

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Ark Of Hope Foundation For All Nations

Last Updated: June 2025

1. Introduction

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we believe it is everyone's responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and to practice in a manner that protects them. Our commitment to effective child protection is an integral part of our broader mission to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Our approach to safeguarding is proactive, aiming to reduce the need for action to protect children from harm by promoting their welfare from the outset. We believe that all children and young people, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, sex, racial origin, religious beliefs, or sexual identity, have an equal right to be protected from abuse.

We are particularly mindful of the needs of disabled children and others who may be especially vulnerable. Children and young people with additional communication needs, such as those who speak English as an additional language, have learning disabilities, hearing impairments, autism, or who are non-verbal, have the same rights to have their needs met as any other child or young person.

In today's world, children can be exposed to a multitude of views and information from various sources, some of which may be radical or extreme. Radicalisation, the process through which an individual comes to support or engage in extremist ideologies, is a serious concern as it can lead to terrorism and is considered a form of harm.

Extremism, defined as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs, poses a significant threat. This includes calls for violence against members of the British armed forces (HM Government, 2011).

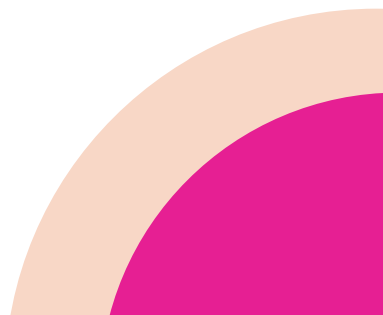
Tackling extremism is a shared responsibility. While the Government has assigned certain organisations in England, Scotland, and Wales the duty to identify and prevent vulnerable children and young people from being drawn into terrorism, every organisation working with children has a responsibility to protect them from harm, including radicalisation and exposure to extreme views (HM Government, 2013).

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we are committed to ensuring that our practices, policies, and procedures reflect this responsibility, creating a safe environment for all children and young people in our care.

2. Policy Statement

Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations adheres to the definition of a child as provided in The Children's Act 1989, recognising a child as any person under the age of 18. We acknowledge our duty of care to all children and young people we come into contact with, and their welfare is paramount in our practice.

To ensure the safety and protection of all children and young people, Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations is committed to adhering to the Child Safeguarding guidelines outlined in this policy. These guidelines are designed to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding and to ensure that every child and young person is protected from harm and abuse in all our activities and engagements.



2.1. Organisational Responsibilities

Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations recognises that protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare relies on shared responsibility and effective joint working between different agencies. We are committed to building constructive relationships between individual practitioners, as effective information sharing is pivotal for identifying abuse, assessing risk, and implementing necessary actions.

In order to safeguard children, Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations will:

- **Listen to Children and Respect Them:** We are dedicated to hearing children's voices and respecting their opinions and feelings.
- **Appoint a Child Safeguarding Lead:** We will designate a child safeguarding lead and a member of the trustee board to take lead responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in the organisation.
- **Develop Detailed Safeguarding Procedures:** We will produce and maintain comprehensive safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- **Provide Appropriate Training:** We will offer appropriate training on safeguarding and child protection procedures to all staff and volunteers.
- **Stay Alert to Potential Indicators of Abuse:** We will ensure that staff and volunteers remain vigilant to potential signs of abuse.
- **Recognise the Risks of Harm:** We will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the risks posed by individual abusers or potential abusers.
- **Enable Informed Responses:** We will empower all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child safeguarding issues.
- **Communicate Safeguarding Policies:** We will ensure that children, young people, and their families are aware of the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policies and know what to do if they have a concern.
- **Respond to Suspicions and Allegations:** We will take all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice seriously and respond swiftly and appropriately.
- **Contribute to Safeguarding Actions:** We will contribute to whatever actions are necessary to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- **Review Safeguarding Practices Regularly:** We will regularly review information on safeguarding concerns to continuously improve our practices.

2.2. Staff Responsibilities

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers. At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, it is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to gather information and report concerns, not to decide whether or not abuse has occurred. Staff and volunteers are not trained to make decisions about how best to manage safeguarding situations independently; any concerns identified must be reported to the safeguarding lead.

All staff providing support or coming into contact with children or young people will ensure:

- **Prioritisation of Direct Communication:** They prioritise direct communication and foster positive and respectful relationships with children.
- **Integration of Safeguarding into Care:** Safeguarding children and promoting their welfare will form an integral part of all elements of the support and care they offer.
- **Cooperation with Parents or Guardians:** They work cooperatively with parents or guardians, unless this is inconsistent with ensuring children's safety.
- **Maintenance of Appropriate Record Keeping:** They maintain appropriate record-keeping at all times to assess whether children are suffering or are likely to suffer harm.
- **Reporting of Concerns:** They report all concerns to the appropriate child safeguarding lead.

