



Safeguarding Children Policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Mulberry Corner.

Mulberry Corner believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them. Furthermore children attending the nursery have a right to feel safe and secure and staff, in partnership with parents/carers, have a responsibility to act on any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare and well-being.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide protection for the children who receive Mulberry Corner's care; and
- To provide staff and volunteers with the guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989;
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991;
- Data Protection Act 1998;
- Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Children Act 2004;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015;
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015;
- The Prevent Duty Guidelines 2015;
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children – see www.hampshiresafeguardingboard.org.uk

This policy links to:

- Our Whistleblowing Policy; and
 - Our Health and Safety Policy
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Mulberry Corner recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare;
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency and communication needs or other issues;
- Extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for children;
- If we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect those in our care.

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is defined in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Mulberry Corner aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the care of nursery staff;
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times;
- Ensure that all staff are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children – i.e. bullying;
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with safeguarding issues and procedures and are kept informed of all updates when they occur;
- Regularly review and update this policy;
- Ensure all staff are able to understand, respond to and calculate risk effectively associated with child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism.

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
 - Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
 - Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made, including ensuring all staff have an enhanced DBS check;
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- Ensuring all staff appointments are made subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed unless we are confident that the applicant can be safely entrusted with children;
 - Requiring all staff to sign health declarations and disqualification declarations at least every 3 months to declare any changes to their circumstances;
 - Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
 - Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
 - Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
 - Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures;
 - Promoting the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - Not allowing an adult to be left alone with a child, unless they have received their enhanced DBS check clearance and completed their in-house safeguarding training;
 - Ensuring adults are not left alone for long periods of time with individual or small groups of children;
 - Ensuring we follow the legal requirements for the minimum numbers of staff present with the children at any time as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework;
 - Ensuring we have a senior member of staff identified within the nursery as the “Lead Practitioner in Safeguarding”. At Mulberry Corner the named Lead Practitioners in Safeguarding are Gemma Botto and Janine Tyson. If neither of the LPSs are available, Hayley Shorthouse assumes safeguarding responsibility and in Hayley’s absence the Manager assumes safeguarding responsibility;
 - The Lead Practitioners in Safeguarding reviewing the Nursery safeguarding File alongside all pre-existing injury forms and Child in Need/Child Protection plans every 6 weeks and record any action taken or needed;
 - Abiding by OFSTED requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers;
 - Ensuring all mobile phones and other recording equipment is stored securely away from any children. No staff shall have their phone out near the children, even if it is not in use. Parents are not permitted to use their phones while on the premises and shall not be permitted to take any pictures or videos. Visitors to the nursery shall also be required to keep their phones securely out of sight. All tablets shall have password locks preventing access to any applications or the internet other than Tapestry (our online learning journal);
 - Ensuring all staff receive regular updates on safeguarding at least annually and that designated members of staff for safeguarding have safeguarding training every two years;
 - Discussing safeguarding concerns at each staff meeting;
 - Liaising, as appropriate, with outside agencies in line with the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board guidance;
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- Ensuring there is a designated member of staff for safeguarding available at all time during working hours for staff to discuss concerns, whether in person or via the telephone.

Procedures for suspected abuse:

- If any staff member suspects any form of abuse, they should initially speak to the Lead Practitioner for Safeguarding as a matter of urgency. The LPS shall discuss the staff member's concern with them and if appropriate one of the procedures in either Appendix A or B will be commenced.
- If a staff member does not think their concern is being taken seriously enough or if their concern relates to the LPS' behaviour, they should consult the guidance in the Whistleblowing policy and follow the suggested procedure.
- Appendix A sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member raises concerns about a child who might be at risk of child abuse or for suspected abuse by another member of staff;
- Appendix B contains the Prevent Referral Pathway which sets out the procedure to be followed if a staff member raises concerns about an individual in relation to extremism or radicalisation.

This policy was adopted on:

Signed on behalf of Mulberry Corner:

Date for review:

Appendix A

What is child abuse?

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Staff in the nursery recognise that child abuse can and does happen in all types of families. The different social and cultural backgrounds of the children do not constitute barriers to child abuse and in most cases children are abused by individuals known to them, rather than strangers. Child abuse can take many formats, but all instances can be broadly categorised under one of four headings; neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

Other forms of abuse include child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, child trafficking, cyber bullying and online grooming. If you have concerns about any of these risks in children in your care (or their siblings) you must discuss with the LPS who may ring the children's services professional line for advice.

