



Safeguarding and Child Protection

Policy Author: Keisha Pretty

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Keisha Pretty

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Cassie Emery

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Safeguarding and Child Protection

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Safeguarding and Child Protection

Introduction - Safeguarding intent

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. Project RESET recognises its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is fully committed to maintaining safeguarding practices that reflect statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and recognised best practice standards.

All children and adults, irrespective of age, disability, gender, racial or cultural heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or gender identity, have an equal right to protection from all forms of harm or abuse.

This policy applies to all staff and will be widely communicated and mandatory for everyone involved in Project RESET. Failure to comply with this policy and with Project RESET's safeguarding procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and/or contract.

All staff placed by Project RESET are expected to familiarise themselves with the safeguarding arrangements of the organisation in which they are placed and to maintain a clear understanding of abuse and neglect in all its forms — including how to identify, respond to, and report any concerns.

Project RESET expects all Staff to follow and promote good practice in safeguarding. To do so, they should:

- Read, understand, accept and act in accordance with this policy.
- Be vigilant and follow professional codes of conduct to maintain professional boundaries and safe working practices.
- Report any concerns or disclosures related to the protection and safety of Children and Adults at risk.
- Undertake mandatory safeguarding training and awareness sessions where provided.
- Help educate learners in placements regarding matters of keeping safe, and to make them aware of how to make disclosures.



Safeguarding and Child Protection

Terminology

Safeguarding - is defined by the following;

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection - The process taken to protect children and young people who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of significant harm.

Staff – is defined to mean a full or part-time employee (including self employed) of Project RESET. It also includes volunteers working alongside employees of Project RESET.

Parent/Carer - Refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example, step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Child/Young Person - Includes everyone under the age of 18.

According to the Children Act 1989, a 'Child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate for children and young people, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under current legislation.

Key Contact Details

Project RESET – safeguarding@projectresetap.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Keisha Pretty

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Cassie Emery



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Children's Social Care BCP – 01202 123 334 or
childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

BCP LADO - lado@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or 01202 817600

Commitment to Safeguarding

This policy has been developed to uphold the principles outlined above by ensuring that:

Project RESET maintains rigorous safer recruitment procedures to ensure that individuals known to pose a risk to children are not able to gain access to them. Those whose behaviour indicates potential risk are identified at the earliest opportunity and prevented from continuing to work with children. Project RESET is committed to preventing, at every possible stage, the entry of individuals who may intend to cause harm into the workforce.

All staff understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities and are provided with appropriate learning and development opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, or other safeguarding concerns relating to children.

Project RESET promotes a culture of openness and transparency, where staff feel confident and supported in raising concerns about the welfare of children, the conduct of colleagues, or safeguarding practices within the organisation.

Reporting concerns about actual or potential harm must be straightforward. Clear procedures are in place for responding to safeguarding and protection issues, and Project RESET ensures that individuals who raise concerns are treated with respect and provided with appropriate support.

Project RESET maintains comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures, which are reviewed regularly and updated at least annually to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, and best practice.



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Project RESET remains informed of developments in safeguarding best practice and undertakes annual reviews and audits of its safeguarding activities, taking prompt action to address any identified areas for improvement.

Any concerns regarding individuals or safeguarding situations that come to Project RESET's attention will be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities. Project RESET will cooperate fully with any subsequent investigations or assessments.

Project RESET works collaboratively with the child's home or on-roll school and with other relevant services — including local authority children's social care — to ensure that those identified as being at risk of abuse are effectively protected.

Confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in accordance with data protection requirements.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

The principal legislation and guidance governing this policy is:

- [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 \(HM Government\)](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- [Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers. HM Government \(2018\)](#)
- [Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(including the 'Prevent Duty'\)](#)



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- [The Prevent Duty, Departmental, Advice for Schools and Child Care Providers 2015 \(Department for Education\)](#)
- [What do to if you're worried a child is being abused \(DfE\)](#)
- [Non-School Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards 2025](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other relevant safeguarding policies - including but not limited to:

- Allegations and Misconduct Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Project RESET Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy

Project RESET takes its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children extremely seriously. We are committed to ensuring that robust and appropriate procedures are in place for responding to any situation in which we believe a child has been harmed or may be at risk of harm.

Our safeguarding procedures also apply in circumstances where a member of staff is suspected or accused of abuse, including cases involving low-level concerns.

Furthermore, Project RESET will ensure that all staff are aware of;

- [The Dorset Continuum of Need](#)
- The identity and role of the DSL at Project RESET
- The safeguarding response to children to ensure the highest level of welfare and care
- The added vulnerabilities of children who are looked after/previously looked after, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and children who are young carers.



Safeguarding and Child Protection

Recruitment and Selection Process

Project RESET is also committed to protecting Children through a careful recruitment and selection process (Safer Recruitment Policy), a Whistleblowing Policy and guidance on appropriate behaviour (Project RESET Staff Code of Conduct). These policies should be read alongside this policy.

Project RESET's rigorous procedures ensures that any potential employee found to have a history of unacceptable conduct or practice, will not be employed. Project RESET will ensure that at least one member of staff on every recruitment panel has completed safer recruitment training, and this is refreshed regularly. Safer recruitment processes will be adhered to, including appropriate DBS checks, reference checks and any additional checks relevant to the role undertaken.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The role of Project RESET's DSL includes:

- Ensuring that all relevant Staff have received an induction safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) appropriate to their role and continue receiving training to enable the development of skills and good practice when working with Children.
- Ensuring appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place on all organisational devices and networks used by children and young people.
- Working with leadership to review the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring arrangements and responding to any safeguarding concerns identified through these systems.
- Ensuring staff understand how filtering and monitoring systems support safeguarding and how concerns arising from these systems should be reported and managed.
- Receiving and responding appropriately to all reports of safeguarding issues or abuse which are raised by Children, Staff, Partner Agencies, or any other third party.



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- Ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records are kept of any concerns, reports or referrals related to Children that they work with.
- Liaising with Designated Safeguarding Leads in partner organisations.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for Staff with concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Supporting Staff involved in safeguarding incidents and assisting them in challenging or reporting poor or unsafe practice.
- Supporting and informing Parent/Carers how to report any safeguarding concerns, regarding Children, Staff and any other parties.
- Referring any allegations of abuse or safeguarding concerns to the relevant children's social care and if relevant, the police and/or the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO). In order to do this, the DSL will need to consult the Local Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements for the area in which the organisation is located. Further details on referral routes are located in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2022, and in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).
- Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures to have appropriate referrals and signposting
- Reporting concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), this may be where a Staff member has been dismissed or left, where serious concerns have been raised about their conduct or behaviour, and Project RESET believes they pose a risk to Children. The DSL will complete the necessary referral documents to the DBS and liaise with them thereafter if they have any further questions regarding the member of Staff.
- Keeping Project RESET leadership apprised of any safeguarding incidents and their outcome.
- Liaising with Project RESET leadership regarding training and skill development programmes available to Staff.
- Policy development (or overseeing this, including ensuring that all policies are updated as and when needed, but in any event on an annual basis.

