

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy Aims

This document provides guidance to Snap Care in relation to dealing with possible cases of child abuse and in generally safeguarding the welfare of those children we come into contact with during the course of our work.

The policy is based on the conviction that:

- a) The children that we encounter in the course of providing services may be at risk of abuse in varied forms.
- b) Abuse may be committed by the staff of the organisation providing support or by any others within that child's network.
- c) Snap Care has a duty to do everything possible to prevent report and tackle abuse whenever we encounter it.

Government Guidance

Snap Care undertakes to work in compliance with the Department of Health Guidance on multi-agency policies and procedures to protect children from abuse and promote their welfare, including Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance (2018) and adhere to CQC guidance around safeguarding children.

Safeguarding Lead

This policy lies at the heart of Snap Care and is integral to our aims, ethos, and values.

The Safeguarding Lead(s) for children at Snap Care is Sally Britton, Managing Director.

Local Authority Contact Information

Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Children Partnership

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Legal and Statutory Guidance Framework for this policy

The Children Act 1989: provides the legislative framework for child protection in England.

Key principles established by the Act include:

- the paramount nature of the child's welfare
- the expectations and requirements around duties of care to children.

The Children Act 2004 encourages partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability, by:

- placing a duty on local authorities to appoint children's services members who are ultimately accountable for the delivery of services;

- placing a duty on local authorities and their partners to co-operate in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 is intended to improve support for looked after children and care leavers, promote the welfare and safeguarding of children, and make provisions about the regulation of social workers.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 promotes the importance of safeguarding children being everyone's responsibility, inter-agency and collaborative working and the sharing of information. Safeguarding Partnerships replaced local Safeguarding Children Boards in 2019.

"Safeguarding partners 71

A safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined under the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act, 2017) as: (a) the local authority (b) a clinical commissioning group for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area (c) the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area".

Empowerment and Capacity

All children aged 16 and 17 must be assumed to have capacity to make their own decisions and be given all practicable help before they are considered not to be able to make their own decisions. Where a young person is found to lack capacity to make a decision, then any action taken, or any decision made for, or on their behalf, must be made in their best interests. In children aged 16 or 17 years, this would include their parents or legal guardian.

Care Act 2014

Prevention is critical to the Care Act 2014 and also applies to safeguarding children.

This policy is central to Snap Care CQC Registration and Compliance and is reflected in all the CQC Quality Statements.

Policy and Procedure

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether the risk of harm comes from within the child's family and/or outside (from the wider community), 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Recognising Abuse

It is a duty of all at Snap Care to be vigilant regarding the welfare of all the children with whom we have contact in the course of providing services. All staff likely to be in contact with children and families will receive training to recognise signs of abuse when they occur.

Recognising Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical signs to look for:

- injuries which the child cannot explain, or explains unconvincingly
- injuries which have not been treated or treated inadequately
- injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as the cheeks, chest or thighs
- bruising which reflects hand or finger marks
- cigarette burns, human bite marks
- broken bones (particularly in children under the age of two)
- scalds, especially those with upward splash marks where hot water has been deliberately thrown over the child, or 'tide marks' - rings on the child's arms, legs or body where the child has been made to sit or stand in very hot water.

Behavioural signs to look out for:

- fear of going home
- reluctance to have their parents contacted

Emotional Abuse

Signs to look out for:

- changes in behaviour
- withdrawal
- aggressive or unusual behaviours
- being upset without apparent triggers
- self-critical comments
- self-harm

Neglect

Signs to look out for:

- weight loss or gain
- poor hygiene
- dirty clothes
- missed appointments
- Frequent illnesses
- poor health
- non-compliance with medication or treatment regimes
- being left alone

Sexual Abuse

Signs to look out for:

- discloses that sexual abuse is happening/has happened
- demonstrates untypical behaviour changes e.g. aggression, self-harm, bed wetting
- demonstrates over/under sexualised behaviour particularly for age
- fearful around others
- shows signs of bruising around the genital area
- contracts sexually transmitted infection/pubic lice
- a high incidence of urinary tract infections
- complains of soreness to bottom/genitals
- becomes pregnant
- secrecy with IT/social media use

Domestic Abuse

(Children observing / living in environments where there is Domestic Abuse are considered as victims in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021).

