Safe Families for Children Wales
Safeguarding and Operations Manual
2015
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MANUAL ONE
THE SAFEGUARDING MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to the Safe Families for Children Wales (hereafter referred to as ‘Safe Families Wales’) Safeguarding and Operations Manual covering topics relating to both safeguarding principles and operational guidance.

The original Safe Families safeguarding manual and volunteer handbooks were developed in the North East of England and have been amended to reflect devolved policy and legislation in the context of Wales. Safe Families Wales was founded on the 1st January 2015 as a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Trustees, employees and volunteers in Wales have to work within the legislation and policy guidance for the UK and Wales.

Safe Families Wales has aligned the safeguarding manual to the Welsh Government “Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act,” 2004 and the “All Wales Child Protection Procedures” (AWCPP) 2008. In addition, this version of the manual for Wales anticipates the changes that will be brought about through the implementation of the “Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act,” 2014, which will come into force on the 1 April 2016. The new Act will provide Wales with its own framework for delivering social services.

The changes in the new Act include; giving individuals a stronger voice and more control over their care; will move the focus of social care delivery to one which is based on earlier intervention and prevention services and will further strengthen safeguarding arrangements for children and vulnerable adults. There will be a ‘National Outcomes Framework’ for Wales setting out the standards that people can expect from social care services.

The Safe Families UK model has evolved over the last three years in the UK to meet the targeted needs of parents experiencing short-term crisis and families where risks have been identified which, if not appropriately managed at home could lead to children coming into short-term care. Safe Families offers child hosting for children aged 10 years and under with volunteer families and befriending for parents who may be experiencing some difficulties in their parenting role.

These manuals have been written with the aim of being accessible and helpful to a range of audiences including those with or without specialist knowledge of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults or the complexities of running a charitable organisation. Welsh language and easy read versions will be made available for people accessing Safe Families for Children Wales.

We trust that you will find the manual and handbooks helpful as we work together to achieve our vision of seeing families in crisis and those experiencing difficulties with parenting move from surviving to thriving as they are embraced by compassionate and committed local volunteers.

Note:
Throughout the manuals there will be references to additional documentation such as forms, role descriptions and policies. This UK documentation is publicly accessible at: www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual The Wales version can be accessed by telephoning Safe Families for Children Wales on 02921 660555.
1.2 Objectives and Principles

Charitable Objectives
1. The provision of relief and respite to families in a crisis arising from poverty, conflict, hardship homelessness, ill health or addictions.
2. The relief of the needs of overwhelmed and resource limited parents and their children through the provision of safe, temporary family stays for their children.
3. The protection of the physical and mental health of children.

Key operating principles
1. We are committed to being a volunteer movement made up of ordinary people wanting to serve their community and show friendship, care and hospitality. In order to ensure no ambiguity about the basis on which they operate volunteers receive no reimbursement, either financially or as gift in kind.
2. We are committed to strengthening families who are crying out for help, and therefore there will be no coercion or manipulation of parents to participate. They choose Safe Families for Children because they recognise they are in a problem and need to involve others in finding a way forward.
3. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, and believe that it is the responsibility of us all. Safe Families therefore works together with Local Authorities, local churches and other agencies within a robust safeguarding framework to achieve a safer future for struggling families.

1.3 Why is Safe Families for Children Needed?

Crisis (noun) – ‘a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger’.

Life can be unpredictable, and raising healthy and well-balanced children is a difficult task even for the most confident and well-resourced parents. Many parents face pressures and difficulties such as the loss of employment, inadequate housing, personal ill health or an illness striking their child or partner, or the breakdown of a vital relationship. Others may be caught in a trap of debt, poverty, domestic violence, drug and/or alcohol misuse, or incidents that find them dealing with the police, the courts and possibly prison. Such issues can and often do blur together, escalating toward crisis point and parents feeling totally overwhelming.

During such crises, parents may struggle to provide a safe and caring environment for their children. Research shows that children in a family experiencing crises become especially at risk of neglect or abuse as their parents struggle to cope with crushing circumstances and emotions. The risks are even higher if the parent or carer is socially isolated, without extended family and friends available to help. Without assistance, all too frequently these situations may lead to long-lasting negative consequences for the children.

Local Authorities are mandated to help children deemed at risk of significant harm. However, public sector resources are stretched and Local Authorities’ Children’s Social Care threshold for intervention has crept higher and higher. Support to the family in their home may often be short-term, and foster care is usually reserved only for children who have already suffered harm, or for whom the risk of such abuse or neglect is very high. Moreover, there may be considerable bureaucracy involved in statutory intervention that sometimes creates additional anxiety for the already struggling parent. It is commonly accepted that more help should be provided for such families, and sooner, but what can be done, and by whom?
1.4 The Safe Families Solution

The Safe Families Wales charity facilitates the work of a grassroots network of volunteers extending a safety net out in the community and providing parents with support when they need help to care for their children. As a faith-based initiative, Safe Families Wales is rooted in the belief that the safety and wellbeing of children in our communities is the responsibility of everyone. The charity aims to bring about a new way of enabling the living out of the principles and attitudes of loving our neighbour and extending hospitality to one another.

The focus of Safe Families Wales support is getting alongside families at a time of difficulty to offer flexible support that benefits both the parent and the child. Parents are offered a volunteer befriender, known as a Family Friend, and the children aged 10 years and under may be given respite care, for up to 28 days in one year, which we call hosting (this support is positioned between a kinship placement and foster care). Our network of approved Host Families welcome a child/children to stay with them temporarily, providing them with stability through the crisis. These interventions are further supported by volunteers called Resource Friends who can offer practical resources to support the hosting such as household items or toys.

Volunteers who can evidence through additional assessment that they have experience in health, social care or other connected services such as therapies or teaching, may be appointed as a Family Coach to supervise and co-ordinate the contact between the family in need and the volunteer. The family coach has additional training and receives regular supervision and peer support from the Safe Families Wales Family Support Manager. Together, the support, resources and relationships that the charity offers mean that acute problems within struggling families can be de-escalated and longer-term problems can be averted.

Who does Safe Families support?

Guiding principles on criteria for accessing the support is summarised below:

- Geographic service availability across Wales will be on a phased basis from 1 October 2015. To check the timescale for availability in your area telephone: 02921 660 555
- The parents do not have their own family or friends who can help sufficiently
- The level of support required is within acceptable safety thresholds for our volunteers
- The support plan can be shown to be in line with Safe Families charitable objectives
- The intervention has a reasonable chance of success and is not merely ‘postponing the inevitable’ such as statutory child protection intervention, where this is needed
- Children needing hosting are 10 years old or younger
1.5 What it means to be a ‘faith-based initiative’

A genuine desire to improve the wellbeing of children and families

Safe Families is a faith-based organisation spanning all the major church denominations and traditions such as Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal and Reformed (NB* this is not an exhaustive list).

The patron of Safe Families for Children is the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Rev Justin Welby who is well-known for his position that faith is not simply a matter of private beliefs but that it is the motivation from which springs the desire to address the injustices present in modern society.

(left) Archbishop Justin.

Safe Families is a network of community-conscious churches working together with others to achieve improvement in the wellbeing of children and families. The motivation of all working within Safe Families is to make a tangible difference to the life chances of those helped, irrespective of whether the family identifies with the Christian faith, another faith, or no faith. Safe Families is not a vehicle to support proselytization and the volunteer suitability assessment considers the applicants ability to value difference.

