

# Safeguarding Children's Policy

*For the purposes of this policy,*

- *'Children' will refer to anyone under the age of 18 years of age, and will include children, young people, and adolescents. This will also apply to care leavers until they attain 25 yrs.*
- *'Thanet' shall mean Thanet Healthcare*
- *'Staff' shall mean paid staff, volunteers, and contractors*

## **Introduction**

Thanet is committed to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of all children who are under our care, or whom we may encounter through the nature of our activities. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and, we wholeheartedly recognise that every individual has a part to play in protecting children from harm, abuse, and neglect.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff associated with Thanet.

This policy sets out our strategic guiding principles, from which our local placements and services will take their lead.

## **Policy Statement**

Here at Thanet, we believe that every child has the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. We unequivocally prioritise the safety, well-being, and dignity of the children within our care or, whom we may encounter through the nature of our activities. We are resolute in our stance against any form of abuse or neglect.

## **Commitment**

Thanet will ensure that all measures are in place to protect children and respond to concerns appropriately. We will do this by ensuring that every part of our operations adheres to best practice in safeguarding.

We expect, and mandate, that all staff will uphold and reinforce this commitment. We ensure this by having comprehensive policies, procedures, and training which operationalise this commitment throughout all levels of our organisation.

**Please refer to Appendix A for supporting addendum which provides full details of how we will achieve this commitment**

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Thanet is committed to anti-discriminatory practice. We believe that all children have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect and harm regardless of their age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability.

When reviewing this policy, we thoroughly consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with respect to these protected characteristics, as per the Equality Act 2010.

We also recognise that vulnerable people from minority or disadvantaged groups may have additional needs when overcoming barriers to access Health, Education or Social Care services.

## **Legal Framework**

This policy adheres to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance which relates to the safeguarding and protection of children:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- UN Convention on Rights of the Child 1991 (UNCRC)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- General Data protection Regulation 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- FGM Act 2003
- Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation- procedural information (2014)
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015
- The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010

## **Associated policies, procedures, and practices**

Our framework for safeguarding children from harm is supported by other organisational policies, procedures and practices including:

- Safeguarding Children procedure
- Safeguarding Adults Policy and procedure
- Making a child safeguarding referral
- Information Sharing
- Safeguarding & safer recruitment
- Safeguarding Training

- Restraint reduction
- Code of Conduct
- Positions of Trust
- Allegations against Staff
- Whistleblowing
- Online safety acceptable use policy
- Health & safety
- Data protection & GDPR
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

**Please refer to Appendix B for further information and explanation of our legislative framework and associated policies, procedures, and practices.**

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or, when deemed necessary.

This policy was last reviewed/ revised on **11/9/2023**

This policy comes into force on **12/9/2023**

The date of the next review of the policy will be **11/9/2024**

The owner of this policy is Marie Williams, Interim Head of Safeguarding for Thanet

This policy is supported and approved by:

Clayton Bryce, Director of Thanet

Samantha Yeboah Buxton, Director of Thanet

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Christopher Yeboah, Director of Thanet

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### Important Thanet Contacts

Clayton Bryce, Director of Thanet; [clayton@valicity.co.uk](mailto:clayton@valicity.co.uk)

Marie Williams, Interim Head of Safeguarding (HoS); [marie@thesafeguardingcop.com](mailto:marie@thesafeguardingcop.com)

Arlene Hinds, Director of Human Resources for Thanet; [hr@valicity.co.uk](mailto:hr@valicity.co.uk)

Nitin Seeta, Principal Designated Safeguarding Lead (PDSL) for Thanet  
[nitin.seeta@valicity.co.uk](mailto:nitin.seeta@valicity.co.uk)

# Safeguarding Children's Policy

## Appendix A

### Addendum

#### **Our Commitment**

Thanet will ensure that all measures are in place to protect children and respond to concerns appropriately. We will do this by ensuring that every part of our operations adheres to best practice in safeguarding.

We expect, and mandate, that all staff will uphold and reinforce this commitment. We ensure this by integrating safeguarding across the organisation and ensure that individual and collective responsibilities are understood. This includes:

- Assurance, endorsement, and ownership by the Executive Leadership Team
- Up-to-date policies and procedures
- Safeguarding within Safer recruitment and vetting
- Prevention
- Staff induction and training
- Clear reporting and recording processes
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are investigated swiftly and thoroughly in conjunction with statutory agencies and with demonstrable outcomes.
- Learning and improvement
- Monitoring, audit, and quality assurance

#### **Recognising Signs of Abuse or Neglect**

All staff who have any form of contact with children will be trained to recognise the signs of all **10** categories of abuse and neglect, in particular:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect & Acts of Omission.

