

POLICY STATEMENT

United Response is committed to ensuring every child and young person grows up safe, healthy, and supported, with their wellbeing as a top priority. Children have the right to be free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

In this policy a child will include anyone who is less than 18 years of age and is inclusive of the terms: baby, toddler, infant and young person. The reference to a 'child' within this policy will also include young people aged 16-25 who have an Education, Health & Care Plan and are within education as legislation such as Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

A child is defined by the Children Act 1989 as anyone under 18 years old.

A Child in Need (Children Act 1989, Section 17(10)) is a child who:

- is unlikely to maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without local authority services
- whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without such services or is disabled.

In Wales, a "child at risk" is one experiencing or at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm and has care and support needs.

A Looked After Child is accommodated by a local authority under an Interim Care Order, Full Care Order, Emergency Protection Order, or is placed for adoption. They may live with parents, foster carers, in Children's Homes, Secure Accommodation, or with prospective adopters.

A young carer, as per the Children and Families Act 2014, is someone under 18 who regularly provides significant care to another person.

Child abuse involves inflicting harm or neglecting to prevent harm, which may occur in person or online, and can be perpetrated by adults or other children.

This policy aims to reduce the risk of safeguarding incidents, minimize harm, and prevent reoccurrence.

We are committed to:

- Promoting child and young people safeguarding and expect all staff to share this responsibility.
- Zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Raising awareness that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Preventing harm or abuse.
- Maintaining and regularly reviewing safeguarding policies.



Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy February 2026

- Reporting any concerns or incidents of harm.
- Protecting children who have been harmed.
- Providing safeguarding training for all staff.
- Offering support to staff involved in safeguarding cases.

WHO IS THE POLICY FOR?

This policy applies to everyone involved with United Response, including permanent staff, agency workers, volunteers, trainers, consultants, and anyone commissioned to work for the company. It should be read alongside our Adult Safeguarding Policy and the policy specific to our Education, Skills, and Employment services.

Whether you work directly with children or adults, you may encounter situations where a child is at risk or has been harmed, such as:

- Witnessing an incident
- Receiving a disclosure from a child
- Being informed by an adult or child about harm.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse.
- Preventing harm to their health or development.
- Ensuring safe care and promoting positive outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and focuses on children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- The child's welfare comes first – always act in their best interests.
- Prevention – spot risks early and take action before harm occurs.
- Protection – act quickly to keep children safe.
- Partnership – work with other organisations to protect children.
- Accountability – everyone must follow safeguarding procedures.
- Equality – protect all children, regardless of background.

TYPES OF ABUSE

- Physical abuse – hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, etc.
- Sexual abuse – sexual contact or exposure, grooming, exploitation.
- Neglect – failing to meet a child's basic needs (food, shelter, supervision, healthcare).
- Emotional abuse – persistent behaviour that harms a child's emotional well-being.

- (In Wales only) Financial abuse – misuse of money or resources meant for a child’s care.

Other safeguarding concerns include:

- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Honour-based violence
- Modern slavery
- Child sexual/criminal exploitation
- County lines drug networks
- Radicalisation and extremism

WHERE AND BY WHOM CAN ABUSE HAPPEN?

Abuse can happen anywhere – at home, school, online, clubs, hospitals – and can be carried out by family, friends, professionals, strangers, or other children.

CHILD CENTERED APPROACH

- The Welfare of the Child is Paramount - The child’s well-being and safety must always be the primary concern in any safeguarding action. Decisions should prioritize what is in the best interests of the child, even if it conflicts with other interests or considerations.
- Prevention- Preventing harm to children before it occurs is a core principle. This involves identifying risks early, providing support to families and children, and creating environments where children can thrive safely. You should focus on early intervention, recognizing signs of potential harm, and providing timely support to prevent issues from escalating.
- Protection- This principle emphasizes the need to protect children from harm. It involves identifying children at risk, taking prompt action to protect them, and ensuring that those who pose a risk are effectively managed.
- Partnership- Effective safeguarding requires collaboration between all agencies and professionals involved in a child’s life, including social services, health, education, and law enforcement.
- Accountability- Organizations and professionals must be accountable for their role in safeguarding children. This includes having clear policies, regular training, and effective oversight mechanisms.
- Equality and Non-Discrimination- All children have the right to be protected from

harm regardless of their race, gender, religion, disability, or background.