All Staff



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The role of staff at Project RESET includes;

- Be fully aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, in line with Project RESET's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant statutory guidance.
- Understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that early identification and intervention are vital to protecting children from harm.
- Be familiar with the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other safeguarding concerns (including contextual and online risks).
- Understand the procedures for reporting and responding to concerns, disclosures, or allegations involving children.
- Immediately report any concern about a child's welfare, or the conduct of another adult, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, in line with Project RESET procedures, and or LADO where appropriate.
- Understand that no concern is too small to report — and that it is not their role to determine the validity of an allegation or suspicion.
- Model professional behaviour at all times and maintain appropriate boundaries with children and young people.
- Contribute to creating an environment where children feel safe, respected, and confident to raise concerns.
- Challenge and report any behaviour that could put a child at risk, including low-level concerns about colleagues.
- Attend and complete all mandatory safeguarding and child protection training as required by Project RESET and refresh knowledge regularly and participate in ongoing professional development related to safeguarding.
- Reflect on practice and seek guidance or supervision when faced with safeguarding dilemmas.
- Uphold the Staff Code of Conduct and demonstrate behaviours that promote trust and safety.
- Ensure that safeguarding practices are applied fairly and consistently to all children, regardless of background, ability, culture, or identity.



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- Recognise and respond appropriately to the additional vulnerabilities of certain groups, such as children with disabilities, looked-after children, or those experiencing discrimination.

Off Site Activities

Project RESET recognises that off-site activities provide valuable opportunities for learning, enrichment, and personal development. However, such activities also present specific safeguarding considerations. All staff have a duty to ensure that the welfare and safety of children remain the highest priority at all times, both on and off Project RESET premises.

To ensure the welfare and safety of children when off site, the following expectations should be met;

- Risk assessments completed for any off site visit which are in line with Health and Safety and Safeguarding procedures.
- Risk assessments are reviewed in advance and followed by all staff responsible during an off site activity. Where appropriate individual risk assessments to be completed for children as identified.
- Staff should remain vigilant when off site in identifying and responding to any safeguarding concerns.
- Staff should maintain professional boundaries at all times
- The DSL and/or leadership team is aware of all off site activities in advance of them taking place.
- Parent/carers are fully informed of the details of any off site activity, with consent for participation given in advance.
- Staff must carry relevant contact details including emergency and medical information.
- When managing a safeguarding concern off site, these must be recorded and reported to the DSL/DDSL as soon as possible. All other safeguarding procedures are to be followed.
- All staff adhere to Project RESET's staff code of conduct.



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Media Arrangements and Online Safety

Media Arrangements

Project RESET recognises that the use of digital media, including mobile phones, cameras, and online platforms, can play a valuable role in supporting learning, communication, and organisational promotion. However, it also presents potential safeguarding, privacy, and data protection risks.

To protect children, staff, and the reputation of Project RESET, all staff must adhere to the following guidance.

- All use of media and communication devices must comply with Project RESET's Safeguarding and Data Protection policies.
- Staff must use organisational equipment wherever possible. Personal devices should only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- All use of digital technology must reflect professional boundaries and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff must not use personal mobile phones to contact, photograph, or video children or young people.
- Communication with parents, carers, or external agencies should take place via official Project RESET devices or channels.
- In off-site settings, staff may carry personal phones for emergency contact only and must continue to follow this guidance.
- Photographs or video recordings of children may only be taken for legitimate educational, developmental, or promotional purposes, and always in accordance with parental consent.
- All images must be stored securely on approved organisational systems and deleted once no longer required for their original purpose.
- Any images or videos used for publicity, displays, reports, or social media must have parental consent and the child must not be identified by full name or any other personal details.



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Online Safety

Project RESET recognises that children and young people frequently use the internet, social media, and digital technologies for learning, socialising, and personal development. While these tools provide significant benefits, they also present risks to safety, welfare, and wellbeing.

Filtering and Monitoring

Project RESET recognises its responsibility to protect children from accessing harmful, inappropriate or illegal content when using digital technology.

Where children access organisational devices, networks or internet services, appropriate filtering and monitoring systems will be in place to support safeguarding and promote safe online activity.

Project RESET will:

- Ensure filtering systems are proportionate to the age, needs and vulnerabilities of the children accessing technology.
- Monitor online activity where appropriate to identify safeguarding concerns, including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, exploitation, radicalisation, self-harm content, and other online risks.
- Review filtering and monitoring arrangements regularly to ensure they remain effective.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and know how to report concerns.
- Record and respond to any safeguarding concerns arising from filtering or monitoring systems in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that children are safe online, understand potential risks, and are supported to use digital technologies responsibly. This will be done in the following ways;

Children will be supported in understanding what is meant by online safety during day to day activities.



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Through activities and sessions done children will increase understanding of recognising risks, understanding privacy settings and knowing how to report concerns.

Children will be guided when using technology to use online resources safely and respect age appropriate guidance.

All staff will have training in and receive updates in online safety.

Any online safety concern, incident or allegation will be reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL and recorded in line with Project RESET's procedures.

Project RESET will work with parent/carers to protect children from online harm through cyberbullying and harmful online behaviour awareness.

Children using personal devices while attending Project RESET will be supervised appropriately and any concerns regarding online activity will be managed in line with this policy.

AI/ Generative Risks

Project RESET recognises that artificial intelligence (AI), generative AI platforms, chatbots and image-generation tools present both educational opportunities and safeguarding risks. Staff will remain vigilant to risks including grooming, misinformation, inappropriate content, online exploitation, deepfakes, impersonation, and the generation or sharing of harmful material. Concerns relating to AI use will be managed in accordance with safeguarding and online safety procedures.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

At Project RESET, all staff, volunteers, and associated personnel have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns promptly, accurately, and in line with this policy. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and no concern is too small to be raised.

When to Report

Concerns must be reported immediately when:

- A child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse or neglect.



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- There are signs or indicators of possible harm or risk
- You witness or suspect inappropriate behavior by staff, volunteers, or others
- You receive information suggesting a safeguarding risk

Delays in reporting can increase risk. It is essential that concerns are shared as soon as possible, even if all the facts are not yet known.

How to Report

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded using the organisation's safeguarding recording system "Report My". This system ensures secure, consistent, and traceable reporting.

