

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Purpose	To protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other harm, and to make sure concerns are identified, recorded and acted on promptly.
Applies to	All directors, employees, workers, volunteers, contractors and anyone acting on behalf of Help n Care.
Policy owner	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Review	At least annually and sooner following an incident, legal change or material service change. Next scheduled review: August 2027.

Statement of commitment

The safety and wellbeing of every child and young person is paramount. Help n Care Solutions will create an environment in which children are listened to, treated with dignity and protected from harm. Safeguarding applies before, during and after sessions, including online contact, transport, handovers, one to one support and activities at third party venues.

Because this is a SEND only programme, safeguarding practice must take account of each child's communication method, sensory presentation, level of understanding, dependence on adults and any additional vulnerability identified in the child's support information. Staff must not assume that a change in behaviour or presentation is simply part of a child's SEND.

Safeguarding leadership

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Irene Ndabaningi, Managing Director.
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: to be appointed and appropriately trained before service commencement. The Deputy acts when the DSL is unavailable.
- Public safeguarding contact: safeguarding@helpncaresolutions.com and 01386 365106. The safeguarding mailbox must be access restricted to the DSL, Deputy DSL and specifically authorised management personnel.

Recognising concerns

Staff must remain alert to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, online harm, domestic abuse, peer on peer abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, discrimination, radicalisation, trafficking, county lines, fabricated or induced illness and any unexplained change in a child's presentation or behaviour. A disclosure must be taken seriously even when it is incomplete or uncertain.

If a child tells us something

- Listen calmly and allow the child to speak in their own words.
- Do not promise secrecy. Explain that information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.

- Do not investigate, interrogate or ask leading questions.
- Record the child's words, observations, date, time, location and who was present as soon as possible.
- Report immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL. If delay could place a child at risk, staff must contact children's social care or emergency services directly.

Referral and emergency routes

Immediate danger

Call 999 where a child is in immediate danger or urgent medical assistance is required.

- Worcestershire Family Front Door: 01905 822666 during published office hours.
- Worcestershire Emergency Duty Team: 01905 768020 outside normal office hours.
- The DSL may make a referral without parental consent where seeking consent would place the child at increased risk, cause inappropriate delay, prejudice an investigation or is otherwise not appropriate for safeguarding reasons.

Safeguarding records

Safeguarding records are kept separately from routine activity records with restricted access. Records must be factual, dated, signed or attributable, and include decisions and reasons. Safeguarding information is shared only where necessary and lawful to protect a child.

Staff conduct and allegations

Any allegation or concern that an adult working with children may have harmed a child, committed a criminal offence against a child, behaved in a way indicating unsuitability to work with children, or breached professional boundaries must be reported immediately to the DSL or Managing Director.

Where the concern is about the Managing Director, it must be escalated to the Deputy DSL and appropriate external safeguarding authorities. The organisation will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer route where applicable.

Training and supervision

- The DSL and Deputy DSL must complete role appropriate safeguarding training and updates at intervals recommended by the relevant training provider and local safeguarding arrangements.
- All staff receive safeguarding induction before unsupervised work and regular refreshers, including how to report concerns and whistleblow.
- Safeguarding learning from incidents, complaints and near misses is shared with staff on a need to know basis.