



**DEAF CHOICES UK**

**offering language and literacy for life**

# DCUK CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Henrietta Ireland, Executive director & Safeguarding Lead

DEAF CHOICES UK

Approved 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025

## Our child protection policy

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional and freelance workers, agency staff\*, students and anyone working on behalf of the Deaf Choices UK (DCUK). All staff must sign to say they have read and understood the document, each time it is reviewed. Team Leaders are responsible for discussing aspects of the policy, abuse and neglect as a standing item at each team meeting to ensure safeguarding remains a high priority for the organisation.

### **The purpose of this policy:**

1. to protect children and young people who receive Deaf Choices UK's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
2. to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;

The Deaf Choices UK charity believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

### **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

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children most particularly [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) and [What to Do if you are worried a child is being abused](#).

It's important every agency knows what to do if worried about a child. We follow the above national guidance so we are clear what to expect and can explain this to children and families.

Where there are specific risks we will access other specific guidance.

### **We recognise that:**

- ☐ the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- ☐ all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- ☐ some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- ☐ working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### **We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- ☐ valuing them, listening to and respecting them through whatever communication method necessary
- ☐ adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- ☐ developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- ☐ providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- ☐ recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- ☐ 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.

### **We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.**

This policy was last reviewed on: ...05/08/2025 and is due for review on 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2026.....(date)

*Herrington Ireland*

Signed:

.....

## **Procedure for children at possible risk of abuse**

This procedure applies to any paid member of staff, Trustee or volunteer who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child.

Research and evidence suggests that deaf and disabled children are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. They are particularly vulnerable to abuse because they're:

- not offered the same protection as non-disabled children
- often treated as different, and less likely to receive adequate sex education or information about their own bodies
- generally more isolated, both physically and socially and also from mainstream facilities and services
- less likely to have people with whom they can communicate
- generally dependent on others for their most important needs, such as feeding, taking medication or their intimate care needs
- they may also be more likely to be abused, and abuse is more likely to be suspected, because it is sometime necessary to touch deaf children and young people to gain their attention. Respectful, non-abusive, ways to get their attention are described on page 7.

### **Purpose and aim of this procedure**

We aim to ensure those children who attend DCUK training, or who communicate with staff, Trustees or volunteers in person or on-line and any other children who may come to the attention of the Deaf Choices UK (DCUK), receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse using whatever form of communication that is appropriate for the child/young person.

This procedure provides clear direction to staff, Trustees and volunteers at the DCUK if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection.

### **Protecting children through our work**

Deaf Choices provides Information & advice (by phone or email) to families & professionals about using Deaf Choices to give visual access to English. We arrange DCUK training online and in people's homes for families so that they can communicate fully at home & can become effective language models for their children. We also arrange training in Cued Speech at nurseries and schools so that they can give deaf pupils full access to English and the curriculum.

As such, some of our staff have direct access to young people who may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse. We recognise as communication facilitators we have a duty to listen and look for communication, signs and indicators of abuse and neglect, to provide a safe workforce and to take our responsibility to safeguard children seriously.

Much of our work is remote, for example using ZOOM. Some of our staff undertake visits to schools and nurseries, but will not be left unsupervised with children. We do undertake home visits with parental supervision, but recognise this brings additional risks and opportunities to identify abuse or neglect. All staff involved in direct communication with young people are recruited to the organisation following our safer recruitment process including DBS checks, and are trained to identify safeguarding issues and take action where they have concerns.

## Different types of abuse

**We take action to keep children safe.** Children are those under 18. We have a separate policy for adults at risk.

**Safeguarding is a term which is broader than ‘child protection’ and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. ‘Safeguarding & promoting welfare’ is defined as:**

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

*Working Together 2015:5*

**‘Child protection’** are the systems and processes all agencies follow if it is possible there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm (s47, Children Act 1989).

**Physical abuse** is violence causing injury or occurring regularly during childhood. It happens when:

- a child is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut
- someone tries to drown or suffocate a child
- someone gives a child poison, alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- someone fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the child being knowingly put at risk.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser’s own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It may include: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other young people.