Signs to look out for:

- withdrawal
- changes in behaviour or replicating behaviours
- physical injuries to parent or child (including witnessing abuse not just experiencing it)
- reporting of incidents between family members
- reluctance or over keen to return home

Grooming

Signs to look out for:

- people going missing
- secrecy with IT/social media use
- changes in social groups
- contact with older or unusual people unknown to others
- possession and distribution of drugs
- unusual habits
- gifts and extravagant purchases
- unpaid work
- dress style

Online/Cyber Bullying

Signs to look out for:

- anxiety using internet or phone
- signs of bullying within classroom or social environments
- reluctance to use certain digital platforms
- relative over or under use of technology
- emotional changes
- situation avoidance

Child Sexual Exploitation

Signs to look out for:

- sexualised behaviour or sexually deviant behaviour
- sexting messages
- changes in social circles
- STIs
- pregnancy
- UTIs and pain in genital area
- encouraging others to replicate actions

Radicalisation

Signs to look out for:

- extreme views
- accessing materials designed to radicalise
- association with certain people or groups
- changes in behaviour and dress or ideology
- intolerance

Female Genital Mutilation

Signs to look out for:

- medical intervention
- being taken out of the country for medical intervention
- pain
- ethnic background and culture
- physical injury

Child Trafficking

Signs to look out for:

- disappearances or sudden arrivals
- numerous changes of location
- lack of paperwork
- unusual home environment dynamics
- erratic structure
- unpaid work
- sexual exploitation

Self-Harmful Behaviour

Signs to look out for:

- scars, burns or dressings
- weight loss or gain
- unprotected sex
- risk taking behaviours
- overdose
- non-compliance with medication or treatment

- not taking care of health
- engaging in or encouraging sexually deviant behaviour
- ingestion of toxins

Reporting Abuse

Any member of staff who knows of or believes that abuse of a child is occurring has an obligation to report it as quickly as possible to their manager, or another responsible person within Snap Care, their employer or direct to the Police or appropriate local Social Care Child Safeguarding Team / Contact team. Failure to report abuse could be seen as collusion and may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Snap Care recognises that it is not always easy to make allegations of abuse, however the well-being of your client must remain paramount.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

In view of the sensitive and confidential nature of our work and the information that we collect and hold about our clients and other stakeholders, this policy must be read alongside Snap Care's policies on GDPR.

Concerns about data protection should not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding.

Action in Emergency Situations

If the situation is an emergency, with a child in immediate danger, the individual must take urgent action to intervene, remove the child from the scene and call 999 for emergency assistance as soon as possible. They should give any necessary first aid (within their capabilities) and contact appropriate emergency services. If the abuser remains present, staff should seek to calm the situation. It is however important to remember that staff have a right to avoid placing themselves at risk of violence or other harm. Every effort should be made not to interfere with any evidence or question those present as this may compromise any criminal investigation.

Guidance on the Reporting of alleged Incidents of Abuse or Poor Practice

In order to observe the principles of good practice, written records must include the following:

- What happened? Report facts, direct observations and actual conversations only.
- Where did it happen? State the location and approximate time of the incident.
- When did it happen? State the date and approximate time of the incident
- Who was present? State the names/contact details of any witnesses (e.g. colleague, family member or member of the public)

Do's and Don'ts:

- **Do** use plain language not jargon
- **Do** use legible handwriting
- **Do** use Snap Care's Incident / Accident Report form
- **Do not** give opinions or judgements

Support workers should write a clear, objective account of any incident of abuse they witness and share this with the Support Manager or Registered Manager as soon as possible.

CQC Statutory Notifications

Incidents will be reported and made available to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) within the necessary timescales as required. There are clear guidelines under their statutory notification process; this will normally be done by the Registered Manager. Copies should be retained of all such notifications.

Ongoing Co-Operation with Statutory Services in Safeguarding or Child in Need Investigations and Processes.

Snap Care will work in partnership with other statutory services to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of any child. This should be done in an open and transparent way and liaison will be needed with the commissioner of the service to ensure they understand the need for and costs of an any ongoing role. Where referrals are made to the statutory services it is important that Snap Care make regular follow ups to ensure that they are aware of the ongoing work and outcome. Interagency collaboration and Partnership are key principles of Working together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Care Act 2014.