Staff will also learn how to recognise the signs of exploitation i.e., sexual, criminal, county lines.



## **The Safeguarding Team**

We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We all have a part to play when protecting children and promoting their safety and wellbeing.

That said, safeguarding is an important strategic matter, and our internal safeguarding structure reflects this. **Clayton Bryce, Director of Thanet** has overall Executive level responsibility and accountability for safeguarding within Thanet.

The Director is supported by **Marie Williams, Interim Head of Safeguarding (HoS)**. The HoS provides strategic level assurance of safeguarding compliance, internal arrangements, advice, and guidance to the organisation. In addition, the HoS also provides oversight of serious safeguarding concerns and incidents and leads on multi-agency working.

The HoS is supported by **Nitin Seeta, Principal Designated Safeguarding Lead (PDSL) for Thanet**. The PDSL is the lead for our team of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), who operate within each region of our organisation. Due to the nature of our work, at least the PDSL or one DSL will be on duty in any 24-hr period.

The PDSL/ DSL's are the first point of contact for any safeguarding related concerns regarding either children or adults. They provide advice and guidance to their colleagues and service area teams and support the HoS with operational safeguarding work.

## **Procedures for Reporting Concerns**

All concerns/ disclosures will be reported immediately to the PDSL/ DSL. The PDSL/ DSL will risk assess to decide what level of action needs to be taken.

In the event that the child is in immediate risk of significant harm, the Police will be called urgently via 999.

If there is no immediate risk of significant harm, and the risks to the child can be effectively managed by staff, the PDSL/ DSL will liaise with the HoS within 24 hrs.

The HoS will review the case and decide on how best to proceed. If the HoS is unavailable, **Arlene Hinds, HR Director of Thanet**, will be contacted for a decision.

Where a safeguarding alert to Children's Services is needed, our '[making a child safeguarding referral](#)' process will be followed, which aligns to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures for the relevant region. The relevant 'front door'/ Duty and Advice team/ MASH will be referred to and the DSL/ PDSL and the HoS will work proactively and collaboratively with external partners to ensure a multiagency response to safeguarding children is facilitated.

Confidentiality will be maintained, where at all possible. However, confidentiality must not override the child's rights to be protected from harm. If information sharing is necessary for safeguarding children, the relevant information will be shared with partner agencies, in line with our [information sharing policy](#).



## **Working Together in Partnership**

Thanet is committed to working in partnership with statutory partners such as the Police, Children's Social Care, Health, Education, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) and Local Safeguarding Practice Review Panels, in accordance with local procedures and thresholds and information sharing protocols. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and to protect all children.

## **Recruitment and Training**

In accordance with our [safeguarding & safer recruitment procedure](#), all staff will undergo a comprehensive recruitment process, including rigorous vetting and background checks.

We are conversant with the DBS process, and mandate that all staff undergo DBS checks, which are relevant to their role and type of contact with vulnerable groups e.g. staff whom we engage in regulated activity with children and/ or adults at risk, will undergo DBS checks to Enhanced with relevant Barred List level.

[Safeguarding training](#) will be mandatory for all new hires, and this will form part of their induction process.

Refresher safeguarding training will be conducted by all staff **annually**. Training will be relevant to their role. Effective training records will also be kept for each staff member, so that safeguarding training can be tracked, evaluated and monitored.

## **Code of Conduct**

Physical contact with children should be justified, proportionate, reasonable, necessary, and lawful.

Any form of physical restraint will be risk assessed and conducted in accordance with our [restraint reduction strategy](#).

We foster a culture where children are listened to and respected. Children will always be treated with dignity and all communication with children will be professional and transparent. All conduct will be in line with our [code of conduct policy](#).

## **Positions of Trust**

Thanet recognises the risks associated with adults in positions of trust. This may be due to their regular and significant contact with children and as such, may be seen as influential in a child's life due to their role.

All staff must abide by our [positions of trust policy](#), which provides guidance on how to avoid abusing this trust and to provide procedures for how allegations of such abuse are managed.



## **Allegations against Staff**

Allegations against staff are a sensitive and critical matter. Therefore, where appropriate, the HoS and the Director of HR will manage any allegations of this nature directly, to ensure a serious and urgent response, in line with our [allegations against staff policy](#).

Concerns about the behaviour of someone working with children will be raised in accordance with the relevant Children's Services Safeguarding & Child Protection procedures.

The LADO will be contacted via phone and notified via email.

The HoS will proactively work with the LADO to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child(ren) and decide on the appropriate action to take, which could range from no action to advice and guidance, or to a multi-agency strategy meeting with key partners such as Police and Children's Social Care.