**Emotional abuse** is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to his/her development. It may include:

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on young people. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Neglect** involves persistently failing to meet a child's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include:

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

### Specific issues

**There** may be specific issues that make a child more at risk, such as those in the list below. DCUK are now signed up to an on-line Training portal [www.safeguarding](http://www.safeguarding) network developed for schools which includes training, webinars and reviews on a number of areas of risk and protection. We are able to use the software to update staff training and access the very latest training offers, in addition the site tracks and records staff training and can be used to carry out a full review of the Charities Policy. Some of the areas of training are listed below and this is frequently updated.

- domestic abuse,
- substance misuse,
- parental substance misuse,
- parental mental health issues,
- children in care or returned home from care,
- missing children and young people,
- county lines,
- online risks,
- sexting,
- so-called 'honour' based violence,
- female genital mutilation,
- forced marriage,
- bullying,
- discrimination (e.g. racism),
- peer on peer abuse,
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- young carers and
- children with SEND including specifically communication needs

### Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention

- a child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- a child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

## Talking to a child who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused

- Listen carefully to the child without adding your own opinion.
- Tell them it was not their fault, reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do and arrange interpretation/transliteration if needed
- Tell him/her that you have taken what they say really seriously, and now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe. Recognise what has been shared might be difficult or distressing and ask them what they think might help them at this point.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his or her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- Avoid asking leading questions, such as "did he hit you?"
- Ask the child what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- If the child has sufficient English skills give them the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111 or online at [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) where a child can communicate via e-mail or a 1-2-1 chat room
- Don't talk to the alleged abuser, and report this immediately to the Safeguarding Lead.

Use communication support from a third person (using BSL or Cued Speech Transliteration (CST)) where necessary. **Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention**

- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
- You also need to contact Henrietta Ireland (designated safeguarding lead), Louise Creed (deputy safeguarding lead) or Debbie Hawke (deputy safeguarding lead) or the named safeguarding person 'on site' to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child's family and the local authority children's social care department, and when they should be informed. The welfare of the child in our decision making will remain the highest priority.

Advice should be sought from the local authority. Issues that will be taken into account are:

- the child's wishes and feelings
- the parent's right to know (unless this would place the child or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- the impact of telling or not telling the parent
- the current assessment of the risk to the child and the source of that risk
- any risk management plans that currently exist
- the use of interpreters for children or parents who need access to their first language to communicate.

## Keeping a record of your concerns

Use the reporting form (appendix 1) to record the concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities if a referral to them is needed.

The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the child's file. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry.

## Reporting child protection concerns

If a child is in need of emergency medical attention or in immediate danger, follow the procedure set out above on helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention.

You should then take the steps set out in the flowchart on the next page to ensure the concern is dealt with.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out in the flowchart on the next page.

## Useful contact details

Named person for child protection and deputy:

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Henrietta Ireland** 07856424035. She takes responsibility for any child protection concern raised with DCUK and ensures procedures are followed. She will manage any referrals to social care, work with other organisations, ensure staff and volunteers are trained, promote the profile of safeguarding in DCUK, ensure proper records are kept and ensure the child protection policy is reviewed at least annually. You should contact Henrietta with any safeguarding concern.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is supported by two deputies who are trained to the same level and can provide cover when she is not available. They are:

**Louise Creed** 07976570451 or 01803 712853

**Debbie Hawke** 07815311279 or 01803 712853

The safeguarding trustee is Christine Hardy, Chair of the Trustees. She can be contacted on 07807290138 if you feel the Executive Director has not dealt properly with a concern, or if the concern is about the Executive Director.

**Named safeguarding person responsible “on site”** ...Henrietta Ireland.....

**Local police:** dial 101 and ask for your nearest police station. If a child is in imminent danger dial 999 and ask for the police.

## Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

All concerns should be reported to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in the relevant local authority. MASH focuses on anything with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and will enable effective interventions at the earliest opportunity. If a child is in imminent danger dial 999 and ask for the police.

