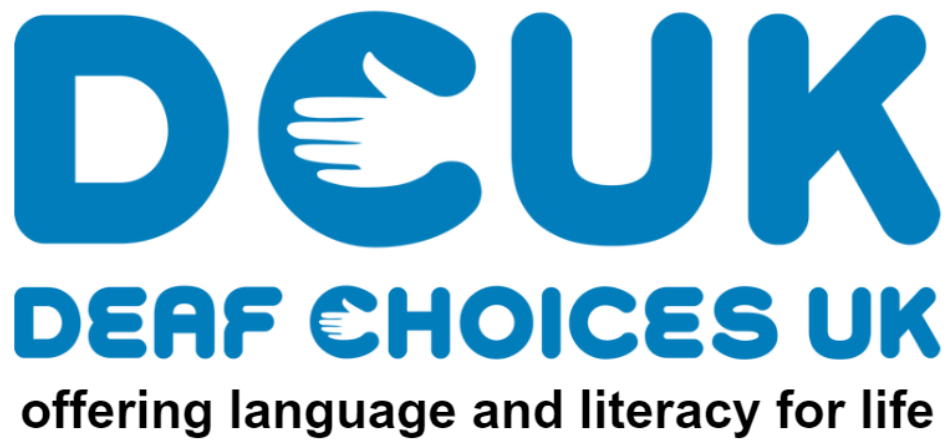




DCUK Child Protection – Policy and Procedures

**Henrietta Ireland – Executive Director and
Safeguarding Lead**

Approved 5th August 2026

Deaf Choices UK

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Registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales No. 279523

A Company Limited by Guarantee No. 1477997

DCUK 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 is:

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:

1. Children Act 2004

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

2. Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england>

3. Data Protection Act (In schools) 18th July 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools/sharing-personal-data>

4. Sexual Offences Act 2003

The [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#) is the last major piece of legislation, but it has been amended many times since its enactment on 1 May 2004. A more recent development is the [Online Safety Act 2023](#), passed in October 2023, which introduced new sexual offences to the UK's legal framework, according to a [report from the Office for National Statistics](#).

5. 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,
- 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: ...05/08/2026 and is due for review on 5th of August 2027.....(date)

Helen 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).

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **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 <https://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 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.

Deaf Choices UK Safeguarding Procedure.

The DCUK Safeguarding Team

Henrietta Ireland (HI) Executive Director and DSL for DCUK 07856424035

Sarah Elumba-Hill (SEH) Designated Safeguarding Trustee 07530 338125

Christine Hardy (CH) Chair of Trustees 07807 290138

The two deputy safeguarding leads are members of the Board of Trustees for DCUK and highly qualified in Safeguarding adults and safeguarding children within their professional lives, as well as having completed the relevant training for DCUK.

Use communication support from a third person (using BSL or Cued Speech Transliteration (CST)) where necessary.

1. 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. 999
- 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. (Mark Merton)
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
- **Contact Henrietta Ireland (designated safeguarding lead (DSL)),**
- If she is not available contact **Christine Hardy (deputy safeguarding lead) or**
- **Sarah Elumba-Hill (deputy safeguarding lead)** or the named safeguarding person 'on site' to let them know what is happening.

In the case of an emergency, Henrietta Ireland (DSL) will immediately contact CH and SHE on the **Safeguarding WhatsApp group for DCUK** and briefly discuss the concern.

Taking risk to the child into consideration, they will agree:-

1. whether to inform the family (if they are not present)
2. who (CH, HI SEH?) will contact
 - Police if it has not already been done
 - the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
 - the out of hours Duty Social Care Team. (if out of hours)

If there is any doubt then advice should be sought from the Local Authority regarding contact issues.

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

Once the child is safe the practitioner should 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.

When to call 999

Call 999 if the person is in **immediate danger** or a crime is happening now. This includes situations such as:

- Someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.
- Someone is using violence or is threatening violence.
- You believe a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of significant harm.

2. Urgent concerns that are not an emergency

Record your concerns on the Reporting sheet Appendix 1

Contact the DSL or deputy DSL to discuss and share your concerns and send them your report via email to Henriettaireland@deafchoicesuk.com, Chrissie Hardy chrissiewolvs@yahoo.co.uk and Sarah Elumba-Hill sarah.elumbahill@gmail.com

The group will convene at the first possible opportunity via ZOOM (within 24 hours) to discuss the case together and to include the practitioner.

A referral will be made to the MASH

For urgent concerns that are **not** an immediate emergency, you should contact your local MASH or the out-of-hours team for your specific local authority. The numbers vary by location.