2.3. Manager Responsibilities

Managers at Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations have additional responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They are responsible for supporting staff to identify safeguarding concerns, providing additional oversight of ongoing safeguarding concerns, and supporting the child safeguarding lead with multi-agency work related to safeguarding children. Managers are not trained to make decisions about how best to manage safeguarding situations independently; actions must arise from consultation with the safeguarding lead.

All managers will ensure:

- **Support and Supervision:** They appropriately support and supervise staff.
- **Reflection on Best Practice:** They support teams to reflect on best practices and identify areas for improvement.
- **Training and Knowledge Gaps:** They identify gaps in knowledge, arrange training, and maintain training logs.
- **Adherence to Recruitment Policies:** They adhere to safer recruitment policies.
- **Accurate Record Keeping:** They maintain the safeguarding log accurately and in a timely manner.

2.4. Child Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities

The child safeguarding lead at Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations is Stella King. The child safeguarding lead's contact details are:

Name: Stella King, **Role:** Support Manager, **Mobile:** 07956120599, **Email:** stella@arkofhopefoundation.com

The child safeguarding lead has additional responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The child safeguarding lead is the point of contact for anyone at Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations who is concerned about a child. They are responsible for leading on:

- **Receiving Concerns:** Receiving concerns about a child.
- **Advising Staff:** Advising staff on managing safeguarding concerns.
- **Reporting and Record Keeping:** Reporting, storing, and retaining child protection records following the organisation's policies and procedures.
- **Policy Oversight:** Ensuring that the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose.
- **Training Oversight:** Ensuring that the organisation's training in relation to safeguarding is fit for purpose.

2.5 Recognising and Understanding Types of Abuse

Children and young people may experience a variety of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect, as well as online abuse and child exploitation.

- Physical abuse involves non-accidental physical harm such as hitting, shaking, burning, or causing injuries, including bruises, fractures, or burns.
- Emotional abuse (psychological abuse) includes persistent belittling, humiliation, intimidation, or rejecting behaviour that damages a child's emotional health and development.
- Sexual abuse covers contact and non-contact activities, including sexual assault, grooming, exposure to sexual activities, or use of sexual images. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) occurs when a child is coerced or manipulated into sexual activity in exchange for something they need or want (e.g. gifts, accommodation, money), and can occur both online and offline.
- Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs, such as inadequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or emotional attention; it may include sub-types like supervisory, educational, medical or emotional neglect.
- Online abuse includes cyberbullying, grooming, the sharing of sexual images, or other harmful conduct via digital platforms. This form of abuse can happen at any time and often leaves limited escape for the child.

These abuses may be present alone or in combination, and often overlap, especially neglect and emotional abuse. Indicators include unexplained injuries, sudden changes in behaviour or mood, fear, withdrawal, poor hygiene, inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour for age, frequent absence from school, or reluctance to return home. Even where a single sign appears, staff and volunteers should always follow reporting procedures without delay.

3. Principles

Safeguarding at Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations is underpinned by six unique key principles. These principles are central to our work with the children we support and are embedded into our procedures and practice:

INCLUSIVITY: We ensure that every child, regardless of their background or circumstances, feels valued, heard, and included in all aspects of our services.

DIGNITY: We respect and uphold the dignity of every child, ensuring their rights and personal boundaries are protected at all times.

RESILIENCE: We empower children to build resilience by providing them with the tools and support needed to cope with and overcome challenges.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: We actively involve local communities in safeguarding efforts, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and support for all children.

INNOVATION: We continuously seek innovative approaches to safeguard children, using the latest research, technology, and best practices to enhance our services.

TRANSPARENCY: We maintain open communication and transparency in all our safeguarding practices, ensuring that children, families, and stakeholders are informed and involved.

The purpose of all our services, whether meeting the needs of all children, children who are vulnerable, or children in need, is to achieve the best possible outcomes for each child, recognising that each one is unique. To achieve this, Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations' work with children is also underpinned by the outcomes for children and young people described in Every Child Matters (see Appendix 1 – Summary of Every Child Matters Outcomes).

4. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we understand the critical importance of ensuring the safety and well-being of children by employing robust recruitment practices. Our Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, in conjunction with our DBS Policy, outlines our commitment to implementing safe recruitment procedures for all staff and volunteers working with children and young people.