In order to preserve the integrity of its Christian roots Safe Families requires that participating churches, partners, staff and volunteers be:

- Comfortable with, and not antagonistic towards, Safe Families ethos as a church-based movement rooted in the historic Christian tradition.
- Willing to work with those of any faith or no faith to meet the Safe Families objectives of relief and respite to families in need and the protection of children.

Safe Families has enjoyed constructive dialogue with leaders of other faiths with a view to developing the Safe Families model within their communities.

The strength of faith communities

Safe Families Wales aims to achieve sustainable support for families and communities. One of the strengths of the Safe Families model is the network that it creates and the community into which those in need can be linked, to the extent to which they choose to do so. Therefore,

- Referred families will be offered help to access wider opportunities of support which will include other Safe Families volunteers and resources, and also community activities, some of which may be church-based. For any church-based activities, the extent to which faith is openly expressed will be carefully described to each family. Care will be taken not to apply any pressure or coercion to engage in faith-related activities, respecting each person’s right and need to make their own faith choices. Faith-based questions and interest from referred families can be responded to honestly.
- In order to cultivate the sense of community volunteers are expected to participate in their local Safe Families Wales network, which will mean having some kind of connection to a local church. This is to provide both support and accountability.
- Safe Families is willing to work in cooperation with communities of other faiths who may want to put into practice the principles of the Safe Families model in their own community.
1.6 The history of the organisation

Safe Families for Children is a charitable organisation that was founded in Chicago in 2003, by child psychologist Dr. David Anderson. Safe Families gives support to families in crisis, principally by offering 'hosting' – a short-term community-based voluntary alternative to foster care – supported by the longer-term befriending of struggling parents. Over 11,000 volunteers are now involved in the network with over 2,000 ‘Host Families’ regularly caring for children in crisis.

Safe Families has proven highly effective in fighting against family breakdown, preventing child neglect and abuse, and achieving up to 50% reductions to the numbers of children entering the care system in Chicago. Safe Families is now operational in 65 cities across 25 American States and over 10,000 children in the USA have benefitted from the intervention. Many awards have been given to Safe Families in recognition of the difference it has made to families.

Beginning in the UK

Safe Families for Children UK was established by Durham-based philanthropist Sir Peter Vardy (right), who over the last 25 years has channelled millions of pounds into projects that have improved the lives of thousands of people affected by poverty, crime, addictions and poor educational provision.

Sir Peter's vision was to pilot Safe Families first in the North East of England, with a plan to later expand around the UK.

The Vardy Foundation has supported the set-up of Safe Families for Children Wales and has provided training and ongoing support to the staff employed within the registered Welsh charity. This allows consistency with the implementation of the model across the UK.

The relationship between Safe Families USA and Safe Families UK

Safe Families for Children UK is licenced to operate the Safe Families model in the British Isles and has full access to the experience, systems and knowledge base of Safe Families USA. Safe Families UK is not however a subsidiary of Safe Families USA. Safe Families UK is a fully independent charity with its own board of trustees. Dr. Anderson is a member of the UK board of trustees and as such offers the benefit of his considerable expertise to the UK organisation.

It is recognised that there are considerable difference between the UK and US contexts and as such Safe Families UK is working to the foundational principles and ethos of Safe Families for Children, whilst adapting aspects of the model to be more appropriate and compliant in the UK.

Likewise Safe Families for Children Wales is an independent charity working to the same international foundational principles, which have been adapted to meet the Welsh legislative and policy context.
Chapter 2

Safeguarding Framework

Preface

Safe Families for Children Wales has adopted the Safe Families for Children UK safeguarding and operations manuals as its basis for service development and delivery. The implementation of the Safe Families model in Wales is part of a franchise agreement with Safe Families for Children UK. However, there is recognition of the fact that health, social care and education in Wales is developed by Welsh Government and enacted by the National Assembly for Wales in the form of a measure or through secondary legislation (which includes amendments to existing UK legislation). These measures and secondary legislation are mandatory in Wales and trustees, employees and volunteers of Safe Families for Children Wales have to work within a UK and Wales legislative and policy context.

It is in this context, that Safe Families for Children Wales has aligned their safeguarding manual to the “Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act,” 2004 and the “All Wales Child Protection Procedures,” (AWCPP) 2008. The national UK manuals are based on ‘Working Together’ 2010. The UK and Wales manuals are updated annually to ensure that they reflect evolving legislation and policy.

There is a UK safeguarding group for Safe Families for Children which meets via telephone conference monthly and twice a year as a group to discuss any current or emerging issues or regional/national differences with regard to safeguarding. Any issues picked up in these teleconferences are worked through and any changes required in practice are communicated to Safe Families for Children hubs to ensure that staff and volunteers are clear about what is expected of them.

The national safeguarding group feeds information and proposed changes into the UK Safe Families training and development group; the UK family support managers group and the UK community volunteer managers group as necessary and they in turn feed this information into their team meetings or volunteer information meetings.

The Safe Families Safeguarding Manual and Volunteer Manuals are regularly reviewed and are updated on an annual basis.

2.1 Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

The 3 aims of Safe Families for Children are:

1. To stabilise families at times of crisis
2. To minimise risks of child neglect & abuse
3. To reduce the number of children entering the care system
2.1.1 Aims and Scope

This framework complete with its relevant sections pertaining to policy, procedure and guidance is intended to ensure the safeguarding of the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we work. The word safeguarding is broader that the related term ‘child protection’ as it implicitly includes an emphasis upon preventative awareness as well as responsive action.

Safe Families for Children’s board of Trustees and Executive team are absolutely committed to the principle of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All of our staff and volunteers, whatever role in which they serve, carry a duty of care towards those being assisted by our programmes and services. Having a comprehensive safeguarding framework in place not only protects and promotes client welfare but also it enhances the confidence of our statutory sector stakeholders and the general public.

Our Safeguarding manual is a living, breathing resource at the heart of our commitment to excellence in delivering programmes and services within the community. It should be thoroughly understood and rigorously implemented by all staff and volunteers working in an outreach capacity, particularly where there is direct contact with children and vulnerable adults. All office-based support staff will pursue a good working knowledge of its principles. Project partners and stakeholders will use it as an important reference point in our collaborative efforts to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe from harm.

This policy and associated procedures are applicable to all children, young people and vulnerable adults served through our work, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

2.1.2 Definitions of Terms

Child protection
Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect (ref: AWCPP).

Safeguarding
The process of; protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development and ensuring they receive safe and effective care so as to enable them to have optimum life chances (ref: AWCPP).

Child(ren)
A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. ‘Children’ means ‘children and young people.’ The fact that a child has become 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, is in prison or a young offenders institution does not change their status or their protection under the entitlement to social care services or protection under the Children Act 1989 (ref: AWCPP).

Child in Need
Children are deemed in need if; they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services. If development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired without such provision of service; or s/he is disabled (ref: AWCPP).
Vulnerable Adult
A vulnerable adult is a person with a physical, sensory, learning, cognitive or mental health disability; a chronic long-term and debilitating health condition; a progressive or terminal illness or physical or mental frailty as a consequence of the aging process. The disability, health condition or frailty has to be substantial and long-term (unless terminal illness with less than 12 months to live) and has to have an effect on the person being able to carry out day-to-day activities such as personal care, self-nourishment/eating, household tasks and getting around in the community.

Other Vulnerability
Addiction to alcohol and substances and domestic violence in Wales is considered as a different vulnerability to that of a vulnerable adult as summarized above. The Child and Family (Wales) Measure 2010 has been established with specific services to support families and children impacted by addiction and violence within the home. People with addiction and alcohol and substance dependency or effected by addiction may be eligible for separate specialist services in Wales under the umbrella of Integrated Family Support Services which are jointly managed and jointly funded health and social care services.