When submitting a report, you must:

- Provide clear, factual, and objective information
- Record exactly what was seen, heard, or disclosed (using the individual's own words where possible)
- Include dates, times, locations, and names of those involved
- Avoid assumptions, opinions, or personal interpretations
- Submit the report as soon as possible after the concern arises

If immediate risk of harm is identified, emergency services must be contacted without delay, in addition to completing a "Report My" submission.

Accuracy and Record Keeping

Accurate record-keeping is critical for safeguarding. Reports must:

- Be completed as soon as possible while details are fresh
- Be clear, concise, and legible
- Distinguish between fact, observation, and opinion
- Be stored securely with "Report My" in accordance with data protection requirements

Incomplete or inaccurate reporting can hinder safeguarding responses and put individuals at further risk.

Confidentiality

All safeguarding reports are treated with strict confidentiality and shared only on a need-to-know basis. Staff must not discuss concerns outside of appropriate reporting channels.



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Support and Escalation

If you are unsure whether to report a concern, you should submit a report. Additional guidance can be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), but this must not delay reporting.

Failure to report safeguarding concerns may be considered a disciplinary matter.

Concern	Who do I refer to?
Professional conduct concerns about Staff	Use our Safeguarding recording system on 'RecordMy' which will then be reviewed by the DSL/DDSL named above.
Concerns or allegations about staff that do not meet the harm threshold – referred to as 'low level concerns'	Use our Safeguarding recording system on 'RecordMy' which will then be reviewed by the DSL/DDSL named above.
Concerns or allegations about Staff that may meet the harm threshold	Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO), including Project RESET's DSL or leadership team where appropriate in referral. If the concern or allegation is against the DSL or leadership team please direct straight to the LADO.
Concerns about a Child	Use our Safeguarding recording system on 'RecordMy' which will then be reviewed by the DSL/DDSL named above. Also inform the Child's Designated Safeguarding Lead at their on roll school in line with the schools policies and procedures. In the absence of the Child's on roll schools DSL/DDSL, contact the local Council's Children's Social Services



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	department. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures to have appropriate referrals and signposting.
Disclosure made by a Child	Any disclosure made by a Child should be recorded on 'RecordMy' and referred to the DSL/DDSL promptly. Referral to be reviewed by DSL/DDSL and Child's on roll school to be informed, and any other relevant parties, including but not limited to Parent/Carers and Children's social services where relevant and appropriate. Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures to have appropriate referrals and signposting
Immediate risk of harm to Child	Local police by dialling 999 (emergency only).

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All Staff have a responsibility to protect Children. This includes:

- Observing Project RESET policies and processes.
- Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures to have appropriate referrals and signposting
- Attending the recommended training and keeping their skills and knowledge concerning safeguarding and safer recruitment up to date.
- Reporting any concerns arising from organisation visits to the DSL/DDSL at the relevant organisation and confirming that this has been done to Project RESET's DSL/DDSL.
- Taking action, such as following the process detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy where there are concerns about practice.
- Ensuring all Staff are aware of the process for reporting concerns to Children's Social Care (MASH).



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Children Missing Education

Project RESET recognises that all children are entitled to a full-time education and that children missing education are at significant risk of harm. Persistent absence, unexplained absence, repeated lateness, and children who become missing from education may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, mental health difficulties, radicalisation, or other safeguarding concerns.

As an Alternative Provision, Project RESET will:

- Monitor attendance daily using MyAT. www.myattendancetracker.com
- Follow up unexplained absences promptly.
- Notify the child's on-roll school of attendance concerns in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Share safeguarding concerns relating to attendance, absence, or missing education with relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers, schools, local authorities and other professionals to reduce barriers to attendance and engagement.
- Treat patterns of non-attendance as potential safeguarding concerns and consider whether additional support or referrals are required.

Any child whose whereabouts become unknown during a session will be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in accordance with Project RESET's safeguarding and emergency procedures.

Attendance as a Safeguarding Indicator

Project RESET recognises that attendance is a key safeguarding indicator. Poor attendance, persistent absence, repeated lateness, disengagement from education, or sudden changes in attendance patterns may indicate that a child is experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties, bullying, or other welfare concerns.

Attendance will be monitored daily and concerns will be shared promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the child's on-roll school where appropriate.



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Attendance concerns will be considered alongside other safeguarding information to ensure that children receive the right support at the earliest opportunity.

Staff will remain professionally curious where attendance concerns arise and will seek to understand any underlying factors affecting a child's engagement.

Contextual Safeguarding

Project RESET recognises that safeguarding risks can occur beyond a child's home environment. Contextual safeguarding acknowledges that children and young people may experience abuse, exploitation or harm in a range of settings including peer groups, schools, alternative provisions, public spaces, transport networks, community environments and online.

Staff will consider the wider context of a child's life when assessing safeguarding concerns and will work with relevant agencies to identify and reduce risks.

Contextual safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Child criminal exploitation.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- County lines activity.
- Serious violence.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Online abuse and exploitation.
- Harmful peer relationships.
- Exposure to gangs or criminal associates.
- Risks associated with public spaces, transport routes and community settings.

Project RESET will adopt a child-centred approach and consider the influence of relationships, environments and external factors when planning support and interventions.



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Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Made Against Staff

All Staff working with Children and Young People are responsible for supporting safe behaviour and have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, such as the Project RESET Staff Code of Conduct.

In accordance with Working Together (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), where an organisation has received an allegation that a volunteer, supply staff or member of staff who works with Children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a Child, or may have harmed a Child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a Child;
- behaved towards a Child in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to Children;
- or behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with Children,

A referral should be sent to the LADO within one working day, giving as much detail as possible.

Low Level Concerns

The term “*low-level concern*” does not imply that the matter is insignificant. Rather, it refers to behaviour towards a child that does not meet the threshold for reporting outlined above. A low-level concern is any behaviour — no matter how minor it may seem, or even if it simply causes a sense of unease or a “nagging doubt” — indicating that an adult working for, or on behalf of, Project RESET may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate behaviour that occurs outside of the work environment; or
- Does not meet the threshold for an allegation or referral to the LADO, but nevertheless raises concern.

Examples of such behaviour may include, but are not limited to:

- Displaying overfamiliar behaviour towards children;
- Showing favouritism;



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- Taking photographs of children on personal mobile devices;
- Spending time alone with a child in secluded areas or behind closed doors;
- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

Project RESET promotes an open and transparent culture in which staff are actively encouraged to report all low-level concerns to the DSL or the leadership team. All such concerns will be appropriately recorded, managed, and reviewed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Dealing with low-level concerns promptly and effectively not only protects children and young people but also safeguards staff and volunteers from potential false allegations or misunderstandings

Duty to Make a Referral to the DBS

Where there is evidence that anyone has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a Child, there is a legal duty on Project RESET to report that person to the Disclosure and Barring Service using their guidance available here. The DBS has statutory authority to bar a person from working in regulated activity with Children in the UK.