Key points of our recruitment procedures include:

- **Comprehensive Application Process:** All potential staff and volunteers are required to complete an application form, including a self-disclosure regarding any previous convictions.
- **Safeguarding Officer Consultation:** Advice will be sought from our Safeguarding Officer if a candidate has a criminal record unrelated to children or vulnerable adults before making any appointment decisions.
- **Reference Checks:** At least two references must be obtained and verified, and essential qualifications verified before any appointments are made.
- **Employment History Review:** Before appointment, applicants are required to provide reasons for any gaps or inconsistencies in their employment history, and appointments will not proceed unless satisfactory explanations are provided.
- **Face-to-Face Interview:** All candidates undergo a face-to-face interview conducted by at least two individuals.
- **Senior Management Engagement:** A member of our senior management team meets with each applicant during the recruitment process to ensure suitability.

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- **Identity Verification:** Identity is verified during the recruitment process by examining official documents such as birth certificates, driving licences, passports, or other photographic identification.
- **DBS Checks:** Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are conducted upon offer of a post and annually thereafter for all staff and volunteers working with children and young people.
- **Supervised Access:** No unsupervised access to children and young people is permitted until a satisfactory DBS check has been received, and all references have been reviewed and verified.

These procedures are designed to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding and ensure that only suitable and trustworthy individuals are entrusted with the care and well-being of children and young people under our supervision.

5. Training

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we prioritise the continuous development and competency of our employees and volunteers to ensure they are equipped to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, particularly in recognising and responding to child safeguarding concerns.

Our approach to training includes:

- **Pre-Selection Checks:** Prior to recruitment, all potential employees and volunteers undergo thorough pre-selection checks.
- **Comprehensive Induction:** Upon appointment, all staff members are subject to a supervised probationary period during which they receive a comprehensive induction. This includes familiarisation with our safeguarding policies and procedures, discussion of our approach to safeguarding, and signing the Ark of Hope Foundation Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding policy.
- **Initial Safeguarding Training:** During the probationary period, all staff members are required to complete initial safeguarding training to ensure they understand their roles, our organisation's responsibilities, and how to recognise and respond to concerns effectively.
- **Internal Safeguarding Workshop:** Staff members attend an internal safeguarding workshop where they receive support to understand their role within Ark of Hope Foundation, comprehend our legal responsibilities and processes, and learn how to collaborate effectively with colleagues and external agencies in safeguarding efforts.
- **Tailored Training:** We recognise that staff and volunteers have varying levels of contact with children and young people, and their training needs may differ accordingly. Training needs are reviewed regularly during supervision and appraisals, with additional training offered based on individual roles and development needs.
- **Ongoing Training Requirements:** All staff members are expected to undergo safeguarding training every three years, or sooner if significant procedural changes occur. Regular updates and multi-agency training sessions are provided to ensure staff members are equipped with the latest knowledge and best practices in safeguarding.

6. Information Sharing

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we recognise the critical importance of sharing information effectively to safeguard children and young people. Our approach to information sharing is guided by the principles outlined in the Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018).

Key Principles:

- **Necessary and Proportionate:** We ensure that decisions about information sharing are necessary and proportionate, considering the impact of disclosure on all parties involved. Information shared must be proportional to the need and level of risk.
- **Relevant:** Only relevant information is shared with those who require it to fulfill their roles effectively and make informed decisions.
- **Adequate:** Information shared is adequate for its purpose and of the right quality to ensure it can be understood and relied upon.
- **Accurate:** We ensure that information shared is accurate, up to date, and clearly distinguishes between fact and opinion. Historical information is clearly identified as such.
- **Timely:** Information is shared in a timely manner, particularly in emergency situations, to reduce the risk of harm. In urgent situations, seeking consent for information sharing may not be appropriate if it could cause delays and harm to a child.
- **Secure:** Information is shared in a secure manner in line with Ark of Hope Foundation's Data Management Policy to maintain confidentiality and protect privacy.
- **Recorded:** Decisions regarding information sharing are documented, including reasons for sharing or not sharing information, and what information has been shared and with whom.

Consent and Confidentiality:

All staff are trained to seek consent where individuals may not expect their information to be shared, and to share information with the informed consent of the child or family involved, where safe to do so.

The Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) regulate information sharing practices. Ark of Hope Foundation adheres to comprehensive Data Management Policy, Code of Conduct, and Confidentiality Guidance, ensuring compliance with legal requirements while prioritising child safeguarding.

In cases where there are concerns about sharing information without consent to safeguard a child, staff consult with the Safeguarding Lead for guidance and decision-making.

