

Sense Operational Policy

Safeguarding Children and Young People

England

Procedure



Outcomes

- Children and young people should be involved as practically possible in the safeguarding process.
- Children and young people are supported to keep themselves safe; they are provided with meaningful information to recognise and report abuse.
- Children and young people are to be engaged in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving their quality of life, wellbeing and safety.
- Children and young people's safety is respected and protected.
- Children and young people, family members' and staff members' concerns about safeguarding are taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.
- Staff understand safeguarding procedures and feel skilled, knowledgeable, confident and supported to report concerns about abuse.
- Safeguarding issues are dealt with responsively and appropriately, actions are taken to prevent and reduce risks. The organisation promotes best practice in relation to safeguarding and learns lessons from internal and external experience.

What is this procedure about?

Safeguarding is working with children and young people with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is everybody's business and the responsibility for dealing with it belongs to us all. Sense takes its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding extremely seriously.

For this procedure to be effective it is essential that each person has an understanding of what safeguarding is, knows that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, knows how to access safeguarding information, knows of any likely contribution that they may be required to make to safeguard children and young people and how to access further advice, support and services.



Sense has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to child safeguarding, recognising the importance of working successfully across partner boundaries.

Abuse definition

Abuse is categorised in the following areas:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Fabricated or Induced illness

Note: Please see the Children and Young People's Safeguarding Guidance for further detailed definitions of the above abuse categories.

Definition of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this procedure 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 to Safeguard Children, DfE 2018)



Who is this procedure for?

- Individuals using a Sense service, their families and carers
- All staff (including volunteers), Service Managers, Operational Managers and Vice Principal's
- Director('s) of Operations, Heads of Operations and Executive Principal
- Other professionals, such as social workers, police and therapists, Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCBs)
- Trustees
- Whilst this list is not exhaustive safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and will include other non-Operational Directors / Managers including Trading Managers where a child or young person is at risk and is accessing their service

This procedure is applicable to children and young people aged between 0 years – 18 years.

All children and young people who receive Sense services are at risk. Sense recognises the increased vulnerability of children and young people who:

- Have a high degree of complex needs
- Additionally, have hearing and visual difficulties
- Have extremely limited / no verbal / no formal communication (communicate differently)
- Have limited / no knowledge of keeping safe
- Have limited mobility
- Rely on others for support with personal care
- Experience social isolation as a result of relying on a small group of support staff

Note: All Sense staff have a responsibility and duty of care regarding safeguarding matters with vulnerable and non-vulnerable children and young people.



Note: Safeguarding children and young people is everybody's business, as professionals we are required to be vigilant at all times. We are required to report concerns as well as any suspected, alleged or disclosed abuse. This reporting should take place in relation to any child or young person that we come into contact with.

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Part One: General Points

Every person has the right to live a life free from abuse and neglect.

Sense has a zero tolerance approach to abuse. This means that all actual and alleged abuse and concerns must be reported. Concerns should also be included as they may form part of a wider picture of abuse.

All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and acted upon. Sense is committed to openness and honesty. Most reporting will be done under this procedure, but it is recognised staff may wish to report under the Whistle Blowing Policy

<https://iris.sense.org.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=1408> .

Sense is committed to the following rights and principles with regards to safeguarding:

Empowerment

Children and young people have the right to:

- Be accorded the same respect and dignity as any other person, by recognising their uniqueness and personal needs
- Guidance and assistance in seeking help as a consequence of abuse
- Be supported in making their own decisions (if appropriate based on age, competence or capacity up to 18 years old) about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse and to know that their wishes will only be over-riden if it is considered necessary for their own safety or the safety of others. It is important that we acknowledge the beliefs and wishes of the child or young person.
- Be supported in bringing a complaint under any existing complaints procedure
- Be supported in reporting the circumstances of any abuse to independent bodies
- Receive appropriate support, education, counselling, therapy and treatment following abuse
- Seek legal advice or representation on their own behalf
- Seek redress through appropriate agencies



Protection

Children and young people have the right to:

- Live safely, without fear of violence or abuse in any form
- Have alleged, suspected or actual cases of abuse investigated
- Have their rights respected and to have their family, informal carers or advocates act on their behalf as appropriate
- Have their money, goods and possessions treated with respect, and to receive equal protection for themselves and their property through the law

Prevention

Children and young people have a right to:

- Be given access to knowledge and information which they can understand to help them make informed choices
- Information about, and practical help in, keeping themselves safe and protecting themselves from abuse
- Have the right to information about why their wishes are not followed in some cases

Child-Centred Approaches and Multi Agency Working

Effective safeguarding arrangements both organisationally and in every service should be underpinned by two key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and



taking prompt action. Sense staff need to have the expectation and be prepared to report concerns to internal and external professionals and agencies.