Harm
Ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another (ref: AWCPP).

Harm is taken to include not only ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical), but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

‘Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child’s health or development, his/her health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child’. (ref: Children Act 1989)

Regulated Activity
The Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) was established to protect and promote the quality of life of vulnerability people and children; to improve the performance of social services in Wales; to ensure the coordination between health and social care services and to establish the Care Council for Wales to regulate the social care workforce.

CSSIW has responsibility for registration and inspection of residential and domiciliary support services’ adult placement schemes, day activities including services for children under 8 years of age, independent fostering agencies and voluntary adoption agencies.

Unsupervised activities that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively and/or overnight. Examples include teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation, and also:

- Any activity allowing unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults that is in a ‘specified place’ frequently or intensively. (‘Specified places’ include schools, childcare premises and care homes.)
- Certain defined positions of responsibility, including foster carer, childminder, school governor, director of social services and trustee of certain charities.

Regulated Activity has an emphasis upon regularity. In this context, ‘regular’ means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period (or in some cases, overnight).
Disclosure

The moment when a child, young person or vulnerable adult chooses to tell a responsible adult, such as a Host Family or Family Friend about abuse they have suffered or are suffering

Abuse

Abuse can occur in any relationship, adult-adult, adult-child or child-child, and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subject to it. Commonly recognised abuse categories are listed below. Some children, young people or vulnerable adults may suffer more than one category of abuse.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent ill treatment of a child such as to cause sever and persistent 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, for example by witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone (ref: AWCPP)

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, kicking, 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 caregiver fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after (ref: AWCPP).

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, coercing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate ways (ref: AWCPP).

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is the coercion or manipulation of children and young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving and exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items such as drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, ‘protection’ or affection. The vulnerability of the young person and grooming process employed by perpetrators renders them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent (ref: AWCPP).

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. It may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs. In addition, neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of material substance misuse (ref: AWCPP).
Neglect may be intentional or may emerge through negligence. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide, or the withholding of: adequate nutrition, safe accommodation, and clothing, protection from physical harm or danger, or access to medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional and developmental needs.

Organised abuse
This may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related and non-related abused young people and children. The abusers concerned may be acting together to abuse children, or may be using an institutional framework or a position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Abuse of trust
A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their role, work or the nature of their activity. Abuse of trust is inappropriate the leveraging of this power in order to gain a personal benefit, be it romantic, sexual, financial or otherwise.

Grooming
Deliberate actions taken by an adult to form a trusting relationship with a child, with the intent of later having sexual contact. The act of grooming a child sexually may include activities that are legal in and of themselves, but later lead to sexual contact. Typically, this is done to gain the child’s trust as well as the trust of those responsible for the child’s well-being. Research has shown children are less likely to report a crime if it involves someone that he or she knows, trusts, and cares about. Additionally, a trusting relationship with the family means the child’s parents will be less likely to believe any potential accusations.

Financial or Material abuse
Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse of misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Damage or threats of damage to property.

Domestic Abuse
The use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining self-confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence by a person who is or has been in a close relationship. It can also involve emotional abuse, the destruction of a spouse’s or partner's property, their isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone and stalking (ref: AWCPP).

2.1.3 Headline Policies on Safeguarding:

a. **We will honour** the unique status of children, young people and vulnerable adults and will respect them as valued individuals. All our staff and volunteers will strive to safeguard the welfare and wellbeing of the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we work. Safe Families for Children Wales will work towards making the framework of the ‘United Nations Convention on the Rights the Child’ (UNCRC) a reality in delivery of volunteer support services.

b. **We will apply the highest standards** of safeguarding whether dealing with children
and young people or vulnerable adults. We recognise that our approach may need to differ when dealing with children, youth or adults, but the same safeguarding principles will remain. Safe Families for Children Wales will work within the standards set within the ‘National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services’ (2005) and the new National Outcomes Framework for social care, when this framework is implemented fully from 1 April 2016. All children and young people will be supported to achieve optimum health and wellbeing and will be supported to achieve their full potential.

c. **We will assess** every referral we receive according to pre-defined risk thresholds, only accepting cases where involvement of staff and volunteers will be safe. Once assigned, volunteer involvement with families will be properly supervised and monitored until the case is closed. Safe Families Wales will provide additional training and support to volunteers where children are already known and formally supported by social services. In these referrals the social services social worker will remain responsible for the case. Safe families for Children Wales will not operate outside of the formal care or support plan of the child without careful negotiation with the child’s social worker.

d. **We will uphold integrity** in all relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults and ensure that our staff and volunteers operate with transparency and avoid any form of exploitation real or perceived. The highest professional standards will be continually encouraged and maintained.

e. **We will take a serving approach**, aware that an unequal balance of power is often the pre-condition from which abuse begins. Staff and volunteers ought never to manipulate a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult for personal advantage or gratification.

f. **We will take any allegation seriously** in Safe Families for Children Wales. We will provide information and additional training to volunteers on the *All Wales Child Protection Procedures* (2008) and the *All Wales Protocol for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation* (2008) in as far as they relate to the role of the volunteer and will collaborate fully with the statutory agencies as outlined within the Welsh procedures where any concerns are raised in regard to allegations of abuse of the vulnerable. We will adhere to systems of accountability and supervision and reserve the right to conduct investigations into the conduct of staff and volunteers.

g. **We will recruit safely** according to stringent recruitment processes, requiring all staff and volunteers to provide evidence that their behaviour has never caused harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults or put them at risk. At time of recruitment, and at specified intervals during their service, all staff and volunteers will be subject to background checks, including detailed character references and screening by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). In Wales there is a stringent suitability assessment completed on all volunteers with additional screening of all people over the age of 16 living, staying or visiting regularly in the home of a host family volunteer and a home safety check of the home environment.

h. **We will train** staff and volunteers in principles of safeguarding and child protection, including how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, and what to do in event of becoming concerned about the potential abuse of a child or vulnerable adult. As
indicated in ‘f’ above Safe Families for Children Wales will provide information and additional training to volunteers on ‘The All Wales Child Protection Procedures,’ (2008) appropriate to their level of responsibility as a volunteer.

i. **We will supervise** appropriately all our work with families and children in accordance with assessment of potential risks, offering opportunity for debrief, further training opportunities and supportive counselling if required. Family support managers in Wales will receive monthly supervision. Volunteers will receive open access to and ongoing support from a community volunteer manager or family support manager depending on their volunteer role and level of responsibility when volunteering.

j. **We will work in partnership** with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, in order that the best possible provision of support is available within the community to ensure that every child is protected from harm and grows up in circumstances that enable them to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

k. **We will share information** with other agencies according to well-established principles best practice within the children and families sector. Safe Families for Children Wales will work in partnership with local authorities and health boards to agree formal arrangements for information sharing where a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm.

l. **We will commit to ensuring good wellbeing outcomes** for children and families where Safe Families for Children Wales volunteers are involved. These outcomes will be aligned to the seven core aims outlined in the Welsh Government commitment to ‘Children and Young People: Rights to Action’ (2004).

m. **We will quality assure** the delivery of volunteer services in Wales by seeking feedback from children and families receiving the services and referrers to the service and by regularly monitoring and evaluating our work.

n. **We will take complaints seriously** and learn from any mistakes. We will have clear information for people receiving volunteer services or referring to volunteer services on how to raise an issue or concern and/or how to make a formal complaint. Issues, concerns and complaints will be used to improve volunteer service delivery.

o. **Alignment to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures; the All Wales Protocol for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation and the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014** when it comes into force on the 1 April 2016 - our safeguarding information, training and practice will be aligned to the appropriate legislation and practice guidance for Wales as it relates to delivering third sector social care services and working in partnership with health and social services.
2.2 From policy to procedure

The U.K. policies and procedures outlined in this manual have all been developed with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in mind. Careful consideration has been given to the welfare of all those we seek to assist through the course of our work prioritising their best interests and ensuring their safety.

