

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

Published

| Event History

**Policy owned by Investigative Services****Child Protection****1. Policy Purpose and key drivers****Introduction**

This policy has been reviewed in relation to Authorised Professional Practice and the following applies.

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child:

- has reached 16 years of age
- is living independently
- is in further education
- is looked after
- is a member of the armed forces
- is in hospital
- is in custody in a secure estate

does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

**Child abuse**

Child abuse is defined as any form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on them, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others (eg, via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Concern about child abuse is one aspect of safeguarding children. The term child abuse includes physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect of a child.

It does not include straightforward property offences where the child is a victim (eg, theft of a mobile phone). However, the police have an important role where there are concerns for children which do not involve criminal offences. That role generally includes active involvement in strategic partnerships relating to safeguarding children, and action at an operational level which includes referring any concerns to other agencies for information and/or action.

Child abuse can also include offences relating to human trafficking, honour based abuse and child sexual exploitation. In most occurrences of child abuse, however, the perpetrator is likely to be a family member or someone known to the child. In some cases children may not understand that they are being abused. The complex dynamics of abuse mean that some individuals develop an attachment to the person harming them. This can sometimes make identifying abuse difficult and result in the victim playing down and/or denying the abuse.

**Child protection**

Where there is a risk that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, or is a 'child in need' as defined in the Children Act 1989 section 17(10), the police are responsible for taking whatever action is appropriate. This includes referring details

about the child to children's social care. In all aspects of the police response to concern for a child, including where there are suspicions of child abuse (eg, as part of a criminal investigation), the key principles are the welfare and best interests of the child. This applies regardless of the environment in which the abuse occurs (eg, family, institution or online) and the context or crime type (eg, exploiting or trafficking a child).

The requirement for action in child abuse cases creates obligations at every stage of the police response. These obligations apply when taking reports of concern for children and throughout the process of investigation. They also include the Multi-Agency response for safeguarding, and in particular, under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, a statutory obligation on the police service to safeguard children. A thorough investigation should be completed in all cases where concern for a child is reported.

Officers should also ensure that their actions and decision making (including cases where actions are considered unnecessary or disproportionate) are recorded in detail. An investigation into child abuse is a search for the truth and, from the outset, officers should focus efforts on gathering evidence that proves or disproves the allegation and does not rely solely on the victim's or suspect's account.

Staffordshire Police recognises the duty to make Staffordshire a safer place for all ; this includes residents of all ages whether permanent or temporary and those who visit or journey through the area serviced by Staffordshire Police .

This policy and its supporting procedures have been put in place to ensure that Staffordshire Police achieves its objective of making Staffordshire safer for children .

Making Staffordshire safer for children will be achieved by :

- a) Recognising that child abuse takes many different forms some less obvious than others
- b) Accurately recording episodes of suspected child abuse from first recognition to case resolution and all actions taken to protect the child
- c) Assessing the risks posed to children by using effective risk assessment processes.
- d) Ensuring that responses to identified risks to children are timely , appropriate and proportionate .
- e) Sharing information and working with partners and other relevant support services towards the common goal of protecting children from harm .

### **Policy Purpose**

To achieve safeguarding of children by providing clear direction to all staff and to enable effective work with partner agencies including non government bodies . Successful joint working to safeguard children requires the coordination of all agencies and professionals who have different roles , skills and expertise regarding child protection and who may also be located in different geographical areas .

Individual children need coordinated help from health , education, children's social care and other agencies including youth justice services . When effectively

coordinated joint working enables agencies to respond earlier and more efficiently to safeguard children.

### **Policy Statement**

Staffordshire Police will work together with local authorities, children's social care and other agencies to safeguard children against abuse and to make Staffordshire a safer place for children.

The priorities of Staffordshire Police in responding to child abuse and neglect are :

- To protect the lives and rights of children .
- To ensure that whilst investigating and policing cases of child abuse the welfare of the child is paramount .
- To take effective action against offenders who abuse children so that they can be held accountable through the criminal justice system while at the same time safeguarding the welfare of the victim .
- To gather and share information and intelligence about the victims and perpetrators of child abuse with other police forces and statutory agencies
- To use current best practice guidance and appropriate academic research to understand and respond to the threats posed to children .
- To use analytical products to identify opportunities for intervention to protect children and to adopt a proactive Multi agency approach to prevent and reduce neglect and child abuse .
- To develop systems, business processes and protocols to manage reports of child abuse and concerns about the welfare of children .
- To develop systems, business processes and protocols to support effective information sharing across Staffordshire Police and with other agencies to safeguard children
- To adhere to the following protocols and best practice guidance :
  - a) Child Protection Interagency Procedures for Safeguarding Children (Stoke on Trent) [www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.org.uk)
  - b) Child Protection Interagency Procedures for Safeguarding Children (Staffordshire) [www.staffsscb.org.uk](http://www.staffsscb.org.uk)
  - c) HM Government (2015) Working Together to Safeguard Children
  - d) College of Policing (2015) : Investigating child abuse and safeguarding children [Internet]