If there is a concern about an adult working for DCUK this should be reported to the Executive director, or if the concern relates to the Executive Director or she is unavailable to the safeguarding governor in line with the procedure below. They will follow the process for involving the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) available at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/managing-allegations-against-adults-working-with-children>

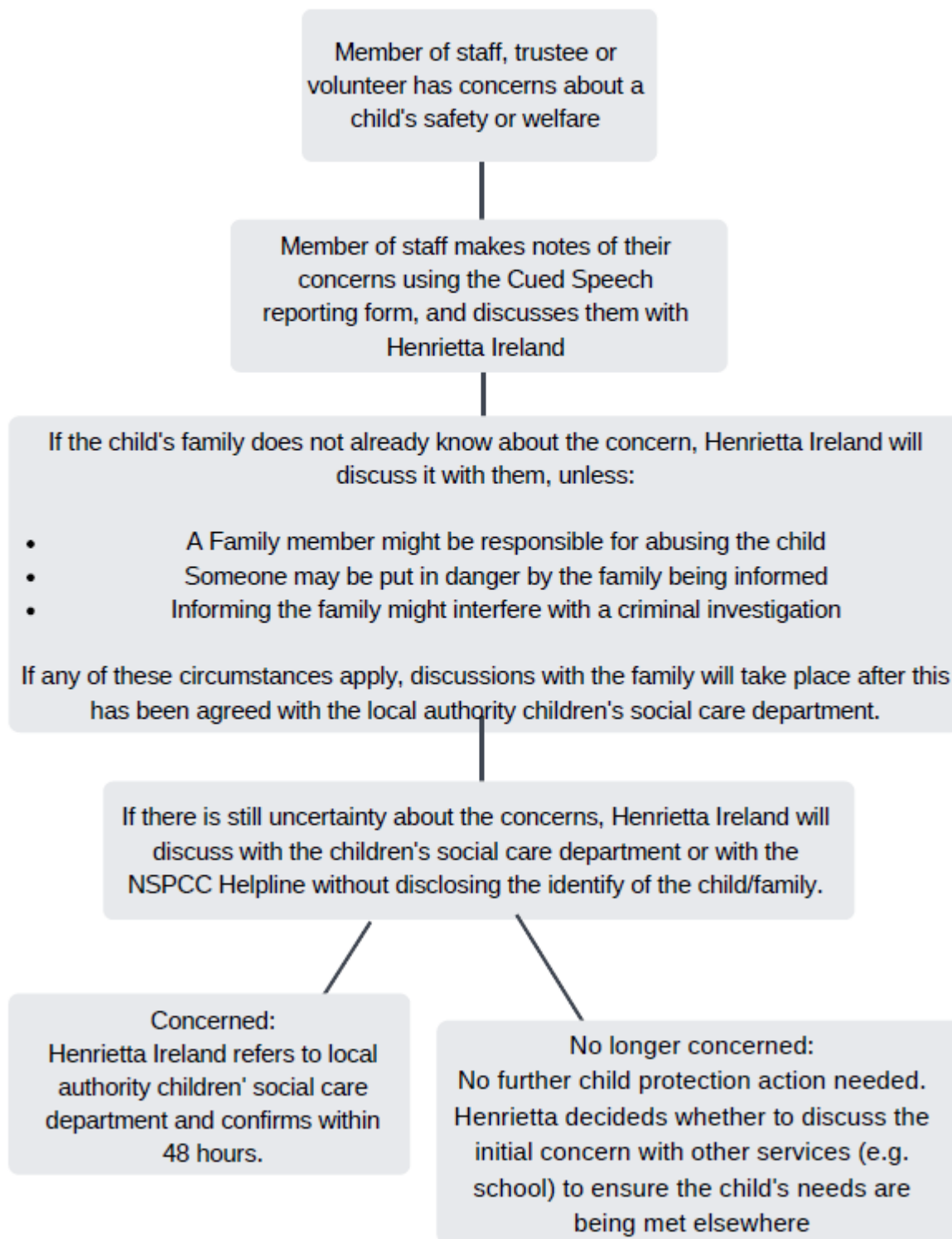
**NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**ChildLine:** 0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222) or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



# Cued Speech UK

## Child Protection Flow Chart





## Escalation procedure

Safeguarding children is **everyone's** responsibility. If anyone is concerned about a child DCUK will listen to this and ensure it is taken seriously. It is not always clear when a child is being abused or neglected and at times there will be disagreements. DCUK will ensure each person's concerns are taken into account and will actively support volunteers and staff members who raise concerns.