A referral to the DBS will also be made if the person resigns prior to an investigation being carried out or reaching its conclusion. If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this guidance.

Project RESET will not make any compromise/settlement agreement in the case of a person deemed unsuitable to work with Children. Any such agreement which contained a condition of not referring the case to the DBS would constitute a criminal offence.

Anyone who is concerned about a Child's welfare or who believes that a Child may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the DBS or other appropriate authority as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the initial concern.

Whistleblowing

Individuals may find it difficult to raise concerns about colleagues, managers, or concerning how safeguarding concerns are responded to within a setting. Project



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RESET has a specific Whistleblowing Policy which encourages individuals to raise concerns and also provides details of outside organisations that individuals can approach for support and advice. Project RESET aims to have an open and honest culture where safeguarding is responded to effectively, and all Staff feel safe, supported and able to voice any concerns that they have in the knowledge that they will be responded to.

Training

All Staff are required to complete mandatory safeguarding training relevant to their role, including an induction, with refresher training undertaken annually. This training includes recognising signs of abuse and understanding how to respond to concerns that may arise. Staff will be kept updated with the latest safeguarding and child protection information via staff emails from the DSL when the need arises. Regular CPD opportunities will be offered to staff to increase their awareness of specific safeguarding needs and issues.

The Project RESET DSL will attend the DSL training and networks/forums to be kept up to date with the latest child protection evidence and research. Project RESET ensures that any third parties not employed by the company are made aware of our safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

Children in Alternative Provision

Project RESET recognises that children attending Alternative Provision may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and barriers to identifying abuse or seeking support.

Staff should be particularly vigilant when working with children who:

- Have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion.
- Have Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences.
- Have persistent absence or a history of poor attendance.
- Are receiving part-time timetables or reduced educational provision.



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- Are known to children's social care services.
- Are looked after or previously looked after children.
- Are at risk of child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines involvement, serious violence, or substance misuse.
- Have involvement with youth justice services.
- Experience mental health difficulties or emotional wellbeing concerns.

Project RESET recognises that these vulnerabilities may increase the likelihood of abuse, neglect, exploitation or disengagement from education. Staff will maintain a child-centred approach, remain professionally curious and ensure that concerns are identified and responded to at the earliest opportunity.

Key Safeguarding Areas

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation - Children

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a Child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

The Children Act 1989 defines 'harm' as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; 'health' means physical or mental health; and 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical. As a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the definition of harm also includes "impairment suffered by hearing or seeing the ill-treatment of another"

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual from the child's school, college, day centre, community, family, those in a position of trust or another Child.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). This is most likely to include but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, up-skirting, sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.



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Signs of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation – Children

Signs of abuse may vary depending on several factors. The following are some of the key indicators to be aware of:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality changes
- Becoming withdrawn
- Seeming anxious
- Overly sexualised behaviour
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- Lacking social skills or having few friends
- Poor relationships with guardian
- Knowledge of information inappropriate to their age
- Going missing or absconding
- Choosing to cover their body
- Lack of cleanliness in their person or clothes
- Health issues
- Injuries that do not correlate with typical accidental injuries

Categories of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation - Children

Child abuse can be one of four different categories as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023):

- **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.



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- **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



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For detailed guidance on the signs which may indicate abuse and neglect see [‘What to do if you’re worried your child is being abused \(2015\)’](#).

Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse occurs when a child or young person is harmed, threatened, or exploited by another child or young person. Such behaviour is never acceptable, should never be dismissed as “banter” or “part of growing up,” and will always be taken seriously. All concerns of child-on-child abuse must be recognised, reported, and addressed in line with safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children involved.

For more information, please refer to [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), statutory guidance.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms and may occur both in person and online. It can include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos.
- Image-based abuse, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.
- Online abuse, exploitation, intimidation or harassment through social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms or other digital technologies.
- Prejudiced behaviour and abuse motivated by protected characteristics.

Project RESET recognises that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse, it does not mean it is not happening. Staff should maintain an attitude of professional curiosity and remain vigilant to signs that a child may be experiencing abuse from another child.

Signs of Child-on-Child Abuse



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- Absence from school or lack of interest in school activities
- Physical injuries
- Mental or emotional ill-health
- Becoming withdrawn
- Poor self-esteem
- Tiredness
- Alcohol or other substance misuse
- Changes in behaviour
- Inappropriate behaviour for their age
- Displaying harmful behaviour towards others

Reporting

If a child discloses any form of abuse, this must be reported promptly to the DSL / DDSL at the setting in which you are working and Project RESET's DSL/DDSL.

Always trust your instincts—if you have any concerns, it is important to speak up. Child-on-child abuse may also be a sign of wider safeguarding issues, including potential abuse within the child's home.

If you are unsure about how to report or need advice, you should speak to Project RESET's DSL/DDSL

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal exploitation refers to the manipulation or coercion of individuals, often vulnerable people such as children, young people, or those in precarious situations, into engaging in criminal activities. This exploitation typically involves an imbalance of power, where the exploiter uses threats, violence, or deception to control and exploit the victim for financial or personal gain.

A common form of criminal exploitation is "county lines," where gangs or organised crime groups exploit children and young people to transport and sell drugs across different regions. Victims may also be forced into theft, burglary, or other illegal



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activities. Criminal exploitation can have severe psychological, emotional, and physical impacts on the victims, who may feel trapped and unable to escape the situation due to fear or lack of support.

For more information, please refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children, statutory guidance.

Signs of Child Criminal Exploitation

Signs of criminal exploitation in children and young people include:

- Behaviour: Sudden changes in mood, appearance, or behaviour, or avoiding certain people, places, or situations. They may also be reluctant to participate in activities they once enjoyed, or have emotional outbursts or extreme mood swings.
- School: Frequent absences from school, or doing badly in school.
- Home: Going missing from home, staying out late, or traveling for unexplained reasons.
- Relationships: Being in a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Isolation: Being isolated or withdrawn from family and friends.
- Gifts: Receiving gifts from unknown sources.
- Substance use: Signs they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Self-harm: Self-harming.
- Theft: Committing theft or shoplifting.
- Injuries: Physical injuries.
- Money: Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, jewellery, or mobile phones.
- Phone calls: Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls.

Reporting

If you suspect that a child is being criminally exploited, it is crucial to act quickly to ensure the child's safety.