7. Local Authorities

When safeguarding concerns arise, Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations values efficient communication with local authorities to prioritise the safety and well-being of children and young people. All safeguarding referrals are conducted in accordance with the relevant local processes, as outlined below:

Safeguarding Children Partnership Stoke on Trent

If there are concerns about a child or young person, individuals can contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHaD) using the following contact details:

Office Hours (8.30am - 6pm Monday - Friday): Call 07956120599

Out of Hours: Dial 07956120599

Emergency: In urgent situations, dial 999

Upon making a referral, formal acknowledgment should be received within three working days of submitting the referral. If acknowledgment is not received within this timeframe, it is important to follow up and re-refer the matter to ensure timely action is taken.

8. Identifying Concerns about a Child's Welfare

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we understand that children may not always disclose abuse, which is why we prioritise identifying concerns about their welfare and taking appropriate action to ensure their safety. We focus on two key areas: identifying concerns and developing supportive services to encourage disclosures.

To empower our staff in recognising signs of potential abuse, we provide comprehensive training during their induction and ongoing supervision. We also emphasise the importance of record-keeping and information sharing within our organisation and with other agencies to identify patterns and share concerns effectively.

Utilising resources like the NSPCC guidance for professionals, our staff are equipped with the knowledge and tools to recognise indicators of abuse. Additionally, we acknowledge the importance of creating a safe environment where children feel comfortable disclosing any concerns they may have.

The NSPCC report "No-one Noticed, No-one Heard" highlights key factors that promote disclosure, such as intervention by others and changes in the nature of abuse. Our staff are trained to intervene by noticing changes in children's behavior and discussing them appropriately. Building trust with children involves actively engaging with them, spending time together, and demonstrating reliability.

While there may be concerns about directly asking a child if they are being abused, we believe it's essential to create opportunities for disclosure and reassure children that we are here to listen and support them.

9. Guidance and Decision Making

If any staff member or volunteer suspects that a child is at immediate risk, they must take immediate action and contact emergency services without delay.

If there are concerns about abuse or potential abuse, they must promptly discuss this with the Safeguarding Lead, who will determine the appropriate course of action in line with our policy. Any suspicion of significant harm should be reported via a Safeguarding Alert to the local authority children's social care services.

For any other concerns related to a child's safety and welfare, staff should discuss these with their line manager and escalate to the Safeguarding Lead if safeguarding concerns are identified.

Further guidance and information can be obtained from local safeguarding teams, NSPCC, police, and NHS community services with the approval of the Safeguarding Lead.

10. Barriers

At Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations, we understand that addressing concerns about abuse requires sensitivity and acceptance. To effectively safeguard children, we must recognise and overcome various barriers that may inhibit disclosure and action.

Barriers to Children Disclosing Abuse:

- **Fear of Threats:** Children may fear reprisals if they disclose abuse, especially if they have been threatened.
- **Fear of Separation:** Some children may fear being taken away from their home or caregiver if they disclose abuse.
- **Self-Blame:** Children may wrongly believe that they are to blame for the abuse.
- **Normalisation of Abuse:** Children may perceive the abuse as normal or believe that it happens to all children.
- **Emotional Reactions:** Feelings of embarrassment, guilt, or shame may prevent children from disclosing abuse.
- **Fear of Consequences:** Children may fear consequences such as not being believed or getting the abuser into trouble.
- **Communication Barriers:** Children with communication or learning difficulties may struggle to articulate their experiences.
- **Lack of Belief:** Children may fear not being believed if they disclose abuse.

Addressing Barriers:

- **Education and Awareness:** We address these barriers through comprehensive induction processes, customer handbooks, support sessions, and tailored awareness-raising sessions. We ensure that children's varying communication needs are met to provide a child-centered approach.
- **Empowerment and Support:** We empower staff to understand and address barriers through induction, supervision, and safeguarding sessions. Specific barriers, such as not having necessary information or difficulty believing a child's disclosure, are actively addressed.
- **Creating a Supportive Culture:** We foster an open and accountable culture where staff feel supported to address concerns and learn from mistakes. Staff are encouraged to take all allegations seriously and trust that their actions contribute to preventing abuse and promoting children's well-being.
- **Collaborative Approach:** We emphasise collaboration with other agencies to promote children's best interests and ensure accountability. Staff are equipped to navigate concerns sensitively and effectively, overcoming any stigmatisation fears associated with reporting abuse.

11. Procedure for Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

Upon receiving a disclosure of abuse, Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations follows a structured procedure to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. A flowchart supporting this procedure can be referenced in Appendix 2 – Flowchart for Responding to a Child Safeguarding Concern.

11.1. Receiving a Disclosure

When a child discloses abuse, it presents an opportunity to prevent further harm and provide comprehensive support to the child. It's imperative to handle disclosures with sensitivity and caution, avoiding leading questions or pressure that may disrupt the child's disclosure or compromise investigations.