Action to be taken in the Absence of a Statutory Investigation

In instances where an investigation by the Social Services and/or Police against a Snap Care staff member or directly recruited support worker does not proceed or is inconclusive, liaison should take place with the Managing Director / employer as to how they wish to proceed. This may then lead to an internal investigation within the disciplinary policy. All involved should keep the situation under review in case it becomes possible or necessary to re-refer to statutory services. Snap Care will follow statutory obligations to report such incidents to the CQC and, as necessary, staff to the Disclosure and Barring Service as per current government guidance/procedures.

Additional Procedural Issues

Snap Care will comply with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 requirements to protect all children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect and self-harm by ensuring that:

- All new employees / associates / support workers submit personal details to complete an Enhanced DBS check.
- All new employees / associates / support workers will, prior to employment, provide a full employment history, photographic ID and satisfy us as to their fitness to work with children.
- A session on safeguarding children is included in the induction programme for all staff / associates and support workers. Training will be updated regularly according to national guidance.
- Every client with directly employed support workers will have an up-to-date care plan, including support plans, risk assessments and team policies which will clearly explain the care to be provided. This will also include a full copy of this policy.
- All support workers have access to a supply of Incident-Accident notification forms.
- All Managers are aware that they have a duty to reinforce protection issues during support team meetings and individual supervision sessions.
- Staff's competence and understanding of their client's safeguarding risks will be reviewed at least annually.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service / professional Bodies

Where the incident has been perpetrated by a member of Snap Care's staff team or a support worker 'employed' or engaged through Snap Care, consideration will need to be given at the conclusion of the investigation of whether this meets the threshold to make a referral to the Scheme – this is a statutory duty of the Registered Manager. In exceptionally serious circumstances, this referral can be made at an earlier stage i.e. whilst the investigation is still ongoing.

Likewise, if the staff member has a professional registration similar consideration should be made as to whether a referral to such is needed.

In both above situations, if in any doubt about the referral, contact the services to obtain their opinion.

Auditing and Monitoring

Snap Care will set up regular auditing and governance systems to ensure that this policy is adhered to and that any safeguarding incident events are shared with others in Snap Care and where necessary lessons are learnt from such.

This might include

- Collation and review of CQC Statutory Notifications
- Collation and review Complaints and Concerns
- Regular review and auditing of any safeguarding concerns raised, and actions taken
- Due diligence regarding quality of training and regular evaluation of training provided and added value from such.

How we will work with stakeholders to ensure we meet this policy

Snap Care is committed to working openly and transparently with all stakeholders when it comes to the protection and safeguarding of children hence why this policy is available to all those who engage with our service.

This policy needs to be shared with the people outlined below and those individuals / stakeholders who use our service.

This policy will be given to all staff who are employed by, or are associates of, Snap Care, at the commencement of their induction. They will be asked to confirm receipt and to confirm that they have read and understood the content.

Likewise, it will be given to all Support Workers/ Carers / Personal Assistants employed by Snap Care and those directly employed by their clients. They will be asked to confirm receipt and that they have read and understood the content.

It will also be given to other stakeholders as follows:

- Clients – a copy will be kept within the care plan at the client's home in situations where Snap Care is responsible for the provision / management of the support.
- Family Members.

- Those who commission our services e.g. Case Managers, Solicitors / Deputies.
- Others who have a significant involvement with our clients e.g. members of the MDT particularly those who do not have access to other safeguarding systems / policies through their own organisational framework.

Training Requirements

The training needs of all staff working with Snap Care will be reviewed as part of their Induction. Prior learning (where a certificate can be provided) may be considered. Whatever the level of prior training all staff must be given access to this policy and must sign to say it has been read and understood.

This policy applies to the following people in our organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employed staff (both Professional and Administrative) and all those who are engaged as associates (i.e. self-employed). • Support Workers – both our own employees and those employed by their client (their Deputy) directly
Policy Written by	Sally Britton, Managing Director
Date Policy written	26 February 2025
Due for Review	26 February 2026
Who has or can give authority to change policy	Sally Britton, Managing Director
Where is this policy kept	On the company's shared drive and software system.