## **Whistleblowing**

Here at Thanet, we foster an open and transparent safeguarding communications culture. We want all staff to feel confident in raising concerns about a colleague's behaviour or misconduct, especially if those concerns relate to the safety and welfare of vulnerable people.

Any concerns raised will be dealt with promptly and appropriately by the HoS and the HR Director. Any person who raises a concern of this nature will be protected from any form of retaliation. This will be in accordance with our [whistleblowing policy](#).

The accused individual may be temporarily suspended pending investigation.

Both the accused and accuser will receive appropriate support.

## **Environmental Safety**

Regular risk assessments will be conducted to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. These will be dynamic and contextual - relevant to the environment and circumstances.

All areas accessible to children will be safe and free from potential hazards, in accordance with our [Health & Safety policy](#).

## **Online Safety**

All staff must be mindful about their use of mobile digital devices whilst around children and must ensure that children's safety is prioritised.





Both staff and children will adhere to our [online safety acceptable use policy](#).

We support a safe online environment and will educate our staff and children about potential risks and appropriate online behaviour. Safeguarding will be in the context of children's lives and their use of social media.

### **Partnership with Parents and Carers**

We strive to create an open and transparent safeguarding communications culture. We believe in open communication with families and will involve them in safeguarding practices, where at all possible.

# Safeguarding Children's Policy

## Appendix B

### Legal Framework

This policy adheres to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance which relates to the safeguarding and protection of children. This is a comprehensive list of these legislations and statutory guidance:

- **Children Act 1989**

This is a foundational piece of legislation that introduced the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount. It emphasizes the importance of children being brought up within their families and specifies the duties and powers of local authorities to provide support for children and families.

- **Children Act 2004**

Following the death of Victoria Climbié and the subsequent inquiry by Lord Laming, the Children Act 2004 was introduced to streamline child welfare services. It introduced the concept of 'Every Child Matters' and established the role of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), now reformed to Local Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018**

While not legislation per se, this is key statutory guidance that outlines inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is updated regularly to incorporate changes in legislation and reflection from lessons learnt from child safeguarding practice reviews.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023**

A key statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England. Its aim is to ensure that educational settings adopt effective measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- **Children and Social Work Act 2017**

This Act made changes to services that local authorities provide to support children, especially those in care or being adopted. It replaced LSCBs with local safeguarding partners and child safeguarding practice reviews.

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

An international treaty that recognizes and establishes children's rights. Ratified by 196 countries (which includes every member of the United Nations except the United

States as of the last update in September 2021), the UNCRC is the most universally embraced human rights treaty in history.

- **Children and Families Act 2014**

A piece of legislation passed in the UK that introduced a wide range of reforms regarding the welfare of children and families. The Act was designed to ensure children and young people's safety, welfare, and health are safeguarded and promoted. It brought significant changes to the systems for adoption, looked after children, family justice, and special educational needs (SEN).

- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**

A piece of legislation in the UK that overhauled previous laws related to sexual offenses. It introduced new offenses, redefined old ones, and was designed to provide a more stringent and comprehensive legal framework around sexual crimes.

- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

This legislation was introduced to restrict contact between children, (and Adults at Risk), and those who might do them harm. The Act led to the creation of the Vetting and Barring list Scheme.

- **The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**

Part of this Act deals with changes to the Vetting and Barring Scheme, transforming it into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

- **FGM Act 2003**

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (FGM Act 2003) is a piece of legislation in the United Kingdom designed to criminalize the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM)

- **Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation - procedural information (2014)**

This mandates professionals to report known cases of FGM in under 18s to the police.

- **The Modern Slavery Act 2015**

A piece of legislation in the UK designed to combat modern slavery and human trafficking. It consolidated previous offenses related to trafficking and slavery and introduced a range of new measures to address the issue.

- **Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015**

A UK legislation aimed at strengthening the powers available to authorities to address the risks posed by terrorism and to ensure national security.



- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

A significant piece of legislation in the UK designed to provide further protections for victims of domestic abuse and to strengthen the measures available to tackle perpetrators. The Act aims to improve the legal framework around domestic abuse, recognizing its impact and working to support victims better while pursuing offenders.

- **Equality Act 2010**

A significant piece of legislation in the UK that consolidates and replaces previous anti-discrimination laws, bringing them together into a single Act. Its primary aim is to simplify the law, strengthen it in certain areas, and support progress on equality.

- **The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

A regulation on data protection and privacy. It aims to give control back to citizens over their personal data and to simplify the regulatory environment. This supports the Data Protection Act 2018.