If you feel a decision is not safe for a child you **must** raise this with the person making the decision and discuss this further. If it is not possible to come to an agreement the safeguarding lead or another member of the safeguarding team should be involved in the discussion or advice sought from an external safeguarding advisor.

After this discussion, if any volunteer or member of staff still believes a child may be at risk from abuse or neglect they should be supported to raise this with children's social care, alongside other information from DCUK.

### External agencies

Each area has an escalation policy (for example, at the [Devon Children & Families Partnership](#)). In broad terms when there are disagreements between agencies the Safeguarding Lead will discuss the concern with another member of the safeguarding team, or an external safeguarding advisor. If the concern remains the issue should be raised again for clarification and discussion with the person making the decision. If agreement cannot be reached the Safeguarding Lead will discuss this with the individual's team manager, then senior manager.

If DCUK believe action is not being taken in an area to keep a child safe from abuse or neglect the Chief Executive will raise this with the local multi-agency partnership and ask for this to be reviewed.

## Threshold for children's social care not met

If staff remain worried for a child's welfare but a child is not at risk of abuse or neglect and children's social care decide not to get involved advice should be sought about how the family may access help.

DCUK will talk to parents about accessing support, usually best achieved through the children's GP or school. There may also be relevant voluntary agencies who can support with specific issues.

## Procedure for dealing with situations where allegations of abuse are made against an adult working/volunteering for Deaf Choices UK.

- Report the situation and names to Henrietta Ireland (Executive Director) immediately or to the safeguarding Trustee (Christine Hardy).

Assessments of all allegations will be dealt with promptly and carefully. The need for immediate action will be considered regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator co-operates with the investigation. A main responsibility is to decide whether external reporting to local authority children's social care department, the police and the Charity Commission is necessary. The charity Trustees must be kept fully informed and be part of the discussion process in a timely and appropriate manner.

The Trustees contact details can be found on appendix 2.

The following can be contacted for advice:

- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (0808 800 5000)
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

More details can be found on the information to be provided and contact numbers [here](#).

- **The individual under suspicion** must not be notified of the cause for concern without the agreement of the LADO.
- Advice from the LADO should be recorded. Where there is disagreement the Chief Executive should be consulted, or external advice sought. There may be a strategy discussion involving DCUK, children's services and the police, or there may be agreement to investigate internally and provide information to the LADO at the end of this process. If you are unhappy with the decision of the strategy discussion you should say at the time and if necessary follow the escalation procedure.
- **Full documentation should be kept.** It should be treated as confidential and held securely with access limited to the safeguarding trustee, safeguarding lead and deputies. Information required to keep children safe should be recorded on the child's record that other staff can access.

**Current Charity Commission guidance should be followed**

- not having 'vetting' procedures in place to check your prospective trustees, volunteers and staff are eligible
- any minor accidental injuries to a service user, such as slips on a wet floor
- and any suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse of young people or their families are 'serious incidents' which need to be reported to the Charity Commission.

An actual or suspected incident must be reported by emailing the Charity Commission as soon as you are aware of it. Make sure you say what happened and how you are dealing with the incident. You need to do this even if you've already reported it to the police or another regulator.

The Charity commission guidance recognises that there is a balance to be struck between fact finding and timely reporting and that trustees will need to exercise their discretion and judgment in the circumstances. When an incident is very serious, such as an allegation of abuse, they expect this to be reported to them immediately.

- **When the investigation is complete**, the information should be retained on the appropriate employment record and should state clearly the outcome of the investigation

Henrietta Ireland – Executive Director



Named Trustee: Christine Hardy



## Code of behaviour for everyone involved with Deaf Choices UK. This includes behaviour when on-line and using digital technology

When working with children and young people for the Deaf Choices UK all staff, trustees and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that you are aware that you may be seen as role models by children and young people, and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of staff, trustees and volunteers from the Deaf Choices UK, and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through Deaf Choices UK and its activities.

It has been informed by the views of children and young people.