Key Principles:

- **Believe the Child:** Staff should approach disclosures with belief and validation, affirming the child's courage in coming forward.
- **Take Action:** Immediate action must be taken in response to the disclosure to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.
- **Provide Emotional Support:** Emotional support should be secured for the child to help them cope with the disclosure and its aftermath.

Best Practices:

Avoid Leading Questions: Refrain from asking leading questions or pressuring the child for more information, especially in cases of sexual abuse. Instead, provide a supportive environment where the child feels safe to share.

General Inquiries: Ask open-ended, general questions such as "Is there anything else you want to tell me?" to encourage the child to share without feeling pressured.

Believe and Validate: Demonstrate belief in the child's disclosure and validate their experience to build trust and rapport.

Take Immediate Action: Act swiftly upon receiving the disclosure to ensure the safety of the child. Avoid delaying intervention or investigation.

Seek Emotional Support: Ensure that the child receives appropriate emotional support to help them process their experience and cope with any trauma.

Believe the Child

Create a safe space for disclosure: At Ark of Hope Foundation, we ensure children feel safe and reassured when they disclose their experiences. We listen attentively and calmly, reassuring them that their disclosure is valid, not burdensome, and not their fault.

Validate the child's experience: We accept the information provided by children without judgment, ensuring they feel believed and supported.

Respect confidentiality: We respect the confidentiality of the disclosure, ensuring children feel safe and protected.

Take Action

Promptly report disclosures: All disclosures are promptly reported to our safeguarding lead, ensuring swift action to address the situation.

Consistency in response: All staff members follow consistent procedures when receiving disclosures, ensuring clarity and trust in our actions.

Ensure appropriate communication: Children are kept informed about the process and their well-being is continuously monitored and addressed.

Emotion

Build trust and support: We prioritize building trust with children, providing them with a supportive environment to discuss their experiences. Honest and informative discussions empower children to make informed decisions and advocate for their best interests.

Advocate for the child: We support children in making formal disclosures and advocate for their best interests, reassuring them that they are not alone and that we are here to support them.

Encourage open dialogue: Open and honest communication helps children feel supported and empowered to discuss their experiences.

11.2. Collecting Information from a Disclosure

When gathering information from a disclosure, meticulous recording is essential to ensure accuracy and thoroughness. It's crucial to document the details promptly and comprehensively. Here's what should be included:

- **Child's particulars:** Name, age, and date of birth.
- **Contact details:** Child's address and telephone number for follow-up.
- **Nature of allegation:** Include specific details such as dates, times, any unique circumstances, and other pertinent information.
- **Account of disclosure:** Document the narrative provided by the person disclosing the abuse.
- **Child's perspective:** If the child did not report the abuse directly, document any conversations with them and their account of events.
- **Witnesses:** Details of any individuals who witnessed the incidents.
- **Consulted individuals:** Record anyone else consulted in relation to the disclosure.
- **Alleged abuser:** Details of the individual accused of perpetrating the abuse.
- **Emotional and physical presentation:** Record observations regarding the child's emotional and physical state.

11.3. Reporting a Disclosure

After receiving a disclosure, immediate action must be taken in accordance with our guidance and decision-making protocol:

- **Emergency services contact:** If there's reason to believe a child is at immediate risk, contact emergency services without delay.
- **Discussion with Safeguarding Lead:** Without delay, discuss the disclosure with the Safeguarding Lead.
- **Safeguarding alert:** Make a safeguarding alert to the relevant local authority children's social care services if significant harm is suspected or believed, following the procedures outlined in **Section 7: Local Authorities**.

11.4. Record Keeping

Effective record-keeping is integral to safeguarding children. Staff must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Document concerns and discussions about a child's welfare in writing.
- Reach a clear agreement on actions or decisions made during discussions, or document the decision not to take further action.
- Record actions taken and feedback from other agencies involved.
- Retain copies of safeguarding alerts and correspondence with statutory agencies for reference and accountability.

12. Procedure for Responding to Concerns About Abuse

A flowchart to support this procedure can be found in Appendix 2 – Flowchart for Responding to a Child Safeguarding Concern.

12.1. Identifying Concerns

Staff may identify concerns about children in the course of their work with them. All interactions must be recorded as part of the child's support logs, and staff working with a child should routinely review logs to identify concerns. Safeguarding must be discussed as part of team meetings and supervision, and staff should raise any minor concerns about children with their manager as part of their day-to-day work. If a staff member identifies that a child may be experiencing or is at risk of experiencing abuse, they should collate information about the concerns.