Staff are expected to be honest, transparent and to share information relevant to the concern. It will be necessary to be clear about each agency's role in supporting the child or young person and their family or carers. Clear communication will also be essential and Sense staff must be clear about their role and requirements. If you are not – ask!

Effective safeguarding systems must be child centred. The needs and views of the child are paramount and must be the key focus of any safeguarding system or activity.

Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and for consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour of professionals.

Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs.

A child-centred approach is supported by:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Equality Act 2010
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that every child has:

- The right to a childhood
- The right to be educated
- The right to be healthy
- The right to be treated fairly



- The right to be heard
- The right to be protected from harm

In particular, the following articles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child should be paramount in relation to safeguarding children and young people:

Article 3: Best interests of the child

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.

Article 12: Respect for the views of the child

Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 13: Freedom of expression

Every child must be free to say what they think and seek and receive information of any kind as long as it is within the law.

Article 23: Children with disability

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life in conditions that promote dignity, independence and an active role in the community.



Part Two: Practice

You might suspect abuse, or have concerns about a child if you recognise some of the symptoms in the guidance. You may have concerns if you see someone behaving in a way that raises your suspicions. This change in behaviour might be seen in the behaviour of the child or young person or in the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator.

Alternatively, a family member, staff member, friend or member of the public might tell you that they are concerned about abuse, or a service user might communicate concerns about abuse or their safety to you.

As a Sense employee you have an obligation to report to the police if a criminal act has occurred where there has been sexual, financial and or physical abuse. Prior to this you should discuss this with your line manager unless there is a risk of immediate danger to the child or young person.

This is what you should do:

Ensure the child or young person's immediate safety and medical needs are met.

If you are told about a suspicion, listen carefully to what is being said. Do not make assumptions or accusations. Take what is being said seriously. Find out the basics of what happened, but do not investigate the matter.

If you observe non-verbal disclosure or see something that concerns you. Do not make assumptions or accusations. Take what you see seriously. Make clear notes so that you can report your concerns, but do not investigate the matter.

Do not ask leading questions. A leading question is a question which contains part of the answer, for example, "that man / woman hurt you on Wednesday, didn't he / she". It is more appropriate to ask an open question, such as "can you tell me what happened on Wednesday", or "can you give me more detail?".



Make a clear record of what has been said / seen. You can include diagrams if it would help to explain what happened. Write the date and time on the recording and sign it.

Do not guarantee confidentiality. When a safeguarding issue has been disclosed or suspected, it is not always possible to keep everything confidential. You can assure the child or young person that you will only share information with people if they need to know about it.

You must tell someone. This is very important. This should be your head of service, line manager, on-call, senior manager or the designated person (in an external environment this could be the head teacher). If the alleged abuse is about your line manager, you should report the matter to a more senior manager.

Alternatively, you can inform the Head of Safeguarding on:

Email: steve.kiekopf@sense.org.uk

Telephone: 0121 553 7264 / Ext: 1801 / Mobile: 07866 593 863 / Freephone: 0800 731 9008

Address: 750 TouchBase Pears, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6NA

In the absence of the Head of Safeguarding please contact the Director Of Operations jonathan.monk@sense.org.uk / 0121 415 2728 / 07876870938

The **police** are to be contacted:

- In an emergency (immediately); or
- If a crime has been committed, after a discussion with a senior Manager.

Note: This practice sheet should be made readily accessible to staff.

What Happens next:

The manager (or on call manager) will decide what will happen next. The manager should:

- Check further that the child or young person's needs are being met, i.e. that they are in no immediate danger and that medical assistance, if necessary, has been sought.



- Inform relevant statutory authorities where appropriate (including the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), Social Worker, the Police, Head Teacher in external environments, Ofsted), **immediately if possible** or within **24 hours**. The Local Authority (or the Police) will provide instructions about whether the matter should be investigated.
- It will be necessary to notify the applicable funder, placing authority or commissioner.
- The manager will, immediately or as soon as possible, inform the relevant senior manager and if necessary the Group Director of Operations Maria Horton, 0121 415 2711 / 07917 813996 / maria.horton@sense.org.uk) who will inform the Chief Executive if the allegations are one "serious abuse" e.g. where a police investigation is likely to occur.
- In Sense College, allegations against members of staff should also be reported to the Chair of Governing Body in the absence of the Executive Principal. Allegations against the Principal should be reported to the Chair of the Governing Body immediately.