Many important aspects of policy and procedure are unpacked in this chapter, and in the two manuals that follow, on recruiting and managing the workforce and role specific handbooks

Recruiting and Managing the Volunteer Force which include;

- Safer recruitment process (chapter 4)
- Guidance on receiving and responding to referrals (chapter 5)
- Managing & monitoring safe families support (chapter 6)

Role Specific Handbooks which include;

- Family coach handbook (Chapter 7)
- Host family handbook (Chapter 8)
- Family friend handbook (Chapter 9)

In addition the final U.K. manual entitled Additional Policy Guidance includes important policy and procedure relating to safeguarding policy and guidance for volunteers, dealing with an allegation of abuse, guidance for making case notes which includes; lone working, volunteer journaling, guidance for discipline, restraint and touch, guidance for transportation, policy on smoking, guidance on sports and leisure activities, guidance on private fostering, internet and social media/social networks policy, whistle-blowing policy, policy on dealing with complaints, policy and guidance on information and data management.

These HR policies can be obtained through contacting Safe Families for Children Wales at wales@safefamiliesforchildren.com or by telephoning 02921 660555.

2.2.1 Safeguarding Officers

Every week Safe Families for Children Wales will deal with dozens of families in crisis and as we grow this number will soon become hundreds. At any time concerns may arise that a child has suffered or is suffering harm as a result of abuse or neglect or that a vulnerable adult is being abused or exploited in some way. Therefore, experienced safeguarding officers have been appointed in each region across the UK to help the whole workforce, staff and volunteers, to respond appropriately.

Safe Families staff and volunteers are made aware of who they should report any safeguarding concerns to as part of their compulsory induction and training. At the time of publishing the named Safeguarding Officer for Wales is Deborah Smith, Senior Family Support Manager.

The safeguarding officers report to the regional management group in Wales. The Programme Manager/Chief Executive for the Wales reports to the U.K. Head Office in Durham.

2.2.2 Procedural Differences in Handling Children and Vulnerable Adults

The definition of a child in Wales in the context of social care, is a person from birth up to the age of 18 years or up to the age of 25 if the child/young person has a disability or has been in care of the local authority and requires certain ongoing education and accommodation services. Safe Families for Children Wales will provide support to children aged 10 years or
under or for a teenager if they are part of a younger sibling group.

Underpinning Wales approach to safeguarding children is the importance placed on children’s rights. Welsh Government has implemented a framework ‘Children and Young People; Rights into Action’ 2004 which actively encourages local authorities, health boards and third sector providers (including charities) to work in partnership to ensure that children have a say and a strong voice in the way that services are organized and delivered with specific focus on empowering children who experience poverty, disability or difficult family circumstances.

The rights-based approach in Wales has its roots in the ‘United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child’ (UNCRC). Wales is the first country in the UK to incorporate the UNCRC into its domestic law through the ‘Children and Young Persons Measure (Wales) Measure’ (2011). Progress on how well publically funded services are doing in delivering a rights-based approach to children in Wales is measured by the Children and Young People Wellbeing Monitor. The monitor is based on seven core aims. There is an expectation that any publically funded services for children in Wales should be based on meeting outcomes to achieve these aims. The aims are for children to have:

1. A flying start in life
2. A comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
3. The best possible health free from abuse, victimization and exploitation
4. Access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
5. A chance to be listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognized
6. A safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing
7. Not to be disadvantaged by poverty.

Two key policies for safeguarding children in Wales are the ‘Safeguarding Children: working together under the Children Act’ (Welsh Government 2004) and ‘The All Wales Child Protection Procedures,’ (2008). All volunteers who have been successfully vetted to volunteer for Safe Families for Children Wales will be given information and (where appropriate) additional training in the above policies as they relate to the specific volunteer role.

Adult social care thresholds in Wales are based on whether a person has a physical, sensory, learning, cognitive or mental health disability; a chronic long-term and debilitating health condition; a progressive or terminal illness or physical or mental frailty as a consequence of the aging process. The disability, health condition or frailty has to be substantial and long-term (unless terminal illness with less than 12 months to live) and has to have an effect on the person being able to carry out day-to-day activities such as personal care, self-nourishment/eating, household tasks and getting around in the community.

Addiction to alcohol and substances and domestic violence in Wales is considered as a different vulnerability. The ‘Child and Family (Wales) Measure’ (2010) has been established with specific services to support families and children impacted by addiction and violence within the home. People with addiction and alcohol and substance dependency or effected by addiction may be eligible for separate specialist services in Wales under the umbrella of Integrated Family Support Services which are jointly managed and jointly funded health and social care services.

Safe Families for Children Wales will be working in close contact with Children and Young People Social Services; Health and Social Care Integrated Family Support Services and where
appropriate Adult Community Care Services. Safe Families for Children Wales will not be able to provide personal care to adults.

Ultimately Safe Families want to ensure that all the parents and carers that we interact with are safeguarded from harm, as well as their children. Therefore staff and volunteers should:

- Be alert to the vulnerability of the adults we support, they are in a stressful situation and such their ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or exploitation may be reduced.
- Never take advantage of, or exploit the vulnerable position of a parents/carer who is trusting us to support them / their child.
- Discuss any concerns that a vulnerable adult or an adult experiencing vulnerability has been or is being abused as soon as possible with your family coach or family support manager.

It is important therefore to acknowledge that the same safeguarding policy principles (a-n) apply, their application will need to be considered and adjusted on a case by case basis. For example we would appropriately attune our approach to:

- A young mum with a chronic mental health condition that we suspect is subject to domestic violence
- A 3 year old boy suspected of suffering emotional abuse from a close family member
- An 10 year old girl displaying overt an inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Concern that an ageing grandparent is being physically harmed by a teenage grandchild they have guardianship of

Variables would be likely to include; methods of communication used with the individual concerned, the extent of consultation with parents or primary carers, and the degree to which the individual may be expected to resist or co-operate with any measures to be taken.

**The influence of adults in positions of power:**
Children from families facing crises may have already suffered significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. Once they are outside their normal home situation, with new carers giving dedicated time to them, they may become more open to speaking about what has taken place. Safe Families host families must be especially alert to this possibility.

Similarly Safe Families for Children family friends may in the course of their befriending a vulnerable adult hear about or see signs of abuse, either historic or current. As an adult the individual concerned may or may not be ready to face up to the reality of this abuse, and to take steps to deal with it. This is often the case with domestic violence.

The Safe Families approach to safeguarding is one of **never do nothing**. All concerns, however minor, ought to be noted and in many cases also reported and discussed with a supervisor such as a Safe Families for Children family coach or family support manager.

### 2.3 Recognising Abuse and Abusers

#### 2.3.1 The Challenge of Recognising Abusers

Those regarded as an abuser might be anyone including family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers and fellow service users, neighbours, friends and associates.

Abuse may be perpetrated by someone in a position of power or authority who uses his or her position to the detriment of the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of a vulnerable person.
Abuse may take place in any context such as; in the home, school, church, hospitals, and other places that are often assumed safe or indeed in public places.