12.2. Collating Information About Concerns

The information regarding the concern must be thoroughly recorded. To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should be made at the time that a concern is identified, which should include the following:

- **Child's Details:** Name, age, and date of birth.
- **Contact Information:** Child's address and telephone number.
- **Nature of Allegation:** Include dates, times, any special factors, and other relevant information.
- **Indicators:** The indicators that led to the concern.
- **Child's Account:** Whether the child has been spoken to and, if so, the child's account of what has happened.
- **Witnesses:** Details of any witnesses to the incidents.
- **Consulted Individuals:** Anyone else who has been consulted.
- **Alleged Abuser:** Information about anyone alleged to be the abuser.

12.3. Reporting a Concern

Following the identification of a concern, a staff member must take action as outlined in Section 9: Guidance and Decision Making:

- **Immediate Risk:** Contact the emergency services without delay if they have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk.
- **Discuss with Safeguarding Lead:** Discuss the concern without delay with the Safeguarding Lead.
- **Safeguarding Alert:** Make a safeguarding alert to the relevant local authority children's social care services if it is believed or suspected that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm following the processes detailed in Section 7: Local Authorities.

12.4. Record Keeping

Effective record-keeping is integral to safeguarding children. Staff must adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Document Concerns:** Record in writing concerns about a child's welfare.
- **Document Discussions:** Record in writing discussions had about a child's welfare.
- **Clear Agreements:** Reach a clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action or that no further action will be taken at the close of any discussions.
- **Document Actions and Feedback:** Record actions taken and feedback from other agencies.
- **Retain Copies:** Retain copies of safeguarding alerts and correspondence with statutory agencies for reference and accountability.

13. Procedure for Responding to Disclosures or Concerns About Staff or Volunteers

When a staff member receives a disclosure from a child about abuse by a staff member or volunteer of the Ark of Hope Foundation, or identifies concerns about such individuals, they must follow the same procedure as for any other disclosure or concern. Staff should therefore adhere to Section 11: Procedure for Responding to Disclosures of Abuse or Section 12: Procedure for Responding to Concerns About Abuse as appropriate.

The Ark of Hope Foundation will thoroughly investigate any concerns raised about staff or volunteers in relation to the abuse of children. It may be necessary to suspend staff or volunteers while an investigation is carried out in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. If an investigation suggests that a criminal offence appears to have been committed or a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm from a staff member or volunteer, the matter will be referred to the police and a referral about a person in a Position of Trust (POT) made to the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Team.

Irrespective of the findings of social care or police inquiries, the Ark of Hope Foundation's Safeguarding Lead will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Safeguarding Lead will make a decision based on the available information, considering the balance of probability. The welfare of the child and young person will remain of paramount importance throughout.

Any staff member or volunteer who in good faith reports their concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or children will be fully supported and protected, in line with the Whistleblowing Policy.

14. Procedure for Reporting Incidents Involving Staff

Where any of the following incidents occur, staff should follow the Incident Management Policy and report the incident immediately to their manager and the Safeguarding Lead:

- A child is accidentally hurt by a staff member.
- A child appears to be sexually aroused by a staff member's actions.
- A child interprets something a staff member has said or done as inappropriate.
- Depending on the exact nature of the incident, it may be necessary to suspend staff or volunteers while an investigation is carried out, in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

15. Procedure for Responding to Concerns About or Disclosures Involving Another Child

When a staff member receives a disclosure from a child about abuse by another child, or identifies concerns about such abuse, they must follow the same procedure as for any other disclosure or concern.

Staff also have a duty to safeguard the child alleged or suspected of carrying out the abuse. It should be considered whether the concerns identified indicate that this child has also experienced abuse. If so, the procedure detailed in Section 12: Procedure for Responding to Concerns About Abuse should be followed.

In all cases, the welfare of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator must be carefully considered, ensuring appropriate support and interventions are in place for both parties. This holistic approach is vital in ensuring the safety and well-being of all children involved.

16. Procedure for Responding to Bullying

If bullying is suspected within the Ark of Hope Foundation, the procedure will follow the guidelines set out in Section 12: Procedure for Responding to Concerns About Abuse. All incidents of bullying must be taken seriously and handled with the same rigor and sensitivity as other forms of abuse, ensuring that the safety and well-being of the affected child are prioritised.

17. Procedure for Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation Concerns

If child sexual exploitation is suspected, the procedure detailed in Section 12: Procedure for Responding to Concerns About Abuse will be followed. Additionally, the Ark of Hope Foundation has a dedicated Child Sexual Exploitation Policy, which provides further guidance to staff in identifying and managing concerns related to child sexual exploitation. This policy outlines specific indicators of exploitation and provides protocols for intervention and support.