1. Contact the Police

- Emergency: If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 right away.



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- **Non-Emergency:** If the child is not in immediate danger, you can call the non-emergency police number, 101, to report your concerns.

2. Contact Local Authorities

- **Children's Social Services:** Report your concerns to your local Council's Children's Social Services department (you can find contact details on each Council's website). If you do not know which Council to report to, you can check this via the Government website. Once reported, Social Services will assess the situation and take the necessary steps to protect the child.

3. Report to NSPCC

- **NSPCC Helpline:** The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) offers a 24/7 helpline where you can report concerns anonymously. Call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

- **Online Reporting:** You can also report concerns via the NSPCC website. Contact CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)

- **CEOP:** If you suspect online grooming related to criminal exploitation, you can report it directly to CEOP through their online reporting tool at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre.
- ## 5. School or Childcare Providers

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** If you are reporting concerns about a child within a school or childcare setting, contact the DSL in that institution. They are responsible for handling safeguarding concerns and will take appropriate action.

If you are unsure about how to report or need advice, you should speak to Project RESET'S DSL / DDSL.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of a child or young person for sexual purposes in exchange for something the child needs or wants, such as affection, money, drugs, or social status. The exploiters manipulate or coerce the child into engaging in sexual activities, often using violence, threats, or emotional manipulation to maintain control over the victim.

Child Sexual Exploitation can occur both online and offline and may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as the sharing of explicit images or videos. It is



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characterised by an imbalance of power, with the perpetrator holding power over the child due to age, status, or access to resources. Victims may be groomed over time, making it difficult for them to recognise the abuse or feel able to seek help.

The effects of Child Sexual Exploitation can be devastating, leading to long-term psychological trauma, physical harm, and social isolation. Protecting children from sexual exploitation requires vigilance, education, and a strong safeguarding framework that includes recognising the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation and providing appropriate support to those at risk.

For more information, please refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children, statutory guidance.

Factors Which Increase Risk

CSE is a complex issue with various risk factors that can increase a child's vulnerability to being exploited. These risk factors can be both individual and environmental. Risks include:

- Age - Children and young people under 18 are at the greatest risk of sexual exploitation. Adolescence, particularly between the ages of 12 and 17, is a critical period when children may be more vulnerable to grooming and manipulation.
- Disabilities or Special Educational Needs - Cognitive or developmental disabilities may impair judgment and increase susceptibility to grooming and manipulation
- History of Abuse - Children who have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in the past are at a significantly higher risk of being exploited. This includes children who have been victims of neglect or domestic violence.
- Living in Care or Foster Care - Children who are in care or living in foster homes are often at higher risk of sexual exploitation. They may feel isolated, rejected, or unsupported, making them more susceptible to the attention of exploiters who prey on vulnerabilities.
- Family Dysfunction - Dysfunctional family environments, such as those with domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health concerns, or parental neglect, increase a child's risk. A lack of parental supervision or support can make children more susceptible to outside influence and exploitation
- Social Isolation and Lack of Support Networks - Children who are socially isolated, lack a strong family or community support network, or have few friends are more



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vulnerable to exploitation. Exploiters often target children who lack emotional connections and offer a false sense of belonging or love.

- **Running Away or Being Homeless** - Children who run away from home or who are homeless are at increased risk of sexual exploitation. Being on the streets exposes them to various forms of exploitation, including grooming, trafficking, and sexual abuse.
- **Substance Misuse** - Children who misuse alcohol or drugs are at higher risk of exploitation, as substance use can impair judgment and make them more vulnerable to being coerced or manipulated.
- **Mental Health Concerns** - Children experiencing mental health concerns, such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, or self-harm, may be more vulnerable to exploitation. Exploiters may target children who feel marginalised, unloved, or disconnected.
- **Peer Pressure and Vulnerable Friendships** - Adolescents are often influenced by their peer group. Peer pressure or involvement in risky behaviours, such as associating with older individuals or gangs, can increase a young person's vulnerability to exploitation.
- **Cultural or Religious Factors** - Children from marginalised communities, including those from minority ethnic, immigrant, or refugee backgrounds, may face additional risks due to cultural or language barriers, lack of social support, or a sense of displacement.
- **Online Vulnerabilities** - The increased use of social media and online platforms has created new opportunities for exploiters to groom children. Children who are less experienced or knowledgeable about online safety are particularly at risk from online grooming and sexual exploitation.
- **Previous Experiences with Exploitation** - Children who have been involved in previous exploitative situations (such as being coerced into criminal activities or other forms of exploitation) may be more likely to be targeted again. Previous trauma may also increase the likelihood of further abuse.
- **Economic or Financial Hardship** - Families experiencing poverty or financial hardship may be at higher risk, as children in these situations may be more susceptible to offers of material goods or money from exploiters.



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- Cultural and Gender Norms - Certain cultural or societal expectations related to gender roles, sexuality, and relationships can contribute to vulnerability, especially in areas where young people face pressure or coercion to engage in sexual behaviours.
- Lack of Knowledge or Awareness - Children who lack awareness of the risks of exploitation or who do not have appropriate sexual education are more likely to fall victim to grooming or exploitation, as they may not recognise the signs or understand the dangers.
- Involvement in Criminal Activity - Children who are involved in gangs or criminal activities, whether as victims or perpetrators, are at greater risk of being sexually exploited. Exploiters may use threats, violence, or coercion to control these children.
- Negative Experiences with Authority - Children who have had negative experiences with authorities, such as the police, social services, or schools, may be less likely to report abuse or exploitation, increasing their vulnerability.

Signs of Child Sexual Exploitation

Signs of sexual exploitation in children and young people include:

- Physical signs - Bruises or bleeding in the genital or anal area, or a sudden change in physical appearance.
- Behavioural signs - Staying out late, missing school, or being absent from work.
- Emotional signs - Poor mental health, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, or expressions of despair.
- Substance use - Misuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Isolation - Reduced contact with family and friends, or isolation from peers.
- Secretiveness - Being secretive about what they are doing online, or having money or things they can't explain.
- Grooming - Being isolated and having their relationship with parents, carers, and friends broken down.
- Sexual behaviour - Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour, or being involved in offending.



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- Vulnerability - Evidence of vulnerability on social networking sites, or being frightened of some people, places, or situations.
- Sexual health - Repeat sexually transmitted infections, pregnancies, or terminations.
- Online bullying - Evidence of online sexual bullying.
- Gifts - Receiving gifts from unknown sources.

Reporting

If you suspect that a child is being sexually exploited, it is crucial to act quickly to ensure the child's safety. Staff must follow Project RESET's processes and procedures for recording and reporting all concerns.