### Purpose

Following this code will help to protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

### Upholding this code of behaviour

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Executive Director, Louise Creed or Debbie Hawke or the named safeguarding person 'on-site'. If any member of staff believes effective action is not being taken to protect children they should raise this formally with the Executive Director, or if necessary follow the whistle-blowing procedure and child protection procedures and make a referral directly to children's services.

Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to Deaf Choices UK's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer, trustee or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave DCUK.

Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the [Disclosure & Barring Service](#).

When working with children and young people, it is important to:

- operate within DCUK's principles and guidance and any specific procedures;
- follow the Deaf Choices UK child protection policy and e-safety policy and procedures at all times;
- listen to and respect children at all times through appropriate communication methods;
- avoid favouritism;
- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination;
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving children and young people in planning activities wherever possible;
- ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project;
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory;
- ensure that you are able to communicate directly, or that you enlist the support of an additional person (for example a CST or a BSL interpreter) to ensure effective communication;
- ensure that any way in which you get the attention of children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing is respectful. For example it is NOT respectful to touch, or turn their face, to obtain their attention. It IS acceptable to gently tap their forearm or their shoulder. It is NOT respectful to shout extra loudly into a room, or put your face close to theirs in a group situation. It IS respectful to flash the room lights to get group attention;
- follow the e-safety policy and report any breaches;
- always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose;
- provide examples of good conduct you wish children and young people to follow;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse;
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or if this isn't possible, that you are within sight or hearing of other adults;

- be close to where others are working. If a child specifically asks for or needs some private time with you, ensure other staff should know where you and the child are;
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy;
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like;
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

You must not:

- patronise or treat children and young people as if they are silly;
- allow allegations to go unreported;
- develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and young people that is not a part of the work of DCUK or agreed with the manager or leader;
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact, behaviour or communication with a child or young person under the age of 18. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person using the services of DCUK represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer and is not acceptable under any circumstances and will be reported to the Police and children's services;
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number or address);
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people;
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality;
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- rely on your reputation or that of the organisation to protect you;
- socially isolate children by not meeting their communication needs.

### **The following practices should never be sanctioned:**

We do not countenance any use of force, form of physical violence or abuse, whether committed by or inflicted upon either adults or young people. It also means that we do not countenance verbal insults or destructive criticism. The organisation encourages respect for others' background, appearance, personality, abilities, opinions, preferences and communication choices or needs. Adults must accept the responsibility to exercise due care in all activities, so that young people are not exposed to risk through adult negligence or incompetence. Adults should not meet individually with children outside organised CSAUK activities. Where this happens inadvertently or by coincidence your line manager must be informed, a record made in supervision, and consideration given to how this might influence your work.

### **Whistle-blowing procedure**

This procedure applies to everyone who works for DCUK, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

#### **Aims and purpose of this procedure**

The aim of this procedure is to provide a clear and transparent way for anyone who works for the Deaf Choices UK to raise genuine concerns about acts of wrongdoing or malpractice in the workplace. It also aims to ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion.

This procedure provides staff, trustees and volunteers with steps to deal with allegations, ensuring that staff and volunteers are not penalised for raising genuine concerns, even if those concerns prove to be unfounded. It also provides the means for taking disciplinary action against anyone who is found to have raised false concerns with malicious intent.

The procedure does not apply to child protection concerns or allegations about a member of staff or volunteer. Concerns or allegations of this nature should be dealt with following the relevant procedure

## **1. What to do if you wish to raise a concern about malpractice**

### **Information for staff can be found in the DCUK Handbook**

Speak to another colleague (preferably someone you work with closely). If your concern relates to your supervisor/manager, you should speak to a trustee.

Your manager, or the responsible manager/trustee, will arrange to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. This meeting can take place away from the workplace if necessary.

You will be told at the meeting, or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address your concern. It may not be possible to tell you the full details of the outcome, as this could relate to confidential third party information. If no action is to be taken in relation to your concern, you will also be informed of this fact and given the reasons why.

If you do not want the person you have concerns about to know your identity, you should make this clear to the responsible manager/trustee at the earliest opportunity. Every effort will be made to respect your wishes, but it cannot be guaranteed that your identity will not be disclosed. If this is the case, you will be informed and any issues you may have about this will be discussed with you.