### 2.3.2 Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

If there are concerns about a child displaying any of the indicators (below), volunteers are expected to contact a Safe Families for Wales safeguarding officer who is the family support manager. If the family support manager is unavailable such as during out of hours, volunteers will need to contact a safeguarding officer within the local authority. All volunteers will be given contact details of the safeguarding officers in Safe Families for Wales and the Children Social Services Intake Team or First Contact Team number for the child and family that they are supporting and the out of ours Emergency Duty Team (EDT) contact numbers.

Indicators can be *physical* such as marks and bruises; *behavioural* such as aggressive or withdrawn or secretive such as *disclosures* where a child tells a volunteer something that indicates abuse, or *presentation/appearance* such as being unkempt or dirty.

The following section summarises helpful guidance given to schoolteachers on this subject:

- Some signs and symptoms are common to all forms of abuse such as low self-esteem and changes in behaviour.
- Clusters of signs and symptoms are particularly important rather than isolated instances although some signs on their own can be particularly significant.
- Significance should be attached to any mismatch between an injury and the account of how it happened.
- It is importance to consider the duration, intensity and frequency of the signs and symptoms.
- Staff and volunteers must record signs and symptoms, even if they have no proof that these indicate abuse such as information about when injuries occur an example would be after the weekend.
- Some forms of abuse have no overt signs. Young children often communicate their distress through their behaviour, whereas older children may become adept at hiding signs of abuse.
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults from different cultural backgrounds may communicate their distress in different ways.
- Bear in mind that what you observe is being filtered through your own personal circumstances, the society you live in, and your culturally and socially determined attitudes.
- On their own, the signs and symptoms do not necessarily indicate abuse, but they must be recorded as many cases of abuse are identified only when one person’s observation of apparently insignificant signs is considered alongside other information.

**NOTE: Safe Families for Children Wales**

Safe Families for Children Wales staff and volunteers will be expected to be familiar with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008) as it relates to their specific role as a volunteer. Parts 1 and 2 of the AWCPP is designed to help all people be able to identify signs and
symptoms of abuse. Part 2 of the procedures relates to ‘Everybody’s Responsibilities.’ Family coaches and host families will receive additional information to ensure that they are clear about their role in reporting any serious concerns to social services on occasions where formal social care intervention would be necessary.

Further resources

Key information resources for staff and volunteers working in Wales are:
- www.childreninwales.org.uk

2.4 Acting Upon Concerns of Potential Abuse

Given our prior discussion regarding procedural differences in handling children, vulnerable adults and adults with vulnerability due to addiction or domestic violence the following guidance indicates whether procedures are advised for children, adults or both.

2.4.1 Urgent Medical Attention

If a child or adult is suffering from a serious injury or health-related condition, medical attention must be sought immediately at the nearest Accident and Emergency unit (dialling 999 if paramedics/ambulance is deemed appropriate).

2.4.2 Listening and Responding to a Disclosure

When a child, young person or adult chooses to tell a Safe Families host family or family friend, about abuse they have suffered or are suffering, we call this a disclosure.

Disclosures may relate to abuse perpetrated by a family member or someone outside the family such as a teacher, youth leader, pastor or online ‘friend.’ No group of people is exempt from being abusers. All disclosures must be taken seriously.

NOTE: It is important that Safe Family for Children Wales volunteers read the summary below and follow the steps in the diagram on page 20:

- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling someone and advise them that you take what they are saying seriously.
- Calmly and carefully listen but do not press for information, ‘cross-examine’, or ask leading questions, as any leading questions may prejudice follow-up investigation by police or local authority safeguarding team.
- Don’t promise confidentiality, rather sensitively explain that you may need to let someone else know and outline what you are going to do next.
- If what the child is telling you is indicating that there is an immediate or imminent risk to the child’s safety, you must contact the Family Support Manager (FSM) immediately. The FSM will have an established link into Social Services as part of the Safe Families for Wales Partnership
Agreement with that Local Authority.

- If the allegation relates to somebody working within Safe Families for Children Wales or relates to a Safe Families volunteer such as a Family Coach, you have the right to contact Social Services directly yourself. The contact details for Social Services will be given to you prior to an assignment for befriending or hosting.
- You will also be given a contact number for Safe Families for Children Head Office in Durham and you will need to let them know you have contacted social services. This second call is because it may be necessary to suspend the member(s) of staff from working duties whilst the investigation is taking place.
- If there is no immediate or imminent risk or danger and the issue does not relate to a Safe Families member of staff or volunteer you should complete the sensitive information report from www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual using the child’s own words to describe the alleged abuse or concern. This should be completed the same day as the allegation is made.
- Forward the completed form to your Family Coach or Family Support Manager in an envelope marked ‘confidential,’ or via a password protected email. The Family Support Manager will take forward the necessary action to address the issue.
- Be aware that the information you have is highly confidential and should only be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis.
- The Family Support Manager will need to decide what action to take in liaison with any other relevant persons. The category of abuse and the current level of risk to the child, young person or vulnerable adult will be taken into account when making this decision.
- If after talking to a child about a sensitive issue or following a disclosure; you as a volunteer feel upset or need debriefing, you should seek help from your Family Coach or the Family Support Manager. If you have gone directly to Social Services as the concern relates to Safe Families Wales; Social Services will advise you on what support is available to you.

2.4.3 Acting on Other Concerns of Abuse

If concerns of abuse do not directly arise from a verbal disclosure from the child or vulnerable adult the reporting process will be very similar. The sensitive information form also allows for the description of bruising, injury, peculiar behaviour or the witnessing of troubling incidents.

Safe Families for Children Wales staff will advise volunteers and follow the procedure for responding to a disclosure as outlined in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures, Part 2 ‘What to do if a child tells you they or another person is being abused,’ and/or ‘Behavior of any adult or colleague (including members of the public) towards children or young people which causes concern.’

NB: Volunteers in Wales must follow the process outlined in the flow chart on the following page for acting on concerns of potential abuse, allegations or disclosures. The process is a summary of the recommendations in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. This has been adapted for use by Safe Families for Children Wales staff and volunteers.
2.4.4 **Action Flow Chart for Serious Concerns and Disclosures for Volunteers in Wales** (Ref: Adapted from the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008)

**STEP 1**
Calmly listen to the child and reassure them that you take what they are saying seriously. Do not promise to keep the information secret or confidential. *(NB* If there is an **Immediate or Imminent** risk of harm you must report the matter straight away).*

**STEP 2**
Keep the communication open but do not prompt or ask leading questions. Do not interrupt when the child/vulnerable adult is recalling significant events. Do not make the child repeat their account.

**STEP 3**
When the child has finished speaking, explain what actions you must take in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child/vulnerable adult.

**STEP 4**
As soon as possible/within 24 hours write down what the child has said to you using the exact words if possible. Then complete the ‘sensitive information’ form and attach the notes you have written to the form and pass on to the Family Support Manager *(unless the concern is in relation to a Safe Families member of staff or volunteer – social services will advise you in these circumstances).*

**STEP 6**
The Family Support Manager will contact Social Services *(unless you have contacted social services and SFFC Head Office yourself).* Disclosures and serious concerns will be investigated by appropriately trained personnel within Children and Young People Social Services. Staff and volunteer notes must be clear and factual. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator. Any concerns raised by a volunteer or a child will always be taken seriously.