- **Listening to the Child-** A child-centred approach requires actively listening to children and taking their views seriously. Children should be encouraged to express their feelings and concerns, and these should be factored into decision-making processes. You should create safe spaces for children to communicate openly, using age-appropriate methods to ensure their voices are heard.
- **Understanding the Child's Experience -** Safeguarding efforts should consider the child's perspective, experiences, and individual circumstances. This involves understanding their home environment, social relationships, and any factors that might impact their well-being.
- **Empowerment -** Children should be empowered to understand their rights and know how to seek help if needed. This involves educating children about safeguarding in a way they can understand and encouraging them to take an active role in their own protection.
- **Respecting the Child's Dignity -** All actions taken in the name of safeguarding should respect the child's dignity and privacy. Children should be treated with care, respect, and sensitivity, particularly in difficult situations.
- **Focusing on Outcomes -** A child-centred approach is outcomes-focused, meaning that safeguarding efforts should aim to improve the overall well-being and future prospects of the child, not just to remove immediate risks.
- **Consistency and Continuity -** Children benefit from consistent support from trusted adults. A child-centred approach involves maintaining continuity in the support and services provided to children, helping them build stable and trusting relationships.

A child-centred approach to safeguarding is essential for ensuring that the rights, dignity, and well-being of children and young people are protected. By prioritizing the child's perspective, promoting collaboration among professionals, and focusing on positive outcomes, safeguarding efforts can more effectively protect children from harm and support their overall development.

In Wales there are two main principles in safeguarding children:

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** for services to be effective each practitioner and organisation must play their full part both individually and in collaboration.
- **A child-centred approach:** for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the personal outcomes for the child and what matters to them. The rights of the child should be central to the approach and their best interests should always be paramount.

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to protecting children and young people from significant harm that occurs outside their homes, such as in schools, neighbourhoods, and online environments.

It recognizes that young people face risks like sexual and criminal exploitation, gang-related harm, and radicalisation in their social and physical contexts, not just within the family unit. This approach requires a broader understanding of community risks and a wider range of interventions beyond traditional social care, involving various professionals and community members to make environments safer for young people.

Examples of contextual risks:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE): (including gangs and county lines)
- Radicalisation
- Harmful sexual behaviours: within peer groups
- Missing from care, home, or education
- Harm within online environments

Key principles:

- Community focus: Addresses risks in specific locations and environments.
- Broader partnerships: Involves collaboration beyond family and traditional child protection services.
- Interventions at a location level: Aims to make specific places and contexts safer.
- Shared responsibility: Recognizes that many people and organisations have a role to play in creating safe spaces.

How it works in practice:

- Professionals identify specific risks within communities, schools, or online spaces.
- They work with various partners, such as community groups, schools, and other local services.
- Interventions are tailored to the context, such as providing support to vulnerable young people in a high-risk area or improving safety in a specific location.

EARLY HELP

We aim to identify problems early and provide support before they escalate. This may include help for:

- Children with disabilities or special needs
- Young carers
- Children at risk of criminal exploitation, radicalisation, or going missing
- Families with mental health or substance misuse problems

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED?

Act immediately if you think a child is at risk.

1. Report it to your manager straight away (within 4 hours if possible).
2. If the child is in immediate danger, call 999.
3. Your manager will decide whether to refer to Children's Social Care or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
4. Record your concerns clearly and factually within 48 hours.

Every worker should read their local multi-agency safeguarding children's policy and procedures, so they are aware of when and how concerns should be reported; and what processes might follow. This can be found on your Local Authority website.