If you need support in raising your concern, you may bring a work colleague or trades union representative with you to the meeting with the responsible manager.

## **2. What to do if someone raises a concern with you about malpractice**

If someone tells you they are concerned about the actions of another staff member, trustee or volunteer, you should arrange to meet him/her as soon as possible. If you are not the person's supervisor/manager, you should establish why he/she has chosen to discuss the concern with you. You may suggest that the person speaks to another responsible manager if you wish, but should not refuse to hear what the person has to say.

You should approach the situation sensitively, recognising the discomfort that the person may feel. Offer to meet him/her away from the office if he/she wishes, and allow him/her to bring a work colleague or trades union representative to the meeting. You should also remind the person with the concern about other sources of support available to him/her. Some are listed at the end of this document.

If the person reporting the concern wants his/her identity to be kept confidential, you should explain that this will be done if possible, but that it may not be achievable.

Make notes of your discussions with the individual, and check the accuracy of your notes with him/her.

### **Deciding what action to take**

Once you have established the nature of the concern, it may be of a relatively minor nature and you may decide to resolve it informally.

If the concern appears more serious, you must consider first whether any immediate action is needed to protect children. If so, you should check the child protection procedures to what action to take.

You should also consider whether there is a need to involve the police and/or other statutory services (eg health). If so, you should contact (name of senior manager who is responsible for this) to discuss the matter further.

If you are not the manager of the person who is the subject of the concern, you should refer the matter to the person's manager, who will decide what action to take.

### **Conducting an investigation**

Unless the matter is relatively minor and can be dealt with informally, the responsible manager should arrange for an investigation to be completed as swiftly as possible. The investigation should also be demonstrably thorough and impartial.

The scope of the investigation will be determined by the nature of the concern. Witnesses may need to be interviewed and records may need to be scrutinised. It is also possible that advice may be needed from someone with specialist knowledge in human resources.

Once the investigation is completed, a report should be produced summarising the nature of the concern, the investigation process and the outcome, including specific recommendations. Take measures to preserve the anonymity of the person who raised the concern, if this has been his/her wish. If the concerns are not upheld, this should also be made clear.

If the concern is upheld and the person at the centre of it is found to have been culpable or remiss in some way, the report's recommendations should be carried out using a clear plan of action. The plan may include the use of disciplinary action, training, coaching, counselling, the implementation of new policies or procedures for the whole workforce, or a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

If it becomes apparent during the course of the investigation that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police should be informed. Your own investigation may have to be suspended on police advice, if they decide that they need to become involved.

The person who raised the concern should be informed of the outcome, but not the details of any disciplinary action. It may be appropriate for the person who raised the concern to be offered support or counselling.

If the concern is unfounded and the person who raised it is found, through the process of investigation, to have acted maliciously or out of a desire for personal gain, it may be appropriate to consider disciplinary action against him/her.

## Recording the concerns

The responsible manager should make accurate notes of each stage of the process, including the discussions during meetings, regardless of whether the concern is dealt with formally or informally,

Copies of these notes should be given to the person who is the subject of the concern. The person who raised the concern should also be given copies of notes from his/her discussion.

Notes made during the investigation and the report of the investigation, together with any notes relating to the outcome, should be kept on the file of the person at the centre of the concern. If it was requested, these notes should not reveal the identity of the person who reported the concerns.

## Further information and advice

Trustees:

Christine Hardy Trustee responsible for Safeguarding

The following details may also be useful:

Charity Commission: 0845 300 0218

Public Concern at Work: 020 7404 6609

This procedure has been adapted from the NSPCC *Speak Out* policy and procedure



## Behaviour code for children and young people

This example has been taken from the Safe Network *Are They Safe?* guide and was originally adapted from policies developed by Leonard Cheshire Disability and NSPCC consultancy services.

## Deaf Choices UK behaviour code for children and young people

This code has been developed in order to provide children and young people with advice on the behaviour that is expected of them when attending and in attendance of Deaf Choices UK training and activities. It has been shaped by the views of children and young people.