**IMMEDIATE OR IMMINENT RISK TO CHILD?**
You must contact the Family Support Manager immediately who will contact the main link in Children Services. If you are unable to make contact with the FSM you must contact social services. **Refer immediately to step 5.** If the concern or allegation is in regard to a Safe Families for Wales staff member or volunteer – you have the right to go directly to Social Services yourself. You will be given contact details to ring for circumstances such as this prior to the hosting or befriending assignment. **Then go to step 4.**

**Note:** The above process would be the same if it was a vulnerable adult making a disclosure. The only difference is that the contact with Social Services would be via the Protection of Vulnerable Adult (POVA) lead.
2.4.5 Information Sharing with Parents or Carers Prior to Referral to Local Authority Social Services

When concerns about potential abuse are considered serious enough to be referred to the local authority safeguarding team Safe Families Wales staff or volunteers are normally expected to discuss any concerns with the family and seek their agreement for a referral to be made. However, discussing with the parent the intention to refer should only be done where such discussion will not place a child at increased risk of harm. For example, we would not seek a parent’s consent to refer a child if:

- The parent is implicated in the abuse
- We believe that the parent is intentionally covering up abuse, out of fear or collusion
- The child may be put at further risk such as physical abuse as a punishment for ‘grassing’
- The perpetrator may be alerted and possibly take action to destroy evidence
- The safety of anyone else, including the referrer is likely to be put at risk
- Situations where there is an indication of fabricated or induced illness

2.4.6 Additional Factors Regarding Potential Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

Safe Families staff and volunteers will ask the permission of the vulnerable adult they are worried about before sharing any information about or acting upon their situation with others. Exceptions to this rule would be situations where others may also be at risk of abuse, or the person is not able to make their own decisions because of lack of mental capacity.

Consideration should be given to the following questions in order to determine whether or not the local authority or police should be involved:

a) Has a crime been committed?
b) Is the individual in need of protection?
c) Is the individual in need of further support regarding their vulnerability and/or in coping with the impact of the situation?

2.4.7 Making a Referral to Local Authority Social Services

Where a disclosure or serious concern is raised, Safe Families for Children Wales staff must not delay in contacting the children social services or adult social care services (for a vulnerable adult) of the local authority where the child or vulnerable adult is permanently resident.

Each volunteer will have access to a family support manager within Safe Families for Children Wales to contact to provide guidance and support. The volunteer will also be given information on the telephone contact details of the emergency duty team (EDT) to contact if there are concerns that arise outside of office hours.

The volunteer will have support from the family support manager after contact has been made with EDT as soon as the volunteer contacts the Safe Families for Children Wales office the next working day (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm). The details of the family support manager and EDT social work team will be written on the Safe Families child profile sheet which is given to host families and family friends at the point of a match being made with a volunteer.

Family support managers and family coaches are expected to plan ahead for this eventuality ensuring that they have the relevant names and contact numbers of local safeguarding teams for quick retrieval.

It is the responsibility of the person making the referral to coordinate the following information before or at the same time as contacting social services safeguarding teams:
• Obtain written details of concern or disclosure, signed and dated by the person expressing the concern using the Safe Families for Children sensitive information form and link with any verbatim notes taken at the time
• Verbatim notes taken immediately after or within 24 hours of the serious concern, allegation or disclosure must be given to the family coach or family support manager to be scanned into the Safe Families for Children database alongside the sensitive information form. The written information will be forwarded to the appropriate safeguarding team within Social Services
• Acknowledge receipt of and date the written details came in with the person who has raised the concern
• Add notes from follow-up discussions about the matter to the relevant record on the Safe Families for Children database, recording decisions with the rationale for those decisions

A phone call may be made to children social services intake or first contact teams for advice and guidance on any cases which may be considered borderline for a referral. It is not necessary to give the name of the child or family when seeking this advice.

Advice can also be sought out of hours from the emergency duty team (EDT). All staff and volunteers in direct contact with children and vulnerable adults are advised to put the EDT number in their phone and their manual contacts list for ease of access.

Members of the public who refer to children’s social services can request that they remain anonymous for this referral. Where children are receiving volunteer support from Safe Families for Children Wales, the charity will be identified as the referrer.

2.4.8 Further Responsibilities of Safe Families as Referrer

The fact that abuse has been reported does not remove the responsibility Safe Families for Children Wales to continue to support the protection of the child or vulnerable adult in question. Safe Families for Children Wales will continue to work collaboratively with children’s social services and adult social care services (where appropriate), making sure that the roles of staff and volunteers are understood in the circumstances and that together the best arrangements are made for the continuing safety of the child and/or vulnerable adult.

Where there are differences of opinion between a family support manager and a volunteer about making a referral to social services, the Programme Manager/Chief Executive will consider and make a decision in order that appropriate action can be taken.

Detailed records of referrals, outcomes and reason will be kept on the Safe Families database and every effort will be made to work with other agencies to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded from harm.

2.4.9 Safeguarding - child to child

Safe Families for Children Wales is aware that host family volunteers may have children of their own. There is a responsibility to safeguard the children within that host family as well as the child/children being placed with them. For example a Host Family with a 4 year old and an 8 year old may offer to host a 10 year old for a long weekend. The host family ought to build in appropriate boundaries for managing any risks identified or perceived. Host families with children ought to prepare their children, age-appropriately for a visit, from the point of view of helping them understand the importance of privacy boundaries and behaving appropriately.
In response to a specific child – child incident

If a child being hosted by a host family has behaved in an inappropriate way towards a child within the host family or visa versa, whether sexually, physically or emotionally, then the host family should work through the following questions with the family support manager, taking any appropriate decisions and planning appropriate actions:

- How serious was the incident?
- To what extent was the action malicious or premeditated?
- Is it appropriate for the child to remain in the host family home or will he/she need to return home or be found another placement?
- How has the incident affected the child concerned?
- Does the child who has been affected need further support to process what has taken place?
- Do the parents of the child affected need to talk through and process what happened?
- How will Safe Families for Children Wales inform the placing family of the incident?
- What are the potential risks to other children in the future?
- Does the behaviour indicate new concerns regarding the child who was referred to Safe Families that need to be shared with other agencies? If so, decisions must be made as to the appropriate way in which this is done. This will depend on the nature of the behaviour.

2.5 Allegation of Abuse against a Safe Families Team Member

2.5.1 Allegations

It is important for all involved with Safe Families for Children Wales to be vigilant as abusers may seek access to children by infiltrating organisations such as ours in both staff and volunteer roles. In this sense we must be willing to ‘think the unthinkable’ such as one of our colleagues may have harmed a child or exploited a vulnerable adult.

Safe Families for Children’s procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, and the need to protect staff and volunteers from unfounded or malicious accusations. They apply to any allegation made against anyone with a role within Safe Families, whether as an employee or a volunteer.

Allegations may concern:

- Behaviour, intentional or otherwise that has harmed, or may harm a child.
- A criminal offence against, or related to, a child (including taking indecent images)
- Inappropriate behaviour towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.
- Blurring of the boundaries of a relationship to the extent that concerns of grooming, manipulation and/or coercion have arisen.
- Signs or patterns that suggest that organised abuse involving a number of perpetrators may be happening
- A current or historical issue, with the latter requiring the same approach as the former.

There are a number of sources from which a complaint or an allegation might arise including:

- A child
- A parent or other adult
• A member of the public
• A colleague (whistle-blowing)
• A disciplinary investigation

**NOTE:** As a charity working within the children’s sector Safe Families for Children Wales is also bound to comply with protocol set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) regarding allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers working with children and families in the community.