Note: Sense appreciates that you may not have all the information you need at the time where an incident of abuse has been alleged/disclosed/suspected.

- The next of kin, carer, family or advocate should usually be informed within a reasonable time. This is immediately or as soon as possible thereafter and no longer than 24 hours after the report or incident. This would not be appropriate if:
 - The abused child or young person has capacity and makes an informed choice not to inform them (this is only applicable to children and young people over the age of 16 years old)
 - If the child is under 16 and any of the above are implicated in the concern – direction will be given by the Police, Children's Social Services or Emergency Duty Team (EDT). This must be followed.
- The manager is responsible for ensuring that all suspected, reported or actual incidents of abuse are recorded on ERIC by completing a Safeguarding notification within five working days.



- Please see the 'Creating A Safeguarding Incident Guidance' for more information [Creating a Safeguarding Incident .pdf](#).
- **Note:** In line with GDPR – ERIC is to be used in all circumstances as the most secure place to store information of this nature.
- With an increase across services working arrangements there will be occasions when a (support) staff member will be working within a different service or location. When completing a safeguarding incident on ERIC the service with responsibility for the care and support of the individual at the time of the incident will be allocated the case. The following procedure will need to be followed under these circumstances: [Local Operating Procedure - Allocation of Service.docx](#)
- In the event a staff member is the alleged perpetrator of abuse, Human Resources may be required to refer them to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Local Children's Safeguarding Board, or other professional body. Volunteers can also be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- If there is a failure to take action at any level, staff should contact the Group Director of Operations (**Maria Horton**) / Ofsted and the LCSB directly and/or staff may wish to report under the HR05 Whistle-Blowing Policy
<https://iris.sense.org.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=1408> .

Note: When a member of Sense staff has reported abuse internally or to an external agency – there will be times when they may hear no further information regarding the concerns they have raised. This is quite appropriate in circumstances such as formal investigations.

Note: It is increasingly best practice and transparent to share concerns with parents and carers of children and young people where there is safeguarding concerns. Please seek support and advice from a senior manager.



Part Three: Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers must report any concerns or suspicions of abuse to the appropriate person without delay. Suspicions of abuse must not be ignored.

Staff and volunteers, who do not act on such information, consequently will face a disciplinary investigation.

Children and young people communicate in a range of different ways. They must be enabled to inform staff that they are being abused. Staff and volunteers should carefully observe changes in behaviour, challenging behaviour and changes in health as potential indicators of abuse.

Sense staff and volunteers will promote inclusion and engagement. Staff will empower children and young people with appropriate information about safeguarding.

All staff and volunteers

- Will respond to safeguarding concerns that are reported to them.
- For ¹**Operations Staff**:
 - Year 1 - Corporate training: eSafeguarding Awareness for ALL + Safeguarding face-to-face + competency
 - Year 2 - External LA Safeguarding course + competency
 - Year 3 – Competency
 - Year 4 – Corporate Sense Safeguarding Refresher - face to face half day course + competency
 - Year 5 onwards... - repeat years 1-4 as above
- For Non-Operational Staff:
 - eSafeguarding Awareness for all

¹ For Sense College Staff refer to Executive Principal and Vice Principal Safeguarding, Behaviour and Learner Wellbeing.



- Should not assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person.
- Where there are concerns about the child or young person's welfare and staff believes they are suffering or likely to suffer abuse or neglect, then they should share the information with their line manager, local authority and or the police if they believe or suspect that a crime has been committed. **Note:** this also includes any other sibling within the family home environment.
- Will inform their line manager if they receive any convictions, cautions or are bound over, which may change their status.

The Safeguarding Board

- Will monitor and evaluate safeguarding practice in Sense.
- Will receive safeguarding reports on reviews of safeguarding systems.
- Will support and promote better learning and safeguarding practice.
- Will make recommendations for areas for development of safeguarding and seek confirmation that these have been considered by senior management groups.
- Will receive reports of specific areas of safeguarding concerns.
- Will review Policy, Procedure and Guidance documents.

The Head of Safeguarding

- Will keep abreast of national policy, best practice, research and development in the area of safeguarding.
- Will liaise with other organisations and networks to enable the ongoing development of best practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Will provide advice to the organisation on safeguarding and implications for practice as well as in relation to specific incidents.
- Will monitor and ensure that corporate systems and processes that enable Sense to receive feedback on its performance are working effectively.