### Purpose

To ensure children and young people are treated fairly by all adults working with them at the Deaf Choices UK and know what is expected of them.

### Basic principles

This code of behaviour for children and young people is intended to:

- identify acceptable behaviour for children and young people
- promote self-respect and self-control
- raise children's and young people's self esteem and self confidence
- encourage individual responsibility for behaviour and outline the consequences of poor behaviour
- encourage children and young people to recognise and respect the rights of others
- encourage cooperation at all times and in all situations
- promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect
- anticipate and resolve any conflict that may arise
- ensure that children and young people are aware of when sanctions will be put into place.

### Dos and don'ts

Children and young people are expected to:

- cooperate with each other
- be friendly
- "listen" to each other, using appropriate communication methods
- be helpful
- follow this code of behaviour and other rules
- stick to the e-safety agreement when using the internet, social networking sites, mobile phones etc
- have good manners
- join in
- respect each other's differences
- treat staff and volunteers with respect
- report anything that worries or concerns them to Louise Creed or Debbie Hawke or on-site person

Children and young people shouldn't:

- pick on or make fun of each other
- bully each other
- stare at others
- yell or shout at others
- be abusive
- use equipment to be abusive or to cyberbully – for example, by using mobile phones to send nasty messages, taking and sharing photos without permission, sending nasty emails, or 'trolling' (leaving unkind comments on a webpage or social network profile).
-



## Deaf Choices UK e-safety policy- Our e-safety policy

This policy and the procedures that it underpins apply to all staff, trustees, volunteers and freelance workers, agency staff\*, students and anyone working on behalf of the Deaf Choices UK to:

- protect children and young people who receive Deaf Choices UK's services and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the Internet and training via skype) as part of their involvement with us;
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to e-safety;
- ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law of how we use IT.

### We recognise that:

- the welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and should govern our approach to the use and management of electronic communication technologies.
- 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, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to e-safety;
- the use of information technology is an essential part of all our lives; it is involved in how we as an organisation gather and store information, as well as how we communicate with each other. It is also an intrinsic part of the experience of our children and young people, and is greatly beneficial to all. However, it can present challenges in terms of how we use it responsibly and, if misused either by an adult or a young person, can be actually or potentially harmful to them.

### We will seek to promote e-safety by:

- appointing an e-safety coordinator (Louise Creed)
- developing a range of procedures that provide clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on the appropriate use of ICT;
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the opportunities offered by mobile phone technology and the internet in a way that keeps themselves safe and shows respect for others;
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online and when using their mobile phones and game consoles;
- incorporating statements about safe and appropriate ICT use into the codes of conduct both for staff and volunteers and for children and young people; [www.childline.org.uk/explore/deafzone](http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/deafzone) has videos in BSL
- expecting all relevant young people and careers to sign up to our e-safety agreement
- use our procedures to deal firmly, fairly and decisively with any examples of inappropriate ICT use, complaints or allegations, whether by an adult or a child/young person (these may include breaches of filtering, illegal use, cyberbullying, or use of ICT to groom a child or to perpetrate abuse);
- informing parents and carers of incidents of concern as appropriate;
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly;
- providing adequate physical security for ICT equipment;
- ensuring that user names, logins and passwords are used effectively;
- using only official email accounts provided via the organisation, and monitoring these as necessary;
- ensuring that the personal information of staff, volunteers and service users are not published on our website;
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given (Appendix 4);
- any social media tools used in the course of our work with children, young people and families must be risk assessed in advance by the member of staff wishing to use them;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers on ICT issues, through supervision, support and training;
- examining and risk assessing any emerging new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

- Further advice if you're worried about online abuse or the way someone is communicating online can be found at [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

## Deaf Choices "Active" Safeguarding Policy

All safeguarding policies and procedures apply to all staff, volunteers, trustees and agencies\* as previously stated.