When to Raise a Concern

Here are examples of when a referral may be needed due to concerns about a child (this list is not exhaustive):

- Suspected mistreatment, abuse, or neglect of a child.
- A child discloses clear allegations of abuse.
- A child has an injury with no explanation, or the explanation doesn't match the injury.
- A non-mobile infant sustains an injury without a reasonable accidental explanation.
- Concerns arise that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm from abuse or neglect.
- Additional concerns arise for a child with an open case in Children's Social Care.
- New concerns of significant harm for a child already receiving services as a child in need.
- A child is in contact with someone who may pose a risk, such as someone on the sex offender registry.
- A child is denied access to urgent or important medical services.
- A child is at risk of illegal activities such as prostitution, female genital mutilation, or trafficking.
- A child suffers or is likely to suffer harm from involvement in gang activity or violence.
- A child is exposed to domestic abuse by witnessing the ill-treatment of others.
- Any single incident of domestic violence in families with a child under 12 months (including unborn children).
- Concerns arise about forced marriage or honour-based violence.
- A child makes historical abuse allegations.

- Suspected fabricated or induced illness (formerly known as Munchausen's by Proxy).
- There are concerns about the welfare of an unborn child.

Any worker of United Response who has a concern about a child should take action without delay. If the child is in immediate danger then you should contact the emergency services (police, ambulance or fire) straight away by dialling 999.

SHARING INFORMATION

You do not need consent to share information if a child is at risk.

Always:

- Share only relevant details with those who need to know.
- Protect the identities of people who could be put at risk.
- Record why you shared (or didn't share) information.

The Seven golden rules for sharing information (including personal information)

1. All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Protecting a child from such harm takes priority over protecting their privacy, or the privacy rights of the person(s) failing to protect them.
 - When you have a safeguarding concern, wherever it is practicable and safe to do so, engage with the child or young person and/or their carer(s), and explain who you intend to share information with, what information you will be sharing and why.
2. You do not need consent to share personal information about a child and/or members of their family if a child is at risk or there is a perceived risk of harm. You need a lawful basis to share information under data protection law, but when you intend to share information as part of action to safeguard a child at possible risk of harm.
3. Seek advice promptly whenever you are uncertain or do not fully understand how the legal framework supports information sharing in a particular case.
4. When sharing information, ensure you and the person or agency/organisation that receives the information take steps to protect the identities of any individuals (e.g., the child, a carer, a neighbour, or a colleague) who might suffer harm if their details became known to an abuser or one of their associates.
5. Only share relevant and accurate information with individuals or agencies/organisations that have a role in safeguarding the child and/or providing their family with support, and only share the information they need to support the provision of their services.
6. Record the reasons for your information sharing decision, irrespective of whether or not you decide to share information.

Another consideration is regarding whether a child should be told that information is going to be shared. This will be dependent on the age of the child and his/her level of maturity and understanding, the situation they are living in and the possible consequences. It is important to work openly and honestly with a child whenever possible. However, if a child is likely to share the information (e.g. with the alleged abuser) which could put them more at risk or compromise any enquiry then some information may be withheld.

TRAINING

All staff must:

- Complete safeguarding training at induction.
- Have annual refresher training.
- Receive specialist training if their role requires it.

Through undertaking training, workers will:

- Understand what safeguarding children work involves
- Be aware of the differences in legislation across England and Wales
- Know where to access the relevant statutory guidance, policies and procedures
- Be clear what constitutes child abuse including statutory and wider categories of abuse
- Have learnt about the signs and symptoms of child abuse
- Be clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children
- Know when and how to raise a concern; and what needs to be recorded
- Understand the safeguarding children process regarding assessment and enquiries

Remember:
If in doubt – **report it**. Protecting children is everyone’s responsibility.

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) COMPLIANCE				
This policy supports compliance with the following key questions. The service is:				
SAFE	EFFECTIVE	CARING	RESPONSIVE	WELL-LED
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) COMPLIANCE			
This Policy supports compliance with the following key themes:			
WELLBEING	CARE AND SUPPORT	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	ENVIRONMENT



Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy February 2026

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