### **Application**

This policy and its supporting procedures applies to all police officers and police staff and those within the wider police family including those working voluntarily or under any employment contract to The Chief Constable of Staffordshire or the Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner

In particular this policy and its supporting procedures applies to all officers and staff within the Public Protection Investigation Teams and the Public Protection Safeguarding Department who have specific terms of reference in relation to the investigation of child abuse and those who commit offences against children . Specific terms of reference for this department are included in the Standard Operation Procedures. This includes:

- Public Protection Investigation Team, Child Exploitation Team, Violent and Sex Offender Management Team and members of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- All police officers, police staff and members of the police family wherever located who in the course of their duty come into contact with or deal with children and young people

### Related Documents

Links to related documents:

[Child Protection - Child Abduction Warnings \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Child Exploitation Team \(CET\) Roles & Responsibilities \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme - Staff Briefing Note \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Concept of Significant Harm & Categories of Abuse \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme \(CSODS\) \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Forensic Medical Examinations \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Introduction to the Provision of Pre Trial Therapy \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Powers of Police Protection \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Powers of Police Protection Guidance Notes \(Procedure\)](#)  
[Child Protection - Powers of Police Protection \(PPP\) Report/ Checklist \(Procedure\)](#)

**Gatekeeper** - the Author suggested the following Procedure document(s) to link to.

[Child Abuse - Guidelines for Officers viewing Images; Child Abuse - Laming Report; Child Protection - Child Abduction Warnings; Child Protection – Child Exploitation Team \(CET\) Roles & Responsibilities; Child Protection – Child Sexual Exploitation – Initial Response; Child Protection - Children Taken into Police Protection; Child Protection – Concept of Significant Harm & Categories of Abuse; Child Protection - Investigation and Interview; Child Protection - Medical Examinations; Child Protection - Notification to Social Services; Child Protection – Powers of Police Protection; Child Protection – Powers of Police Protection Guidance Notes; Child Protection - Powers of Police Protection \(PPP\) Report/ Checklist; Child Protection - Pre trial therapy CPS Police and Therapists accountability; Child Protection – Understanding Child Sexual Exploitation; Child Protection - Video Interviewing; Child Rescue Alert - Activation Process; Child Sexual Abuse - Online](#)

### Relevant Dates and Review Period

Effective Date:	31/12/2015
Review Date:	31/12/2018
Review Frequency:	Annually

### Policy Basis and Implications

2. Legal Basis: Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 imposes a duty on specified agencies including the police to make arrangements to ensure their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children  
 Childrens Act 1989; The Laming report 2003; The Bichard Inquiry Report

3. Management of Police Information (MoPI): **MoPI Policing Purpose:** Protecting Life and Property, Preventing the commission of offences, Bringing offenders to justice, Any duty or responsibility arising from common or statute law  
**MoPI Review, Retention and Disposal addressed as follows:**

All reports of the abuse of children are MOPI category 1 Public Protection matters and material is to be retained in accordance with the retention periods for MOPI Class 1 material

4. Associated Benefits:	To meet the statutory requirement to make arrangements to safeguard children. To work effectively with partners to safeguard children and to ensure that information is shared; accurate risk assessments are made and appropriate action is taken. The measurement of success will be fewer serious case reviews, a reduction in the need for escalation procedures where partners cannot agree on the level of risk; increased attendance at case conferences and medical examinations of children
5. Consultation:	Police Federation; Unison; Director of Intelligence; Investigation Hub Detective Superintendents; Representatives of the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board; LPT Commanders and Superintendent
6. Financial Implications:	Policy implementation will be met through existing funding
7. Human Resources / Training:	All operational police officers and police staff who come into contact with members of the public and who may receive reports from members of the public are required to complete the Child Protection level 1 SSCB Training package. A training needs analysis has been conducted and a training plan introduced for Public Protection investigators
8. Associated Policy:	Missing Persons; Sudden Death of an Infant; Vulnerable Adults; Domestic Violence; Mental Ill Health; Hate Crime

**FOI, Human Rights and Equality Impact Assessment Indicators**

FOIA:	Release to Public		
ECHR:	Compliant with proportionality test	Articles engaged:	Article 2 Right To Life; Article 3 Prohibition of Torture; Article 5 Right to Liberty and Security; Article 6 Fair Trial; Article 7 No Punishment without Law; Article 8 Right to respect for Private and Family life; Article 14 Prohibition of Discrimination
EIA:	Compliant	Compliant with Code of Ethics:	Yes

**Indexing**

Categories:	Crime Investigation Intelligence Major Crime Partnerships Protecting Vulnerable People Victims and Witnesses
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