To find the correct contact number for your local authority:

- Use the [GOV.UK tool to find your local council](#).
- Navigate to your local council's website and search for "Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub" or "Children's/Adults Social Care" contact information.

General Guidance for Non-Emergency Safeguarding Concerns:

- **During office hours:** Call your local MASH number. You will generally be expected to follow up with an online referral form.

- **Outside office hours:** Call the specific Emergency Duty Team (EDT) number for the local authority where the person at risk lives.
- **For non-urgent police matters:** Call **101** to report a crime or share information where there is no immediate danger.
- **To report anonymously:** You can often report concerns anonymously to the MASH or the police on 101, but this may be restricted for professionals.

For general advice and support, you can also contact the [NSPCC helpline](#).

The DCUK Safeguarding Team in collaboration with other multi-agency services will agree a plan with the family based on a strengths-based intervention.

Regular reporting and updates with the DCUK Safeguarding Team will happen on a weekly - then fortnightly - monthly basis until all concerns are reduced to LOW Risk.

3. Low or Emerging Risk

The practitioner should record concerns and observations in the case notes. She should discuss her concerns with the family and take a strengths-based approach and create a plan.

Concerns should be shared with the DSL immediately. A case discussion will happen with the DCUK Safeguarding Team within one week.

Depending on risk, a referral to MASH may be made.

Referral to Local Early Help pathways for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

Regular updates will happen through supervision with the line manager.

DCUK Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding shall be a 'Matters Arising' within every Trustee meeting

Cases and learning around safeguarding examples shall be shared on every agenda at every Team Meeting.

Safeguarding is part of DCUK safer recruitment and the DSL and one other member of the DCUK Safeguarding Team will be present on the interview panel. There will always be questions regarding Safeguarding children and adults at every interview for a practitioner, freelance practitioner or volunteer.

Every member of the DCUK team, including volunteers and Trustees will be made aware of the Safeguarding protocol.

If there is a concern about an adult working for DCUK this should be reported to the Executive Director. If the concern relates to the Executive Director or she is unavailable then contact CH or SHE and 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

ChildLine: 0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222) or www.childline.org.uk

Deaf Choices UK

Child Protection Flow Chart

NSPP Helpline: 0808 800 5000.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline Helpline: 0800 1111.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Is the child in immediate danger or are they injured? If so, contact the emergency services first.



Report the concern to a DCUK safeguarding lead:

Henrietta Ireland

Sarah Elumba-Hill

Christine Hardy



Report concerns on reporting sheet. Hold team discussion via Zoom within 24 hours. Involve any relevant practitioner in the discussion.



Are Concerns urgent?



Referral to MASH



Consider what support is needed for the referrer or others involved



Record concerns and observations in case notes.



Share and discuss with family; create strengths-based plan.



Share with DSL and discuss with DCUK safeguarding team

Safeguarding protocol known by all DCUK trustees, staff and volunteers. Cases discussed in regular team meetings, including trustee meetings. Flexibility for access communication (BSL, CST) as needed.

www.deafchoicesuk.com

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, or **the Local Authority Early Help Team**

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 be 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.

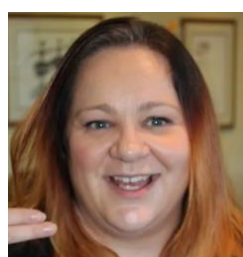
An actual or suspected incident must be reported by emailing the Charity Commission as soon as you are aware of it. Make sure you say what happened and how you are dealing with the incident. You need to do this even if you've already reported it to the police or another regulator.

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
Or Sarah Elumba Hill

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 dont's

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 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

Safer Recruitment – Deaf Choices UK

Deaf Choices UK (DCUK) is committed to creating a safe environment for children, young people and families. Our safer recruitment practices reduce the risk of employing or engaging individuals who may pose a safeguarding risk. All trustees, staff, freelancers and volunteers must adhere to the procedures outlined below.

1. Planning & Advertising

- All job descriptions and volunteer role profiles clearly state:
 - ❖ DCUK's commitment to safeguarding.
 - ❖ That enhanced DBS checks (with barring list where appropriate) are required.
 - ❖ That safeguarding concerns may be discussed at interview.
- Adverts highlight that:
 - ❖ Professional references and identity checks are required.
 - ❖ Any offer is conditional pending safeguarding vetting.

2. Application Process

- All applicants complete a *standard application form* capturing:
 - ❖ Full work history with explanations for any gaps.
 - ❖ Declaration of criminal convictions, cautions, or investigations (under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act exceptions).
 - ❖ Agreement that information may be used for safeguarding checks.
- CVs alone are **not** accepted.