Individuals who wish to raise concerns should follow the procedures set by the external body or regulator, and as outlined by the below steps.

1. Contact the Police

- Emergency: If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 right away.
- Non-Emergency: If the child is not in immediate danger, you can call the non-emergency police number, 101, to report your concerns.

2. Contact Local Authorities

- Children's Social Services: Report your concerns to your local Council's Children's Social Services department. Once reported, Social Services will assess the situation and take the necessary steps to protect the child.

3. Report to NSPCC

- NSPCC Helpline: The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) offers a 24/7 helpline where you can report concerns anonymously. Call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- Online Reporting: You can also report concerns via the NSPCC website.

4. Contact CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)

- CEOP: If you suspect online sexual exploitation or grooming, you can report it directly to CEOP through their online reporting tool at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre.



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5. School or Childcare Providers

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): If you are reporting concerns about a child within a school or childcare setting, contact the DSL in that institution. They are responsible for handling safeguarding concerns and will take appropriate action.

If you are unsure about how to report or need advice, you should speak to Project RESET's DSL/DDSL.

Criminal Exploitation of Children / County Lines

County Lines is applicable to all Staff.

Project RESET maintain the following expectations in line with [NCA Guidance](#) (referenced below).

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where the drugs are taken to) are reporting increased levels of violence and weapons-related crimes as a result of this trend.

A common feature in county lines drug supply is the exploitation of young and vulnerable people. The dealers will frequently target children and adults - often with mental health or addiction problems - to act as drug runners or move cash so they can stay under the radar of law enforcement.

In some cases the dealers will take over a local property, normally belonging to a vulnerable person, and use it to operate their criminal activity from. This is known as cuckooing.

People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business.

As we have seen in child sexual exploitation, children often don't see themselves as victims or realise they have been groomed to get involved in criminality. So it's important that we all play our part to understand county lines and speak out if we have concerns.

Who is Vulnerable to County Lines



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Those who are most vulnerable to being exploited through County Lines include:

Children and Young People

- **Age** - Young people, particularly those between the ages of 12 and 17, are the primary targets of County Lines gangs. Children are often seen as more easily manipulated and less likely to raise suspicion.
- **Social Isolation** - Children who are socially isolated, lack support networks, or have difficulty forming relationships are particularly vulnerable to the attention of gangs, who may offer a false sense of belonging or family.
- **Those in Care or Foster Care** - Children in care or those living in foster homes are at a higher risk, often due to feelings of neglect, rejection, or a lack of supervision. These children may be more susceptible to being groomed or exploited by gang members.
- **Running Away or Homelessness** - Children who run away from home or who are homeless are especially vulnerable. Without stable housing or support, they are more likely to be exploited by criminals who prey on their vulnerability.
- **School Exclusion** - Those who are excluded from school or have trouble engaging with education may be at higher risk. Gangs often target those who are disengaged from formal systems.
- **Substance Misuse** - Young people who misuse drugs or alcohol are more susceptible to being targeted by gangs, as they are easier to manipulate or control through substance use.

Adults at Risk

- **Mental Health Concerns** - Adults with mental health concerns or cognitive impairments can be more easily manipulated by County Lines gangs. They may lack the capacity to recognise manipulation or coercion, making them more vulnerable to exploitation.
- **Substance Misuse** - Adults with substance misuse concerns can be vulnerable targets for County Lines exploitation, as gangs often exploit addiction to control individuals and involve them in drugrunning activities.
- **Those Experiencing Domestic Abuse** - Adults who are victims of domestic abuse or controlling relationships may be more vulnerable, as they may already be in situations where they are used to manipulation and control, making it easier for them to be coerced into drug-running activities.



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- Homelessness or Unstable Housing – Adults at Risk who are homeless or living in unstable conditions are also at risk. The lack of stable housing or financial support increases the likelihood that they will fall prey to gangs offering money, shelter, or protection.

Those Facing Economic Hardship

- Poverty - Children and Adults from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be targeted by County Lines gangs, as they may be more willing to engage in criminal activities for money, food, or material goods.
- Family Stress - Families experiencing financial hardship, unemployment, or high levels of stress may not be able to provide the support that children or adults need, making them more vulnerable to external manipulation or coercion.

Cultural or Language Barriers

- Migrants or Refugees - Vulnerable migrants or refugees, especially those who are new to the country or do not speak English fluently, are at high risk of being exploited by County Lines gangs. These individuals may feel isolated, lack knowledge of local laws, and may be reluctant to report abuse due to fear of authorities or lack of trust.

Gang Involvement or Peer Pressure

- Peer Pressure - Young people who are involved with peers who are already associated with gangs are at high risk. Gangs often recruit children or young people from other gangs to help extend their operations, using peer pressure and loyalty to coerce them into drug running.
- Previous Exposure to Crime - Children or young adults who have been involved in criminal activities, even at a low level, may be more susceptible to County Lines exploitation. Exploiters often target these individuals, knowing they are more likely to comply with criminal behaviour.

Those Who Have Experienced Trauma or Abuse

- Victims of Sexual or Physical Abuse - Children and adults who have suffered abuse or trauma may be more vulnerable to County Lines exploitation. The trauma they have experienced can make them more susceptible to manipulation by criminals offering them a way out of their situation or providing false promises of care and protection.

Individuals Lacking Trust in Authorities



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- Distrust of Police or Social Services - Those who have had negative experiences with authorities, such as the police or social services, may be reluctant to report their involvement with County Lines gangs. This fear or distrust increases their vulnerability, as they are less likely to seek help or escape from the situation.

Signs of County Lines

Some signs to look out for include:

- An increase in visitors and cars to a house or flat
- New faces appearing at the house or flat
- New and regularly changing residents (e.g different accents compared to local accent)
- Change in resident's mood and/or demeanour (e.g. secretive/ withdrawn/ aggressive/ emotional)
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Changes in the way young people you might know dress
- Unexplained, sometimes unaffordable new things (e.g clothes, jewellery, cars etc)
- Residents or young people you know going missing, maybe for long periods of time
- Young people seen in different cars/taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement from school
- An increase in anti-social behaviour in the community
- Unexplained injuries

Reporting

The best advice is to trust your instincts. Even if someone isn't involved in county lines drug dealing, they may be being exploited in some other way, so it's always worth speaking out.



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If you are in any doubt, you should speak to Project RESET's DSL/DDSL, your local police by dialling 101 (in an emergency 999) and/or the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can impact children directly through harm, or indirectly when they observe violence or abuse between family members. In some cases, children may feel responsible for the abuse, or may have had to leave the family home because of it.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Intimate partner violence
- Abuse by family members
- Teenage relationship abuse (abuse within intimate personal relationships between children)
- Child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse

Abuse may be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, or emotional. It also includes the ill-treatment of others, and the harm caused to children who witness such ill-treatment.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, including children and young people. It can affect people regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, or sexuality, and can take place both within and outside the family home.