The detailed process of how we will handle enquiries into allegations made against staff or volunteers is described in manual 4 (Chapter 11) this includes:

  - Whose responsibility is it to handle the allegation?
  - Suspension, and other considerations relating to employment
  - Concluding the enquiry into an allegation
  - Incorporating lessons learnt
  - Action in respect of unfounded or malicious allegations
  - Managing adverse publicity generated by the allegation
  - Flow Chart
2.6 Safeguarding Reference Policies Available

In addition to the concise policy framework set out in this chapter, Safe Families has more detailed policies on a number of different aspects of safeguarding and operational management. These can be found in Manual 4 ‘Reference Policies’ along with a Glossary and complete document index. The policy list consists of:

Chapter 11 Reference Safeguarding Policies
11.1 Safeguarding Policies and Guidance for Volunteers
11.2 Safeguarding Policy: Headline Statements
11.3 Dealing with an allegation of abuse against Safe Families team members
11.4 Guidance for Making Case Notes and Volunteer Journaling
11.5 Guidance for Discipline, Restraint and Touch
11.6 Guidance for Transportation of Children
11.7 Policy for Restraint of a Child
11.8 Policy on Smoking
11.9 Guidance on sports and leisure activities
11.10 Guidance on Private Fostering
11.11 Policy on Communication Methods
11.12 Internet and Social Media / Social Networks Policy
11.13 Whistle-blowing policy
11.14 Policy on dealing with complaints
Chapter 3 Organisational Structure

3.1 How Safe Families is structured

3.1.1 A charitable company limited by guarantee

As a legal entity Safe Families for Children (Safe Families) is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It therefore benefits from the complementary skills offered by a board of Trustees offering guidance and oversight to an Executive Chairman and a Chief Executive. In terms of its day-to-day life, the charity functions through a dedicated team of full time staff facilitating a much wider network of volunteers who give direct support to families.

3.1.2 Organisational Chart UK

NOTE: Wales is an independent registered charity which is part of a UK franchise. The Safe Families for Children model for volunteer service delivery is the same for Wales as the rest of the UK. In terms of the governance and reporting at UK level - Wales is considered to be an SFFC region. The structure within the region is exactly the same in Wales as indicated in the example of the North East (above).
3.1.3 The key volunteer roles

The principal volunteer roles within the life of the organisation are listed below.

1. **Host Families.** A family, couple, or in certain circumstances single adult, screened and trained, who open their home to care for a child on a short-term basis while the parents receive the help they need. Parents remain in control, with parental responsibility; the Host Family giving supplementary support.

2. **Family Friends.** A trustworthy and caring individual, willing to befriend a parent who is facing various challenges; supporting and encouraging them both practically and emotionally; helping them to envision and reach towards goals in life. Some Family Friends may help a Host Family if they are looking after a child for more than a few days; others may help parents by providing daytime childcare, or transport for a child.

3. **Family Coaches.** Family Coaches are recruited on the basis of their qualifications and experience in social care support and as such are a highly skilled volunteer member of the Safe Families team. The Family Coach reports to the Family Support Manager and is given delegated supervisory responsibility. Their role is central to the co-ordinating Safe Families for Children’s involvement with families, especially when multiple volunteers are involved.

4. **Resource Friends.** Volunteers who offer help such as donations of hardware, clothing or furniture. They may also offer services and practical jobs such decorating, gardening, hairdressing or administration support. In Wales, ‘service provider’ resource friends will be DBS checked.

**NOTE:**

Full volunteer role descriptions can be found at [www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual](http://www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual)
The full expression of Safe Families support to a family could then look like this:

*Not every family will need all support roles to be put in place.

3.1.4 Church Support and Co-ordination

Churches play a vital role in supporting the network of volunteers. Their commitment to their local community, and wider involvement in the life of families from the community, from cradle to grave, sets the work of Safe Families in a wider holistic context. Many local churches are now appointing a Safe Families co-ordinator as a way of integrating Safe Families into the congregation.

3.1.5 Safe Families National HQ

The Safe Families National Office is based in Durham and provides specialised functions to the operational regions and local sites. This support can be summarised as assistance with:

- Operations management
- Technology support
- Safeguarding standards
- Financial management
The National Office is directly overseen by the Chief Executive.

3.1.6 Safe Families around Great Britain

Safe Families has now expanded across the UK. Wales and Scotland are independent registered charities who provide the same ‘Safe Families for Children’ model within a national franchise agreement. Differences in Wales and Scotland relate to devolved legislative powers. Health, Social Care and Education in Wales are regulated by Welsh Government. Differences relate to policy and legal context but do not fundamentally change the essence of the operational service delivery of the Safe Families for Children model.

Each distinct Safe Families operation is referred to as a ‘site’. Each site is the responsibility of a Safe Families Programme Director whose role is to ensure the safe and smooth running of Safe Families in that geographic area, which may be a town, city, or county. Each site is supported by a small management board consisting of leaders and professionals from the area who are willing to volunteer their time in this capacity.

In England Safe Families is operational in the 12 North East local authority regions of Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton and Sunderland.

3.2 Board of Trustees and Advisory Group

Safe Families recognises the importance of accountability and has a number of structures in place to ensure best practice in every aspect of its operation. This is vital:

- To maintain high standards in safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults.
- To ensure that the policies and procedures that have been put in place are fit for purpose and are being followed.
- To keep abreast of the demands upon the organisation and support ongoing development of personnel and systems.

Summary of levels of accountability

- The trustees of the registered charities have ultimate responsibility in law for the governance of that charity within their region/country and report to the charity commission.
- Regional management groups are responsible for Safe Families sites around the UK.
- Financial auditing is currently contracted to Ryecroft Glenton & co at UK level and Steve Ellem & Associates at a Wales level.
- Advisory Group (see below).

3.2.1 Advisory Group

An Advisory Group has been established and comprises of 10-15 people with expertise in relevant fields such as children’s social care, paediatrics, mental health, charitable governance, local government and local democracy.

The advisory group has no executive powers; it is purely advisory with the purpose of serving in a voluntary capacity. It meets 3 times a year to review and advise on:

- High level strategic issues.
- Policies and procedures.
- Independent assessment and structures.
- Assessing practice.
- Selected case studies.

As required, sub groups may be established to advise or review aspects of Safe Families such as:
- Recruitment of staff.
- Social care support for senior Safe Families Coordinators.
- Legal Advice.
- Responding to government guidance, requirements or law.

### 3.3 The key staff roles

The key staff roles are summarized below. Full role descriptions are available at [www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual](http://www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual)

**The Executive Chairman and CEO**
Both full time roles, working together to further the strategic aims of the charity.

The Executive Chairman has responsibility for matters of governance, legal compliance, financial auditing, franchising, major donor relationships and liaison with central government.

The Chief Executive has responsibility for leading and growing the team, organisational development, partnerships, safeguarding, marketing, and liaison with local authorities.

**Programme Director**
Responsible for the overall operation of Safe Families within a specific geographic location within the UK. The Programme Director for Wales is a senior role which requires a combination of leadership and management, as duties will involve oversight of both personnel and systems.

**Volunteer Managers**
Responsible for the recruitment, screening, assessment, training and ongoing encouragement of the volunteer force. Has strengths in communication, one to one, group work and confident to speak to larger audiences. A good networker who is tenacious in pursuing recruitment opportunities.

**Family Support Manager**
Have end-to-end operational oversight of all cases that Safe Families deals with, from initial referral, through matching and introducing volunteers, to deciding when outcomes have been achieved and the case can be closed.