Categories and procedures

The following identifies some possible manifestations of child abuse, however these lists are not exhaustive.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, which may result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. For example; poor hygiene, untreated medical problems, emaciation or under nourishment. Staff may notice behavioural signs such as a child who always seems to be hungry, is constantly tired or talks of being left alone.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the parent/carer.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the children's services access centre will be notified.

Physical abuse

Physical signs of physical abuse may involve unexplained bruising in unlikely areas, facial bruising, hand/finger marks, bite marks, burns, lacerations or abrasions. Staff may notice certain behavioural signs that also indicate physical abuse such as a child that shies away from physical contact, is withdrawn or aggressive towards others or their behaviour changes suddenly.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child when they come into nursery will be recorded as soon as noticed by a staff member.
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- The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.
- Such discussions will be recorded and a signature obtained from the parent/carer who will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the injury, the children's services access centre should be informed immediately.

Sexual abuse

Physical signs of sexual abuse may include bruising consistent with being held firmly, discomfort in walking/sitting, pain or itching in the genital area, discharge or blood on under clothes, or loss of appetite. Behavioural signs may include drawings or play showing indicators of sexual activity, sexual explicit language, knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, seductive behaviour towards others, poor self-esteem and a child who is withdrawn.

Procedure:

- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the Safeguarding Officer.
- The matter will be referred by the Safeguarding Officer to the children's services access centre immediately.

Emotional Abuse

Physical signs of emotional abuse may include a general failure to thrive, not meeting expected developmental milestones and behaviourally a child may be attention seeking tells lies, have an inability to have fun, low self-esteem, speech disorders, and be inappropriately affectionate towards others.

Procedure:

- The concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer by the Safeguarding Officer or child's key person (after discussion with the Safeguarding Officer).
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the children's services access centre will be notified.

General Points to Note:

When identifying any potential instances of abuse, staff must at all times be aware that children may demonstrate individual or combinations of the indicators detailed, but may not be the subject of abuse. Individual or isolated incidents do not necessarily indicate abuse. However, staff should always remain vigilant and must not ignore warnings signs and contact Children's services access centre at any stage for support.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

When making a record of any observation or disclosure staff shall include:

- Child's name.
- Child's address
- Child's age and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- EXACT words spoken by the child/injuries or marks seen
- Name of person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time and the names of any other person present at the time.
- Any discussion held with the parent/carer.

These records are to be signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Children's services access centre and OFSTED. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have of concerns with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the Children's Services access centre and OFSTED in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Board does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating Officer will inform the parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and only shared with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Board.

Support to Families

Mulberry Corner takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery. The nursery continues to welcome a child and their family whilst investigation are being made in relation to abuse within the home. Confidential records kept on a child are shared with parents or those who have

parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Allegations of abuse against a member of staff

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, the Lead Practitioner will immediately inform the children's services. It is important to take a name of the person spoken to and they will advise on the next steps to be taken. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will also be on hand to convene a strategy meeting and offer advice and support. OFSTED and will also need to be informed and this will be investigated. Staff will co-operate with the investigating authority. The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation. All investigation/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file. Records on the alleged perpetrator will be kept until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years if that period of time is longer. This includes records of people no longer associated with the provision. Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated. All allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (Children's Services) and will result in the termination of employment. OFSTED shall be notified immediately of the allegation. Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by the allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

If an allegation of abuse is made about the nursery manager/registered person, the person making the complaint must contact the LADO immediately. Please see the Whistleblowing policy for further details.

Important numbers

- Children's services professional line – 01329 225379 (out of hours – 08456 004555)
- LADO (Mark Blackwell) – 01962 876364

Appendix B

What do I do if I have concerns about an individual in relation to extremism or radicalisation?

If you have concern about an individual in relation to extremism or radicalisation, you can refer to the Prevent Team. They will be able to offer appropriate advice and guidance and will refer into the Channel process, if required.

Child Prevent Co-ordinator

Tel: 0300 5551384

prevent.engagement@hampshire.pnn.police.uk.

What is Channel?

Channel is a key element of the Prevent Strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk of radicalisation. Channel uses existing collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners, the police and the local community to identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assess the nature and extent of that risk and develop the most appropriate support for the individuals concerned.

More information about Channel can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118194/channel-guidance.pdf

What happens once I have raised a concern about an individual with the Prevent Team?

Prevent Team Officers would liaise with you to discuss your concerns. They would complete a vulnerability assessment for the individual (either by engaging directly with them or based on information given by the referrer, depending on the circumstances).

The information would then be used to make a decision as to whether the case needed to be discussed at the next Channel meeting, where the assessment is discussed and agencies are invited to contribute any shared knowledge about the individual from their own area of business. The vulnerability assessment scoring is also discussed and a decision made about how to ensure the most suitable outcomes for the individual are achieved. If the case is not accepted into the Channel process at this stage, it will be referred back to the Case Management process, where appropriate alternative support and engagement for the individual will be identified.