Exposure to domestic abuse can have serious and long-lasting effects on a child's health, wellbeing, and development. Everyone must remain vigilant to the signs of domestic abuse and follow safeguarding procedures, reporting any concerns immediately.

For more information on identifying and responding to domestic abuse to safeguard children, please refer to the [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), statutory guidance.



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FGM

FGM involves cutting or injuring the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is a practice that is not condoned by any religion and can leave physical and mental scars on the girl involved. Since 1985, it has been illegal in the UK, but many young girls are sent abroad to have the procedure carried out.

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community in which they live. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, many cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 to 8 years and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk.

Reporting

Since October 2015, there is a requirement on doctors, nurses, teachers and other professionals to report known cases of FGM in under-18s, to the police. A known case is where there has been visual identification (this usually applies to healthcare professionals) or direct verbal disclosure.

If a child discloses that they have undergone FGM, you must ring the non-emergency 101 number within 48 hours. It is important to make a note of your actions and record the police reference number as evidence that you have complied with the duty.

The duty does not apply if the person has reason to believe that another person working in that profession has previously made an FGM notification in connection with the same act of mutilation.

If you are in any doubt, you should speak to Project RESET's DSL/DDSL (remember the duty is individual not organisational). Once you have made your report via the 101 number, you have met the duty.

Mental Health

Mental health difficulties can be an indicator that a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing, or has experienced, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Potential indicators of mental health concerns in children and young people:

Emotional and Psychological Indicators



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- Persistent sadness, tearfulness, or frequent mood swings
- Low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness
- Anxiety, panic attacks, or excessive worry
- Withdrawal from family, friends, or usual activities
- Irritability, aggression, or frequent anger outbursts
- Expressions of hopelessness or thoughts of self-harm

Behavioural Indicators

- Sudden changes in behaviour or personality
- Self-harming behaviour (cutting, scratching, burning)
- Risk-taking behaviours (substance misuse, reckless actions)
- Difficulty concentrating or frequent daydreaming
- Obsessive or compulsive behaviours
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities

Social Indicators

- Social withdrawal or isolation from peers
- Conflict with friends, family, or authority figures
- Difficulty maintaining friendships or relationships
- Reluctance to attend school or frequent absences

Physical Indicators

- Changes in appetite or significant weight loss/gain
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares, or difficulty sleeping



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- Frequent physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches) without clear medical cause
- Fatigue or low energy levels

Other Possible Signs

- Regression in younger children (bedwetting, clinginess)
- Decline in academic performance
- Overly perfectionist or anxious behaviour regarding schoolwork
- Talking about death or suicide, or expressing a wish to harm themselves

All Staff are expected to:

- Remain alert to behavioural or emotional signs that may indicate a child or vulnerable adult is experiencing, or at risk of developing, a mental health problem.
- Report any concerns promptly to the DSL/DDSL.

If you are unsure or need advice, you should contact Project RESET's DSL/DDSL, your local police by dialling 101 (or 999 in an emergency), and/or the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Online Safety

While technology offers many benefits, it can also contribute to safeguarding and wellbeing concerns. It is essential that children are protected from potentially harmful or inappropriate online content and interactions.

All Staff are expected to:

- Be aware of the risks associated with technology, including but not limited to laptops, mobile phones, personal devices, and smart devices.
- Monitor for any inappropriate content being accessed and report concerns promptly.



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Incel Ideology

“Incels” (involuntary celibates) are individuals, often young men, who identify as unable to form romantic or sexual relationships. In some online communities, this identity has evolved into an extremist ideology characterised by misogyny, hostility toward women, and, in rare cases, advocacy of violence.

Staff should be alert to indicators that a child or young person may be influenced by incel ideology, including:

- Frequent engagement with online content promoting misogyny or violence.
- Use of terminology associated with incel communities (e.g. “Chad,” “Stacy,” “blackpill”).
- Expressions of entitlement to relationships or disdain toward women.
- Withdrawal from social interactions or increased isolation.
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour, including anger or depression.

Responding to Concerns

- Report any concerns immediately to the DSL/DDSL.
- Record observations in detail, noting dates, times, and context.
- Engage in open, non-confrontational conversations where appropriate.

If concerns persist or there is a risk of radicalisation, the matter should be escalated to the local safeguarding partnership or relevant authorities, and the Prevent Duty/Channel programme may be considered.

Preventing Radicalisation

Project RESET maintain the following expectations in line with the [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\)](#).

Radicalisation is the process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals, often leading to the support of terrorism or violent acts. This process often involves the rejection of mainstream values and may include the adoption of beliefs that justify the use of violence to achieve ideological goals. Radicalisation can occur through various means, including exposure to extremist propaganda, influence from radical groups or individuals, and



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online platforms that promote extremist content. It is a gradual process that can affect anyone, particularly those who may feel marginalised, isolated, or disillusioned.

Factors Which Increase Risk

Radicalisation is a complex process influenced by a combination of individual, social, and contextual factors. Below are some key factors that may increase the risk of radicalisation:

Individual Factors

Developmental Vulnerabilities (Children)

- Delayed cognitive development, making them more impressionable and less able to critically analyse extremist ideologies.
- Increased need for identity formation, belonging, and validation.

Disabilities or Special Educational Needs (Children and Adults)

- Cognitive or developmental disabilities may impair judgment and increase susceptibility to manipulation.
- Challenges in understanding or resisting extremist narratives.

Emotional or Psychological Challenges

- Experiences of trauma, neglect, or abuse, particularly in childhood.
- Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, or PTSD.

Desire for Recognition

- Vulnerability to extremist groups offering a sense of importance, purpose, or heroism.

Victim of Bullying or Marginalisation

- Feelings of powerlessness or exclusion that extremist ideologies may exploit

Social Factors

Unstable Family Environment



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- Exposure to domestic violence, substance abuse, or inconsistent parenting.
- Lack of positive role models or support systems.

Social Isolation

- Limited peer interactions or inability to form meaningful relationships.

Peer Pressure

- Children and adolescents are particularly susceptible to the influence of radicalised friends or groups.

Involvement in Gangs or Deviant Groups

- Overlap between criminal activities and radicalisation pathways, especially for vulnerable young people.

Environmental and Contextual Factors

Institutional Care Settings (Children and Adults)

- Vulnerability to radicalised staff, peers, or visitors.
- Gaps in safeguarding practices, making these environments potential targets for recruiters.

Lack of Safe Spaces

- Limited access to environments where individuals can express grievances or seek support without judgment.