**Referrals Co-Ordinator**
Handling incoming referrals. Being the point-person for incoming phone calls and emails from agencies working with at-risk families. Information gathering and screening according to pre-determined risk thresholds. Friendly but discerning and able to assist the Family Support Manager with decision making. A good organiser who can manage diaries and arrange introductions between those willing to provide the support and the family needing help.

**Suitability Assessors**
Play an important part in the volunteer recruitment process. A suitability assessor will have vocational experience in children’s social care or a related field. They visit the homes of
individuals and families wishing to become Host Families and Family Friends, interviewing them for approximately 1.5 hours and writing a report with recommendations for the Family Support Manager to whom they report. Suitability Assessors tend to work on a freelance or voluntary basis.

3.4 Working well with other agencies

3.4.1 5 Principles of working with other agencies

Safe Families for Children is a registered charity and is not part of any statutory body. However, in our support of families we will often need to work to complement parallel intervention by statutory services or other voluntary sector groups. The positive benefits of agencies working together for the benefit of children and families is well documented, but it is also accepted that partnership working is not without its challenges.

Therefore, Safe Families has the following principles for working relationships with other agencies:

1. Safe Families will seek to learn from other agencies – their knowledge and experience, to ensure that our operational processes remain of the highest quality.
2. Safe Families will share information with other agencies, within acceptable and legal limits, which may mean that parental consent will be required prior to certain case notes being released. By doing this we hope to avoid duplication and achieve better outcomes for children and families.
3. Safe Families will participate in local networking opportunities in order to help potential referrers to understand our services, our geographic reach and our thresholds of intervention.
4. Safe Families will endeavour to understand the local landscape of services for children in families in order to be effective at signposting families to types of support that Safe Families cannot provide.
5. Safe Families will uphold the integrity of its service being offered to parents on the basis of voluntary participation and will therefore seek to deter other agencies from referring to Safe Families for Children that may be engaging under coercion or duress.

Ultimately Safe Families is seeking a natural, relational community of support for families in need, especially who do not have the help of extended family or friends to care for and parent their children whilst additional stresses and needs are addressed. We recognise however that the families we serve often have multiple needs relating to both the children and the parents/carers – needs that may need specialist intervention beyond that which our network of volunteers can offer.

3.4.2 How Safe Families Wales relates to Key Stakeholders and Partners

Wherever it is located Safe Families for Children will seek to develop a constructive and mutually beneficial working relationship with the local authority within which it is operating.

In the planning stages of the launch of Safe Families for Children Wales there will be correspondence and meetings with high level representatives of Welsh Government including Assembly Members; Local Authority such as the Elected Mayor, Council Leaders, Chief Executive, Elected Members with portfolio for Children Services, Executive Director of Social Services and Heads of Children Services, Chairs of Local and/Regional Safeguarding Children’s Boards; Chief Executives and Executive Directors of Health Boards across Wales.
As Safe Families for Children’s services go live in an area the detail of the working relationship will need to be worked out with the relevant service managers and commissioning managers.

- Operationally it helps enormously for Safe Families to have 2 or 3 named contacts or ‘gatekeepers’ within the Local Authority through which the working relationship can be transacted.
- Occasional roundtable meetings (3 - 4 a year) involving a select group of senior staff from the council also assist greatly with communication, feedback, and the strengthening of the working relationship.
- Information about Safe Families for Children in Wales will be distributed around relevant staff at the Local Authority, in particular within Children’s Social Services; First Contact and Intake Teams, Safeguarding Teams, Integrated Family Support Services, Disabled Children Teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Teams, Team Around the Family Teams and other teams who provide social care to children. Safe Families for Children Wales will also utilise opportunities to provide information via Welsh Children Information websites targeted at children and families.
- Staff from Safe Families may be invited in to give talks to specific teams within children’s social care or health and social care integrated teams in Wales, as well as to answer questions to develop dialogue around specific policies and priorities, and to establish thresholds for referrals.
- Safe Families will make its Safeguarding and Operations Manual available for scrutiny by the Local Authority. Typically the manual will be reviewed by either the LADO or a business manager working on behalf of the LSCB.
- It is likely to be the case that funding becomes allocated to Safe Families by the Local Authority to undertake pre-planned work with targeted families and / or in targeted communities. In this case the requirement for monitoring, evaluation and feedback is likely to be increased.

**NOTE:** Detail of Safe Families for Children’s incoming referral process is contained in Chapter 5 of this manual, entitled ‘Receiving and Responding to Referrals’.

### 3.4.3 Signposting to Other Services

In Wales it is the role of the family support manager to assist the referred family in considering their additional support needs, and to signpost to other services as appropriate. This is a role that will be picked up by the family coach when they have received appropriate training or mentoring. Examples might be to access specialist help with a drug or alcohol problem, to seek counselling following a situation of domestic violence, or to access services for a child’s specific needs such as autism or dyslexia.

In Wales, if the issues that the child is facing are recognised by the family Support manager or family coach as escalating to the point of reaching the threshold for statutory intervention, then they should contact with the Children Social Services First Contact or Intake Team for the area that the child is permanently resident. If the escalating circumstances are outside of office hours, the family support manager or family coach will contact the emergency duty team (EDT). Information on the child will be passed on to the relevant local authority using the Forward Referral Form (available at [www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual](http://www.safefamiliesforchildren.com/manual)).
3.4.4 Registration and Inspection

Safe Families is committed to complying with best practice within the children’s sector and believes that its systems are of a very high standard and entirely fit for purpose.

In Wales social care services are inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) and the Health Boards are inspected by the Health Inspectorate for Wales (HIW). Where services are jointly managed and funded, inspectors from both are involved in reviewing services. Inspection applies to regulated activity.

At the time of writing, advice has been sought about family hosting as children stay overnight and for up to 28 days with a host family. The advice given is that host families should be safely recruited and vetted (ref: chapter 4 on ‘Safer Recruitment Process’). The advice on registration is that host families do not need to be inspected on the basis that the short term hosting is by mutual agreement with a parent who maintains parental responsibility and the volunteer family; and the hosting assignment is for a short period of no longer than 28 consecutive days per annum and there is no financial remuneration for host families.

3.5 Insurance Indemnity and Legal Protection

Safe Families is covered by a comprehensive Social Welfare insurance product underwritten by Markel International Insurance Co. Ltd. renewed annually each April.

Employers’ Liability

Safe Families for Children has employers’ liability according to the requirements of the Employers’ Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

The maximum cover within the insurance policy is £10,000,000

General (Public and Products) Liability

Safe Families for Children as the following limits in its public and product liability:

£5,000,000 in any one occurrence of Public Liability.

£5,000,000 in any one insurance period of Product Liability.

Who is covered by the insurance?

The insurance covers all ‘members’ including directors, trustees, staff, volunteers and self-employed contractors. The policy is fully inclusive of Professional Indemnities and associated Legal Protection should a case be brought against Safe Families or any of its members.

Upon completion of the training and vetting process volunteers become accepted as a bona fide part of the Safe Families operation. They are sent a certificate of accreditation as proof of this and thereafter benefit from the organisation’s insurance protection.

It is made clear to volunteers at their training that they need to consult their own Home and Vehicle insurers to cover breakages and accidents in the home or in the car as Safe Families for Children’s insurance will not cover these scenarios.

3.6 The Safe Families Database

Safe Families has invested a huge amount of time, energy and financial resource in the creation of a bespoke database fulfilling all the requirements of volunteer management, and the managing of the caseload of families being supported.
The database is designed with security in mind and involves various levels of protection and access according to the sensitivity of the data held, and the permission level granted to the user.


The Safe Families Database has been designed around the expectations of Safe Families Data and Information Management Policy, also available at the same location.