3. Shortlisting

- At least **two DCUK staff/trustees** shortlist candidates.
- Safeguarding "concern indicators" are flagged (e.g., unexplained gaps in employment, inconsistent information).
- Reasons for rejection are documented.

4. Interview Procedure

- Interviews conducted by **two trained interviewers**, one being the DSL, SEH, or CH where possible.
- Interviews include:
 - ❖ A specific safeguarding question to test values and judgement.
 - ❖ Review of any concerns arising from the application.
- Identity documents (photo ID, proof of address) are verified at interview or before appointment.

5. Pre-Appointment Checks

Before any candidate begins work or volunteering (including shadowing), DCUK completes:

1. **Enhanced DBS check** (with children's barred list if the role is regulated activity).
2. **Right-to-work check** (staff only).
3. **Two written references** including:
 - Most recent employer
 - A referee able to comment on suitability to work with children
4. **Self-declaration** of criminal history and safeguarding concerns.
5. **Verification of qualifications**, training or professional memberships where relevant.

No individual begins working with children until all checks are completed and approved by the DSL or Chair of Trustees.

6. Induction & Training

All new staff, trustees, and volunteers must:

- Receive DCUK's Safeguarding Protocol, Code of Conduct, and Whistleblowing Procedures.
- Complete an induction meeting with HI/SEH covering:
 - Recognising abuse and responding to concerns
 - Boundaries, communication and Lone Working expectations
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training within **one month** of appointment.

Records of training dates and certificates are held securely.

7. Ongoing Monitoring & Supervision

- Regular supervision sessions include safeguarding reflection and oversight of conduct.
- Concerns about behaviour, boundaries, or practice are documented and acted upon immediately.
- DBS checks are renewed every **3 years** or sooner if concerns arise.
- All staff/volunteers must sign an annual declaration confirming:
 - They remain suitable to work with children.
 - They have no new police or safeguarding history.

8. Recruitment of Trustees

Trustee recruitment follows the above checks, with the addition of:

- Charity Commission disqualification checks.
- Governance-specific safeguarding responsibilities outlined during induction.

9. Safe Use of Contractors / Freelancers

Where external professionals are used:

- DCUK verifies safeguarding training and DBS checks.
- Contracts specify safeguarding responsibilities and reporting routes.
- Contractors do not work unsupervised with children unless fully vetted and approved.

10. Recording & Data Security

All recruitment documentation—including references, DBS numbers, interview notes and risk assessments—is:

- Stored securely and confidentially.
- Accessed only by HI, SEH, or CH.
- Retained in line with DCUK's data retention schedule.

DCUK

Safeguarding Groups and Activities

Deaf Choices UK's **commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

Plymouth deaf Choices provides a **safe, environment with inclusive activities for deaf children**

The group is **voluntary and parent-led and overseen by and managed in accordance with Deaf Choices UK Safeguarding protocol and procedures**

Safeguarding applies to **all activities**, venues, and interactions organised under the group's name.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to :

- Parents and carers
- Volunteers
- Deaf Choices UK staff (if involved)
- Visiting professionals or activity leaders
- **Where it applies**
- Abbey Hall, Plymouth
- External venues and trips
- Online or digital communication related to the group

3. Roles, Responsibilities & Limits of Responsibility

Parents and carers remain responsible for the supervision and behaviour of their own child at all times

PDC provides:-

- No formal childcare
- No one-to-one supervision unless explicitly agreed and risk-assessed
- **Safeguarding Lead**

Henrietta Ireland

4. PDC Expectation of safe practice

- There must be appropriate physical contact (e.g. only with parental consent and in view of others)
- Respectful communication, including:
 - Deaf-aware communication
 - Use of interpreters, cues, or visual communication

- No discrimination, bullying, or exclusion

For deaf children specifically:

- Recognise that communication barriers can increase safeguarding risk
- PDC and DCUK are committed to ensuring children can **express concerns in accessible ways**

5. Volunteers & Helpers

Volunteers may include:

- Parents
- Family members
- Community volunteers

DBS checks are required where there is regular unsupervised contact.

All volunteers should:-

- be aware of the safeguarding policy.
- Know how to raise concerns

6. Reporting Concerns & Allegations

SEE THE SAFEGUARDING FLOWCHART

7. Use of External Venues & Joint Safeguarding

External venues may have their own safeguarding policies

The group will comply with venue requirements where applicable

The DCUK Safeguarding Policy will take precedence over venue policies unless the organisation holds a specific policy for working with children in which case the Safeguarding Leads will work together to keep the child(ren) safe.

Parents remain responsible for their children regardless of venue.