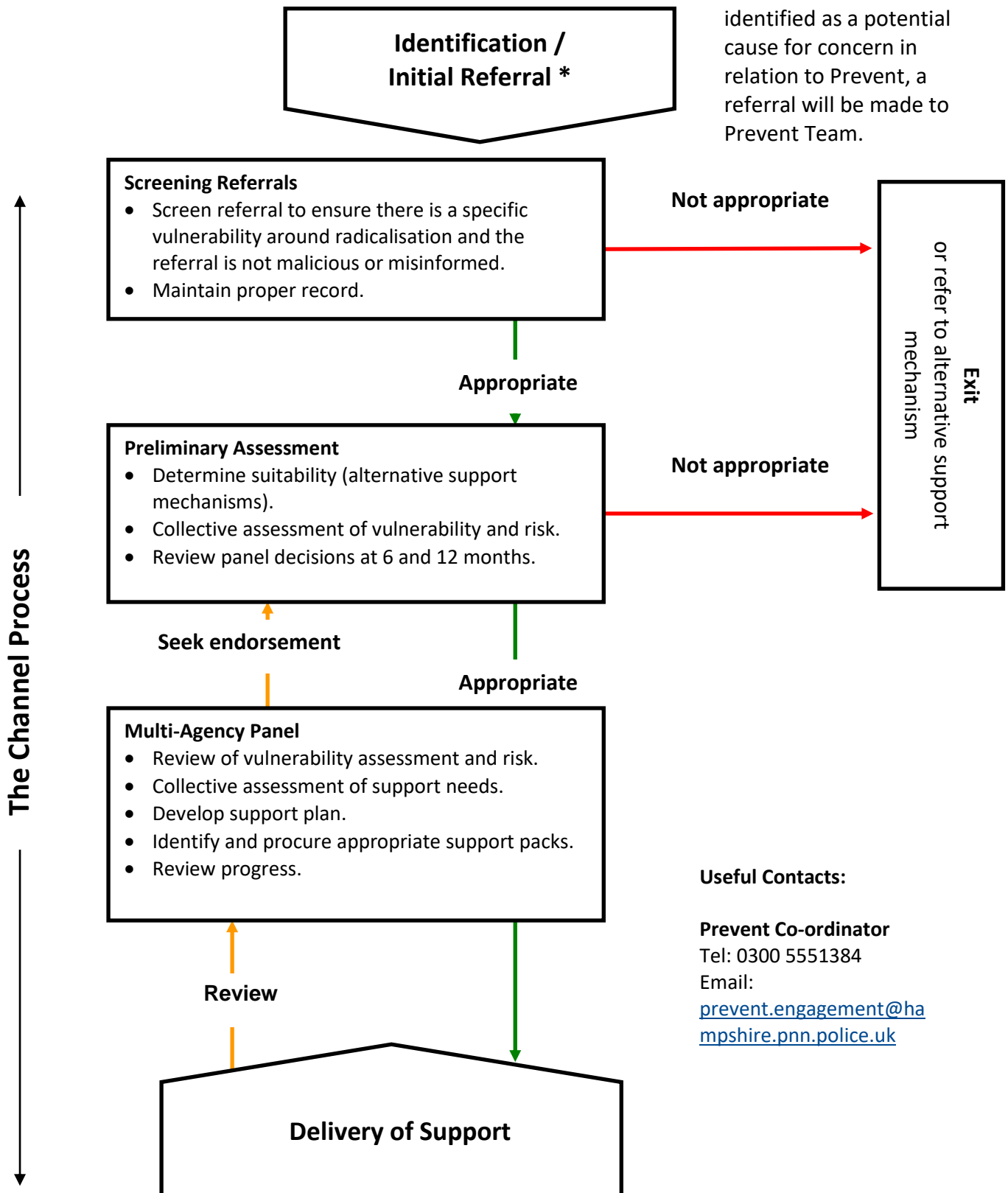
If an individual who has been referred to Channel is the subject of an existing statutory process (for example, child protection processes) the Prevent Team would endeavour to contribute to the statutory process along with the other key partners who were working together to achieve the best outcomes for the individual concerned.

The person making the referral will be kept informed and, in many cases, would be involved in decision-making going forward.

Referral Process

The diagram shows the different stages within the Channel process:

* When an individual is identified as a potential cause for concern in relation to Prevent, a referral will be made to Prevent Team.



Source: 'Channel: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism - A guide for local partnerships'. HM Government, October 2012