

OP04 *Safeguarding Children***1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 Shared Lives South West believes that every child has the right to be in a safe environment, free from harm, and recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 1.2 Children are present in many Shared Lives Carer households, either as people supported from 16 years old, the children of parents being supported, or the children in the families of Shared Lives Carers.
- 1.3 As such, Shared Lives South West recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding under The Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 Shared Lives South West recognise that the right to be safe from harm applies to all children, irrespective of where they are, who is responsible for their care, their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- 2.2 Shared Lives South West recognise child abuse as being;
 - When anyone under the age of 18 is either being harmed or not properly looked after
 - Either physical, emotional, sexual or neglect
 - Over a period of time or a one-off action
 - Intentional action or as a result of failing to act
- 2.3 Shared Lives South West has a zero tolerance of abuse and will always respond to concerns raised.
- 2.4 Shared lives South West is committed to following guidance from the South West Child Care Procedures which have been accepted by the Somerset, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, Plymouth, Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Children Boards in relation to passing on concerns for children's welfare and safety. Shared Lives South West operates a 'zero tolerance' policy of abuse against children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 2.5 Shared Lives South West recognise their responsibility to work together with all other partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.
- 2.6 All staff and Shared Lives Carers must undertake an enhanced DBS check, which will be checked against the children's workforce barring list if they provide direct support to children.

- 2.7 Shared Lives South West recognise the importance of ongoing training and development to support the safeguarding of children. All operational staff and Carers receive foundation level training in Safeguarding Children.

3. Reporting Child Abuse or Concerns

- 3.1 Anyone associated to Shared Lives South West has a responsibility to act if they have a concern that a child is being abused. This includes all staff, Carers, or volunteers.
- 3.2 It is not the responsibility of the organisation, or anyone associated, to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however the organisation is responsible for passing on information to the appropriate authority immediately.
- 3.3 Shared Lives Carers are responsible for reporting concerns or allegations to their Shared Lives Coordinator as soon as possible, who in turn will raise those concerns with Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- 3.4 If the Shared Lives Coordinator has or receives concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person in the family home of a Shared Lives Carer then they must report this to a Registered Manager immediately.
- 3.5 Concerns should be passed to the local Children's Services using the relevant contact information below.
- 3.6 If anyone is concerned about a serious risk to life of a child they should call the police on 999 immediately.

4. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 4.1 If a child discloses abuse to anyone they should;
- Stay calm
 - Reassure the child that they were right to tell, that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously
 - Do not promise confidentiality
 - Inform the child what you will do next
 - Listen but don't ask questions
 - Make notes of what has been said as soon as possible, in the child's own words
- 4.2 Timely information sharing is key to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as it enables intervention that crucially tackles problems at an early stage. As such, it is essential that information is passed to the relevant authority immediately.

- 4.3 Where there is a concern that a child is at risk, information can be shared without the consent of the child.

5. Person Alleged to be Responsible for Child Abuse

- 5.1 Where the person alleged to be responsible for abuse is a member of staff or volunteer, they may need to be suspended from their role pending investigation, or temporarily change their role to avoid further risk.
- 5.2 Where the person alleged to be responsible for abuse is a Shared Lives Carer, Shared Lives South West will work with the local authority to assess the level of risk to other children or vulnerable adults and take action accordingly.
- 5.3 Where the person alleged to be responsible for abuse is a person supported, Shared Lives South West will work with the local authority to assess the level of risk to other children or vulnerable adults and take action accordingly.

6. Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if needed.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1 The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy, and for ensuring that the organisation is compliant with safeguarding legislation.
- 7.2 All operational staff are responsible for ensuring that all safeguarding matters are notified to CQC and other relevant organisations, and that this policy is followed in the approach to handling safeguarding.
- 7.3 All staff, Carers and volunteers are responsible for undertaking safeguarding training and understanding the principles of this policy.

Appendix - Contact details for making Safeguarding Alerts**Torbay**

Children's Social Care - 01803 208100 or email mash@torbay.gov.uk

Out of hours service - 01803 524519

Domestic Abuse Service - www.areyouok.co.uk

Plymouth

Call 01752 668000 or email gateway@plymouth.gov.uk

Out of Hours Service - 01752 346984.

Domestic Abuse Service on 01752 252033

Devon

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - 0345 155 1071 or email

mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

Out of hours service- 0345 600 0388

For concerns about a professional or volunteer working with children contact the

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - 01392 384964 or email;

childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecuremailbox@devon.gov.uk

Domestic abuse Service- 0345 155 1074

Cornwall

Multi-agency Referral Unit: 0300 123 1116

Out of Hours Service: 01208 251300

Isles of Scilly

Children's Social Care: 01720 424483

Out of Hours Service: 01720 422699

For concerns about a professional or volunteer working with a child contact the

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - 01872 326536.

lado@cornwall.gov.uk

Somerset

Children's Social Care - 0300 123 2224 or e-mail at: childrens@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset safeguarding partnership - sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk

Out of Hours service (EDT) on 0300 123 23 27

Early Help Advice Hub - 01823 355803

Children's Social Care - 0300 123 2224

Domestic Abuse Service -0800 69 49 999 or email SIDAS@Somerset.gov.uk

For concerns about a professional or volunteer working with a child contact the

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk or

Contact Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224 and request an Allegations reporting form (ARF).

Safeguarding Children Boards

South West Child Protection Procedures www.swcpp.org.uk

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

<http://www.safechildren-cios.co.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-family-care/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-safeguarding-children-board/>

Devon <http://www.dscb.info/>

Plymouth

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/childrensocialcare/localsafeguardingchildrenboard.htm>

Torbay <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/tscb>