8. Trips, Outings & Risk Assessment

Cover:

- A basic risk assessment will be carried out for activities outside of Abbey Hall
- Travel arrangements will be supervised as necessary
- Medical needs and emergency contacts will be provided on the day
- DCUK will need consent from parents/carers for off-site activities
- **Parents are responsible for supervising their own child unless otherwise agreed.**

9. Online Safety & Communication for Parents and Carers

We use online tools such as WhatsApp, email, social media and occasional online meetings to share information and help families stay connected. We want these spaces to be safe, respectful and supportive for everyone.

What this means in practice:

- Online communication is mainly **between adults (parents, carers and volunteers)**, not directly with children.
- Volunteers and organisers **do not send private messages to children**.
- Any concerns about a child's safety should be shared **privately with the Safeguarding Lead**, not in group chats.

Photos and videos:

- Photos or videos of children are only taken or shared **with clear parental consent**.
- Images are used respectfully and children are not identified by full name.
- Parents are asked **not to share images of other children** without permission from their parents or carers.

Online behaviour:

- We expect all online communication to be **kind, respectful and inclusive**.
- Bullying, offensive language or inappropriate content will not be tolerated.
- The same standards of behaviour apply online as at in-person activities.

Online meetings:

- Children should only take part in online meetings **with their parent or carer's knowledge and supervision**.
- Any concerns during online activities should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead.

If you ever have a concern about online behaviour or communication linked to the group, please raise it as soon as possible. Our priority is always the **safety and wellbeing of deaf children and their families**.

10. Review, Training & Updates

This Policy will be reviewed annually

- Parents and volunteers will be made aware of updates
- Safeguarding guidance will be refreshed as needed



Deaf Choices UK
Child Protection Expression of Concern Form

Details of Child:

Childs name:

Childs 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

Section A:

Date and time of incident/disclosure:

Location of incident/disclosure:

Date this form was completed:

Section B:

Details of concerns/disclosure/incident:
(what was said, observed, recorded)



Deaf Choices UK

Child Protection Expression of Concern Form

Section B continued:

Action taken:

Any other relevant information:

Signed:

Date:



Deaf Choices UK

Child Protection Expression of Concern Form

DSL Response:

Action taken: by DSL:

Rationale for decision making/actions taken:

Outcome of action taken by DSL:

Follow up action by DSL:

Feedback given to person reporting the concerns:



Deaf Choices UK

Child Protection Expression of Concern Form

Signed by DSL:

Date:

Full Name:

Checklist for DSL:

- Concern described in sufficient detail?
- Distinguished between fact, opinion and here-say?
- Child's own words used? (Swear words, insults or intimate vocabulary should be written down verbatim)
- Jargon free?
- Free from discrimination, stereotyping or assumptions?

Appendix 2. List of Trustees and their contact details

Christine Hardy – Chairman 07807 290138

Peter Bowman - 07904161951

Ken Orpin – 07718924583

Sarah Elumba-Hill - 07530 338125

Appendix 3. Online Safety Form

Deaf Choices UK Online Safety Agreement

Deaf Choices UK understands the importance of children being able to use the internet for education and personal development. This includes social media platforms, games and apps. We aim to support children and young people in making use of these in our work. However, we also recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times.

This agreement is part of our overarching **code of behaviour for children and young people and staff and volunteers**. It also fits with our overarching **online safety policy**. If you would like to know more about this, please speak to Henrietta Ireland – Executive Director.

• More information about online safety is available from learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguardingchild-protection/online-safety-for-organisations-and-groups

Young person: please read the following agreement and discuss it with your parents/carers and group leader.

Parents/carers: please read and discuss this agreement with your child and then sign it, ask your child to sign it, and return it to the group leader. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to Henrietta Ireland – Executive Director.

Young person's agreement

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet, including social media platforms, games and apps. This includes the resources I access and the language I use.
- I will not deliberately browse, download or upload material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to the group leader.
- I will not send anyone material that could be considered threatening, bullying, offensive or illegal.
- I will not give out any personal information online, such as my name, phone number or address.
- I will not reveal my passwords to anyone.
- I will not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone I meet online unless I have discussed this with my parents and/or group leader and am accompanied by a trusted adult.



- If I am concerned or upset about anything I see on the internet or any messages that I receive, I know I can talk to [Name of Regional Adviser here].

I understand that my internet use at Deaf Choices UK will be monitored and logged and can be made available to the group leader. I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if I choose not to follow them, Deaf Choices UK may contact my parents/carers.

Signatures:

We have discussed this online safety agreement and agrees to follow the rules set out above.

Parent/carer signature.....= Date

Young person's signature..... Date



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: _____