

# Safeguarding policy



PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

**PACT DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Shirley Elliott, Head of Adoption. Tel: 0118 402 1737 or 07867 467489 during office hours; for advice out of hours please ring 07787 834871**

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## 2. Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers (including the board of trustees), students or anyone working on behalf of PACT. The purpose of this policy is:

- **To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are in receipt of PACT's services**
- **To provide people working for, or on behalf of, PACT with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.**

All work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children should:

- Be child centred
- Be rooted in child development
- Be focussed on outcomes for children
- Be holistic in approach
- Ensure equality of opportunity
- Involve children and families
- Build on strengths as well as identifying differences
- Be integrated in approach

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- Be a continuing process, not an event
- Be reviewed regularly
- Be informed by evidence

### **3. Legislative and regulatory context**

This policy and associated procedures are informed by and adhere to the following legislation and guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2015
- The National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014
- The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Children and young People from Sexual Exploitation 2009
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Children Act 1989 (section 47)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

### **4. Policy statement**

PACT believes that all children, young people and adults have a right to protection from mistreatment, neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse and that people accessing our services should feel safe and able to trust the services PACT provides.

PACT workers and those who work with them in any capacity have a responsibility to protect the PACT service by safeguarding clients and the wider community.

This policy and associated procedures therefore aims to ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of everything PACT does.

All staff, both voluntary and paid, will adhere to the policy, procedures and guidelines. Failure to do so could have implications both for the safety of a vulnerable individual and/or the reputation of PACT as a provider of services.

All PACT's policies and procedures are made available to the workforce through induction, the corporate intranet, training and one-to-one consultation / supervision.

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It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that the workforce is aware of procedures and where to access them.

We are diligent, adhere to the law and PACT policies and procedures. We know that from time to time things may not go as well as expected. During these times we support each other and learn from what's gone wrong, taking steps to prevent re-occurrence. We are committed to our continued professional development and ensure that we are resourced and supported to operate safely.

Should any of PACT's procedures not be followed, investigations will take place and workers may be suspended whilst these are carried out. This decision lies with the Chief Executive Officer. It is recognised that workers may need support until investigations are completed. It will be the investigating officer's responsibility to identify who will provide support and to clarify their role with them.

## **5. Recognising abuse**

### **Child abuse**

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse. Some children are more vulnerable to abuse, often having additional needs or disabilities.

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event; it can increasingly happen online.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Child abuse can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. The main forms of maltreatment are:

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to a child. This might involve punching, kicking, biting, burning, scalding, shaking, throwing or beating with objects such as belts, whips, or sticks. It also includes poisoning, giving a child alcohol or illegal drugs, drowning or suffocation. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule, shouting, lack of love and affection causes a severe adverse effect on a child's emotional development. It includes conveying to children that they are worthless,

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unloved, and inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from taking part in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact including penetrative sex, oral sex, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching outside of clothing, or it may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in watching sexual activities, producing or looking at sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect is when a parent or carer fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), medical care, or protection from physical and emotional harm or danger.

**The signs of child abuse** aren't always obvious, and a child might not tell anyone what's happening to them. Children might be scared that the abuser will find out, and worried that the abuse will get worse. Or they might think that there's no-one they can tell or that they won't be believed. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening is abuse. The effects of abuse may be short term or may last a long time - sometimes into adulthood. Adults who were abused as children may need advice and support.

PACT's adoption service will ensure that the preparation and assessment for adoption includes information about safeguarding children and that prospective adoptive parents are helped to develop parenting skills and strategies which enable them to create safe families for children and develop each child's sense of worth and self-esteem. PACT recognises that in some circumstances adopters do deliberately harm their children and therefore our child centred approach is to focus on the needs of the child at all times, and when required, necessary action will be taken.

PACT also recognises that many families may end up in a safeguarding situation due to the pressures and difficulties experienced by parenting children who have been highly traumatised in their early childhood and are finding life difficult to cope with. Parents

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managing complex behaviour over time can become exhausted, entrenched and unable to think clearly and may resort to behaviour management strategies that are unacceptable. We aim to provide ongoing support to families as a means of safeguarding children who may currently be difficult to parent.

**Adult abuse** People with care and support needs, such as older people or people with disabilities, are more likely to be abused or neglected. They may be seen as an easy target and may be less likely to identify abuse themselves or to report it. People with communication difficulties can be particularly at risk because they may not be able to alert others. Sometimes people may not even be aware that they are being abused, and this is especially likely if they have a cognitive impairment.

The main types of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Signs of abuse can often be difficult to detect. The above list is not exhaustive and people may be subject to a number of abuse types at the same time. Many types of abuse are also criminal offences and should be treated as such.