18. Procedure for Managing Ongoing Concerns

18.1. Internal Procedures

A flowchart to support this procedure can be found in Appendix 3 – Flowchart for Managing a Child Safeguarding Concern.



18.2. Children on Child Protection Plans

When the Ark of Hope Foundation becomes aware that a child in one of its services is subject to a Child Protection Plan, this information will be recorded by notifying the Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all relevant staff members are informed of the child's status and any necessary actions to support the child effectively.

If there is a change to the risk management plan of a child subject to a Child Protection Plan while the Foundation is working with the family, this change will be communicated to the project manager. However, the details of the new risk management plan will be recorded only in the appropriate risk management documents to maintain confidentiality and relevance.

18.3. Child Protection Conferences

The Ark of Hope Foundation recognises that multi-agency protection conferences are a critical component of the child protection process. Staff members involved in supporting a child or family subject to child protection proceedings will actively participate in these conferences, providing appropriate and timely information.

Before a child protection conference, staff will contact the social worker to announce their involvement with the family, request copies of reports, and seek an invitation to the conference if they have relevant information about the child or carer(s). If staff believe they possess valuable information for the conference, they should contact the conference chair in advance and request to be invited. This proactive approach ensures that the child's best interests are represented and that the Ark of Hope Foundation is effectively collaborating with other agencies to safeguard the child.

18.4. Advocacy

Children have a right to understand the statutory processes that are taking place and a right to complain if these processes are not being followed. Staff at Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations who support children receiving statutory services should be able to identify instances where services are not provided in line with statutory requirements. Children should be assisted in accessing advocacy organisations if they wish to make a complaint.

19. Procedure for Responding to Missing Children

If a child goes missing, the procedure outlined in Section 12 will be followed. Additionally, Ark of Hope Foundation for All Nations has a separate Missing Persons Policy that provides detailed guidance on how staff should respond to a missing child, including practical steps and reporting protocols.

20. Procedure for Storing Child Protection Records

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality for all involved. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following individuals:

- The Project Manager/Director of the respective department/Safeguarding Officer
- The person making the allegation
- Social services and police

Information must be stored securely, with access limited to designated personnel, in compliance with data protection laws.

Appendix 1 – Summary of Every Child Matters Outcomes for Ark Of Hope Foundation For All Nations

1. Be Healthy

- Physical Health: Encourage regular physical activity and ensure access to nutritious meals. Provide information and support for maintaining good health and hygiene.
- Mental Health: Offer emotional and psychological support through counseling services. Create a safe and supportive environment where children feel valued and heard.
- Health Education: Educate children on health-related issues, including substance abuse prevention and sexual health.

2. Stay Safe

- Safeguarding Policies: Implement and maintain rigorous safeguarding policies to protect children from abuse and neglect.
- Safe Environment: Ensure that all living and recreational spaces are safe, secure, and free from hazards.
- Risk Management: Conduct regular risk assessments and provide training for staff on safety procedures and emergency responses.

3. Enjoy and Achieve

- Education Support: Provide access to quality education and learning resources. Offer homework support and tutoring services.
- Extracurricular Activities: Encourage participation in sports, arts, and other extracurricular activities to foster personal development and enjoyment.
- Achievement Recognition: Celebrate and recognise the achievements and milestones of each child to build self-esteem and motivation.