In addition, we will ensure that:

- When organizing activities, there is a written programme of activities, appropriate to the needs of all ages and abilities in the group. This will include a contingency plan in case activities have to change (i.e in the case of outdoor activities and inclement weather conditions)
- Parents will be given a copy of the programme if activities and sign appropriate consent forms.
- Parents will be asked to sign a consent form for the provision of first-aid treatment as appropriate
- Parents will be asked to sign photo/video consent form
- WE have a written record of creche sessions and which children will be attending and sign children in and out of the creche
- Workers will know where children are and what they are doing
- We will never leave children unsupervised
- There are always adults that can communicate with the deaf children during either BSL or CS or both
- Report any accidents and "near misses" through our accident reporting procedure

We will ensure though risk assessments:

Buildings being used are safe and meet required standards, such as fire and health and safety  
 Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities should be up to standard, paying attention to respecting the right to privacy for children and young people  
 There should be sufficient heating and ventilation  
 Fire precautions are in place  
 First aid facilities are readily available and adequate  
 Equipment adequate and checked regularly  
 There is access to a telephone  
 Necessary insurance cover is adequate

Please note that the Deaf Choices – flow chart will be re-named with the named person 'on-site' with safeguarding duties.

\*Agency staff – Are usually services such as a pop-up crèche. We will ensure that they have, and adhere to robust Safeguarding procedures which meet the standards of the Deaf Choices UK Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

## Appendix 1.



**Cued Speech UK**

### Child Protection Expression of Concern Form

**This form should be completed when there is cause for concern and given to your Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.**

Details of Child:
Child's Name:
Child's Date of Birth:

Details of the person reporting concerns:
Full Name:
Post:

**Do these concerns relate to a specific incident/disclosure? If YES complete Section A; If NO, omit section A and move straight to Section B**  
[Text Box]

Section B:
Details of concern/disclosure/incident: <small>(What was said, observed, reported)</small>
Action taken: <small>(What did you do following the incident/disclosure/concern?)</small>
Any other relevant information:

Signed:	Date:
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**For completion by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

[Text Box]

[Text Box]

Checklist for DSL:

- ✓ Concern described in sufficient detail?
- ✓ Distinguished between fact, opinion and hearsay?
- ✓ Child's own words used? (Swear words, insults or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim)
- ✓ Jargon free?
- ✓ Free from discrimination/stereotyping or assumptions?
- ✓ Concern recorded and passed to DSL in a timely manner?

Deaf Choices UK, The Boatshed, Steamer Quay Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5AL  
T 01803 712 853 [E info@deafchoicesuk.com](mailto:info@deafchoicesuk.com) [W deafchoicesuk.com](http://www.deafchoicesuk.com)  
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## Appendix 2. List of Trustees and their contact details

Christine Hardy – Chairman 07807 290138

Peter Bowman - 07904161951

Ken Orpin – 07718924583

Jason Twomey - 07816997082

Sarah Elumba-Hill - 07530 338125

## Appendix 3. Online Safety Form



### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in the UK. Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available on:

- online abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- bullying learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

### We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

### We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using [name of organisation]'s network and devices
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety

### We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- appointing an online safety coordinator [this may or may not be the same person as your nominated child protection lead]
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents/carers
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly

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- ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

### If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

### Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Child protection
- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing
- Dealing with allegations of abuse made against a child or young person
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance

### Contact details

#### Online safety co-ordinator

Name: Henrietta Ireland  
Phone/email: 01803 712 853

#### Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Henrietta Ireland  
Phone/email: 01803 712 853



NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed on: 03/08/2025

Signed: *Henrietta Ireland*

Date: 03/08/2025

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## Appendix 4. Photography Consent Form



### Footage Consent Form

It is very important to us that the young people we record feel safe and happy for us to do so, we want to use the footage responsibly and with full consent.

We are asking you their parents/carers if you agree for footage of your child to be used by us in these ways:

(Please tick those you are happy with) ☒



**For Training Purposes:**

(e.g. to be shared with teachers and other people interested in deaf education)

☐

**For Fundraising:**

(e.g. as case studies in funding applications)

☐

**For Our Website:**

(e.g. on our literacy intervention page)

☐

**For Publicity:**

(e.g. facebook, youtube, social media campaigns))

☐

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.deafchoicesuk.com](http://www.deafchoicesuk.com)  
Email us: [info@deafchoicesuk.com](mailto:info@deafchoicesuk.com)