Community Disconnection

- Children and adults from minority or migrant backgrounds may feel alienated in their communities.

Cultural or Religious Exploitation

- Manipulation of cultural or religious beliefs to promote radical ideologies.

Limited Education or Awareness

- Children lacking exposure to critical thinking skills.



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Online Influence

Unsupervised Internet Access (Children)

- Exposure to extremist content via gaming platforms, social media, or forums.
- Predators using online spaces to groom and radicalise children.

Triggering Events

Traumatic Life Events

- Children experiencing parental separation, bereavement, or foster care placement.

Conflict Zones or Migration

- Refugee children may carry trauma and be more vulnerable to exploitation.
- Unaccompanied minors face heightened risks due to lack of support systems.

Perceived Injustice or Marginalisation

- Experiences of racism, sexism, or ableism, leading to anger or alienation.

Signs of Radicalisation

Some signs to look out for include:

- Isolation - They may isolate themselves from friends and family
- Online activity - They may spend more time online, or have uncontrolled access to the internet
- Extreme content - They may access extremist content, download propaganda, or share extreme views on social media
- Appearance - They may change their appearance or style of dress to align with an extremist group
- Symbols - They may use symbols associated with terrorist organisations



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- Violent views - They may use abusive, aggressive, or extremist views, threats, or language
- Recruitment - They may try to recruit others to join an extremist cause
- Weapons - They may be fascinated with weapons, chemicals, or explosives
- Scripted speech - They may talk as if from a scripted speech
- Disrespect - They may have a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Anger - They may have increased levels of anger
- Low self-esteem - They may have low self-esteem

Reporting

If you suspect that an individual is being radicalised, it is crucial to act quickly to ensure the individual's safety.

Individuals who wish to raise concerns should follow the procedures set by the external body or regulator, and as outlined by the below steps.

1. Contact the Police

- Emergency: In the event of immediate danger, call 999 right away.
- Non-Emergency: You can call the national police Prevent advice line on 0800 011 3764.

2. Contact Local Authorities

- Children's Social Services: Report your concerns to your local Council's Children's Social Services department. Once reported, Social Services will assess the situation and take the necessary steps to protect the child.

If you are in any doubt, you should speak to Project RESET's DSL/DDSL.



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Appendix A - Working procedures for Staff and Children/Young People

This appendix covers any member of Staff working with children or young people in one to one or small group situations in the classroom or in an outside learning environment.

Project RESET is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of safeguarding. The personal safety and wellbeing of each student and staff member using Project RESET is of most importance.

Staff will ensure that group work sessions take place in a safe environment.

The following sets out procedures to be followed if an incident occurs:

- The safety and wellbeing of any student or other person using Project RESET is paramount. These procedures aim to ensure a prompt response to any incident and to minimise any further harm to a student or other person.
- There are differing severities of behaviour that could be witnessed during a session. Some behaviour would warrant only a report to Project RESET; other behaviour maybe of a more serious nature where a direct report to the police may be necessary.
- Each section below sets out the recommended procedure to be followed. It is always the responsibility of the staff member alerted to the incident to take some action to protect the child or young person
- The procedures are not an exhaustive list; therefore if an incident occurs that is not covered in this document you are advised to contact Project RESET's DSL/DDSL immediately.

Staff



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If a staff member sees or witnesses from child or young person;

Inappropriate language

The member of staff will calmly and politely request that the child or young person using the inappropriate language refrains from repeating so. A clear explanation of why the language used is inappropriate and reference back to the Project RESET student code of conduct is provided. If the language continues, the staff member will provide a final warning to the child or young person with an explanation that the session may have to be cancelled if language persists.

If language does persist following these warnings then the staff member has the right to cancel the session. In this instance the DSL/DDSL of Project RESET is to be contacted to decide how is best to return the child or young person to their parent/carer.

Inappropriate behaviour

The member of staff will calmly and politely request that the child or young person using the inappropriate behaviour refrains from repeating so. A clear explanation of why the behaviour used is inappropriate and reference back to the Project RESET student code of conduct is provided. If the behaviour continues, the staff member will provide a final warning to the child or young person with an explanation that the session may have to be cancelled if language persists.

If language does persist following these warnings then the staff member has the right to cancel the session. In this instance the DSL/DDSL of Project RESET is to be contacted to decide how is best to return the child or young person to their parent/carer.

Disclosure seen or made to by a child or young person

Staff are encouraged to do the following;

- Listen patiently - Give your full attention, let the child speak at their own pace, and use encouraging body language.
- Be compassionate - Reassure them their feelings are important and acknowledge their courage.
- Remain calm and non-judgmental - Avoid emotional reactions and don't make assumptions or jump to conclusions.



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- Use TED style questioning for information finding - Tell ME, Explain to ME and Describe to ME.
- Explain the next steps - Tell the child that you have to share the information and who you have to talk to (DSL/DDSL)
- Report and record - Follow your Project RESET's procedures to report the disclosure. Write a detailed account via PROJECT RESET's concern and referral form.

Staff are encouraged to NOT do the following;

- Investigate - Don't try to interrogate the child or decide if they are telling the truth.
- Ask leading questions - Avoid questions that could imply blame, such as "Why?".
- Promise secrecy - Do not promise to keep it a secret, as you may be required to share the information for the child's safety.
- Contaminate evidence - Avoid anything that could compromise a future investigation, such as touching the child or moving things in the area.
- Discuss with unauthorized people - Keep the information confidential to the DSL/DDSL
- Make the child repeat it - Don't ask the child to repeat what they've said to another person unless it's necessary for a direct investigation and appropriate for their age.

Students

If a student sees or witnesses;

Inappropriate language or behaviour by another child or young person

The student should inform the mentor or tutor that inappropriate language has been used. The member of staff responsible should then follow the procedure set out



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above. If the child or young person believes this has not been dealt with appropriately then they are to inform a parent/carers after the session to contact the DSL/DDSL to be followed up with appropriate action.

In the event of the child not wanting to raise an issue during the session, contact may be made with the DSL/DDSL after the session by a parent/carers.

Inappropriate language or behaviour by a staff member

The student should inform a parent/carers or responsible adult as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken in line with this policy. Where deemed necessary the child or young person will have no further contact with the staff member. Project RESET's senior management will decide whether to continue using the member of staff as a mentor.

Disclosure of/ Witness to Abuse

As any physical or sexual abuse of a person is an offence under UK Law, a student must inform a parent/carers or responsible adult if they receive such information. The DSL/DDSL must then be informed to ensure that witness accounts and evidence are collected and recorded appropriately. It is then the responsibility of the DSL/DDSL to take appropriate action.