## 6. Responsibilities

This document, as with all policies and procedures, is reviewed regularly, approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and endorsed by the Board of Trustees.

Everyone who works for PACT, or on its behalf, has a responsibility to safeguard clients and the wider community and is expected to adhere to the safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance. All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately. This may require a referral to the safeguarding adults team or children’s social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Office (LADO), the regulatory body (Ofsted) or in emergencies, the police.

### Additional specific responsibilities

- Trustees have responsibility to ensure there is an appropriate safeguarding policy and associated procedures in place.

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- The senior leadership team has responsibility for ensuring this policy and associated procedures are accessible and that there is effective communication of safeguarding procedures and issues across the teams.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults within the organisation with the support of the senior management team. The DSO will receive, review and advise on safeguarding concerns across the organisation.

## **Designated Safeguarding Officer responsibilities**

The Head of Adoption is the Designated Safeguarding Officer with overall responsibility for safeguarding issues within PACT; he/she refers directly to the CEO. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and the Head of HR will ensure that everyone who works directly with families is recruited using the principles of safer recruitment. S/he will support managers to take responsibility for ensuring that people are well trained and supported, and that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

The DSO will keep up to date with safeguarding issues and communicate this as necessary; safeguarding will be a regular agenda item during supervisions and team meetings. A central log will be kept of all safeguarding incidences across the organisation; the DSO will review this quarterly and report on this to the Board.

The DSO will keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding, liaising with relevant agencies (such as the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board “LSCB” or OFSTED) as necessary.

## **7. Communicating and reviewing this policy**

PACT will make clients aware of the safeguarding policy by providing a link to this policy on the website. Contact details for the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and local authority children’s services as well as flow charts illustrating the actions to be taken in the event of a safeguarding issue are displayed in PACT’s offices and noticeboards.

There is a short leaflet explaining the key actions to take in the event of safeguarding concerns that is readily accessible on our website as well as in our offices.

The Compliments, Concerns and Complaints leaflet is also available in our offices and on PACT’s website, so that clients are aware of how they can make a complaint about the service.

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed annually and/or when there are changes in legislation.

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This document is approved by the Board of Trustees, amendments to which are recommended by the Senior Leadership Team following any routine review and identification of new best practice.

PACT's Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure changes to legislation are tracked and monitored through the relevant staff most closely involved with such policy areas.

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## 8. Contact information – Children

### READING OFFICE

#### **Local safeguarding children’s board:**

<http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/>

#### **Child protection:**

Reading Children’s Single Point of Access **Tel: 0118 937 3641**

Outside office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team on **01344 786543**

See Reading’s website for the **Children’s Single Point of Access referral form:**

ChidrensSinglePointofAccess@reading.gcsx.gov.uk

### LONDON OFFICE

#### **Local Safeguarding Children’s Board:**

The Pimlico area is covered by the LSCB for Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/sharedservices/lscb/aboutus.aspx>

#### **Child protection:**

To make a referral **Tel: 020 7641 4000**

**Emergency Duty Team (out of office hours) 020 7641 2388.**

**or email:** [accesstochidrensservices@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:accesstochidrensservices@westminster.gov.uk)

### BRIGHTON OFFICE

#### **Local Safeguarding Children’s Board:**

<http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk/>

#### **Child Protection.**

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/a-z/a-z-pages/child-protection>

**To make a referral contact the Email address:**

**FrontDoorForFamilies@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk**

**Phone: 01273 290400**

**Address:**

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## 9. Contact information – Adults

### READING OFFICE

#### **Local safeguarding adults board (West of Berkshire):**

<http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/>

#### **West Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Team.**

Email: [safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingadults@westberks.gov.uk) or **Tel: 01635 519056**

## 10. PACT officers

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Shirley Elliott

Head of Adoption Services  
PACT  
7 Southern Court  
Reading  
RG1 4QS

[shirley.elliott@pactcharity.org](mailto:shirley.elliott@pactcharity.org)  
0118 402 1737

### **07787 834871 (Out Of Hours)**

Chief Executive Officer:

Jan Fishwick  
PACT  
7 Southern Court  
Reading  
RG1 4QS

[jan.fishwick@pactcharity.org](mailto:jan.fishwick@pactcharity.org)  
0118 938 7600

## 11. Associated procedures

Safeguarding and Protecting Children  
Historical Abuse  
Allegations against staff, volunteers and adopters  
Child Sexual Exploitation  
Photography & Storage of Images  
Safeguarding Adults

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Safer Recruitment  
Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks  
Whistleblowing

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