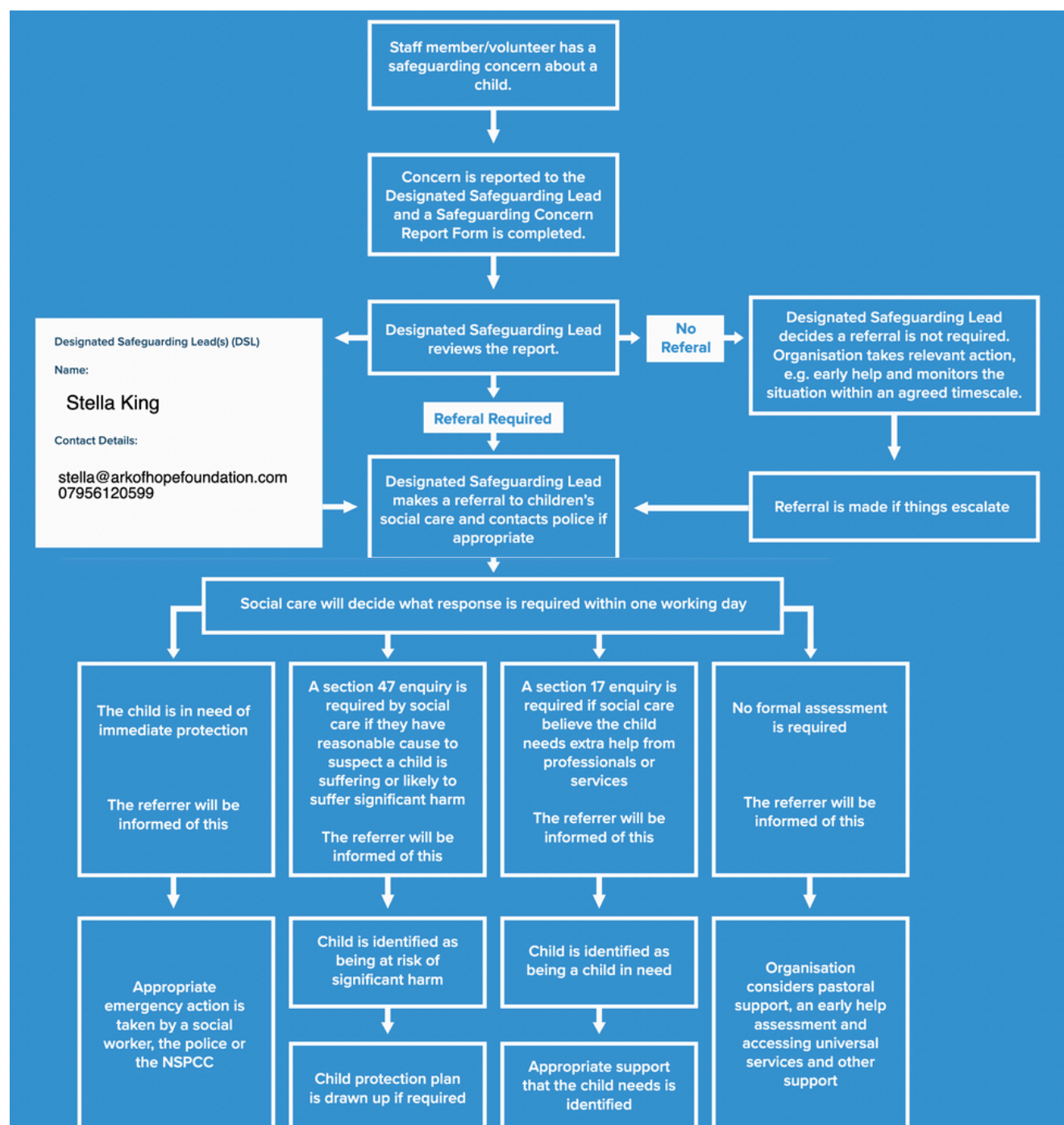
4. Make a Positive Contribution

- Community Involvement: Encourage children to engage in community service and activities that promote social responsibility.
- Personal Development: Support the development of social and communication skills through group activities and peer interactions.
- Empowerment: Involve children in decision-making processes that affect their lives and the community, promoting a sense of agency and responsibility.

5. Achieve Economic Well-Being

- Financial Literacy: Provide education on financial management, budgeting, and saving to prepare children for future independence.
- Career Guidance: Offer career counseling and support access to vocational training and higher education opportunities.
- Support Services: Ensure that children and their families have access to resources and services that address economic challenges and promote stability.

Appendix 2 –Flowchart for Responding to a Child Safeguarding Concern



Appendix 3 –Steps for Responding to a Child Safeguarding Concern

Step	Action	Next Step
Identify and Record Concern	Record all concerns and indicators according to safeguarding training.	Handle Disclosures Appropriately
Handle Disclosures Appropriately	Discuss concerns with the Safeguarding Lead.	Collate Relevant Information
Collate Relevant Information	Gather all relevant information and assess the situation.	Determine Immediate Danger
Determine Immediate Danger	Is the child in immediate danger?	- If Yes: Contact Emergency Services - If No: Develop Action Plan with Safeguarding Lead
Develop Action Plan with Safeguarding Lead	Work with the Safeguarding Lead to develop an action plan.	Make Referral to Local Authority
Make Referral to Local Authority	Refer the concern to the relevant local authority.	Provide Required Supporting Information
Provide Required Supporting Information	Supply all necessary information requested by the local authority.	Develop and Update Risk Management Plan
Develop and Update Risk Management Plan	Create or update a risk management plan to address the concern.	Implement Support Plan in Conjunction with Multi-Agency Plans
Implement Support Plan in Conjunction with Multi-Agency Plans	Provide support in alignment with any multi-agency plans in place.	Review and Monitor Concerns
Review and Monitor Concerns	Regularly review and monitor safeguarding concerns.	- Schedule Regular SLT Meetings for Updates - Close Case When No Longer a Concern - Update Records and Debrief