- Will monitor and maintain safeguarding recording systems so that comprehensive and accurate information is available.
- Will advise support groups and departments in receiving and managing incidents of alleged abuse and in ensuring compliance with Sense procedures.
- Will compile a report for the Sense Safeguarding Board and Sense Trustees in order to keep them up to date on safeguarding findings and statistics and implications for practice.
- Will monitor and support children, young people and families involved in safeguarding incidents.

Head of Sense Specialist Services for Children and Young People

- Produce the Annual Children and Young Peoples Safeguarding Report in collaboration with the Head of Safeguarding.
- Will monitor and support children, young people and families involved in safeguarding incidents.

Human Resources Department

The Sense Human Resources Department will complete appropriate checks before employing staff, including:

- DBS Checks;
- Two satisfactory written references;
- Full employment history.

Advise managers on responding to allegations of abuse against members of staff.
Refer cases on to the Disclosure and Barring Service where this is appropriate.

Learning and Development Team

- Will ensure that safeguarding training is delivered upon induction and in line with all staff and volunteer responsibilities.



Group Director of Operations and Heads of Operations

- Directors will commission investigations and appoint investigators where appropriate.
- Monitor and review progress on investigations and ensure any actions as a result of the investigation.

Sense College Governors and Executive Principal

The Governing Body will include a nominated safeguarding governor (a lay governor).

The nominated safeguarding governor will have a lead role in safeguarding issues for the Governing Body.

The Governing Body must consider safeguarding matters in general, for example:

- In relation to training;
- New safeguarding guidance;
- Annual reviews of internal procedure and guidance;
- Remediating any weaknesses or deficiencies in relation to safeguarding arrangements,
- Consulting with the Executive Principal and the Sense College Vice Principal Care and Support (nominated safeguarding Co-ordinator) as appropriate.

The principal will collate safeguarding information and will compile a confidential report for the Governors, for each Governing Body Meeting.

- Duty to have fully implemented 'Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation Policy' in line with the Governments Prevent Strategy 2011.

Operations Managers and Vice Principals

- Will monitor safeguarding incidents in their areas and ensure that staff are appropriately supported.
- Will investigate safeguarding incidents in accordance with the instructions of external agencies.
- Provide relevant and appropriate support to their managers and monitor training.



Service Level Managers (including Children’s Specialist Services, Holidays and Events, Residential Service Managers, Education Service Managers and their deputies) – “Designated Person”

- Will have a sound knowledge of local and inter-agency safeguarding procedures. This will be achieved by accessing local safeguarding training and having a copy of the local authorities safeguarding policy to refer to.
- Will monitor safeguarding incidents in their areas and ensure that staff are appropriately supported.
- Will ensure that initial induction into services includes discussion of this procedure with continuous discussion in team meetings and supervision.
- Will ensure that staff attend appropriate training.
- Will ensure that staff understand and follow this procedure.
- Will ensure that action is taken when safeguarding concerns are reported.
- Will follow both internal and external reporting procedures.
- Will keep accurate records.
- Will ensure that staff can access local contact details for reporting safeguarding concerns. Managers should note that they may have to actively seek out this information and they will need to ensure that the ‘What To Do If You Suspect Abuse’ poster / information is updated and shared with team members and / or displayed within the service.
- Will complete a fact find and investigate safeguarding incidents in accordance with the instructions of Sense or external agencies.
- Will support children and young people with whom they work to understand how to raise concerns.



- Will as far as possible support young people and their families who have been abused or alleged of being abuse are aware of sources of support. This may include local independent information advice, advocacy services and counselling services.
- Will be responsible for inputting, updating and maintain safeguarding records on ERIC.

Support Staff, Volunteers and Leaders

- Will respond to safeguarding concerns by following this procedure and the guidance that accompanies this procedure.
- Will ensure to involve the child or young person in the process.
- Identify and confront colleagues poor practice (safe challenge).
- Will report concerns to a line manager/on call manager/or other appropriate person.
- Will complete accurate notes if they are informed of a safeguarding incident.
- Must undertake training and ask managers if they are unsure about safeguarding procedures.

Young people, their **families/carers**, **Sense staff** and **other professionals** are encouraged to be observant and report safeguarding concerns. Sense emphasises the importance of prevention as a way of supporting individuals to keep themselves safe and to assess and manage risk.

If children and young people or their families would like to access the Safeguarding Children and Young People's Procedure, they can be offered the main procedure and guidance. Alternatively, the Safe Guide) sets out some key principles.



Part Four: Sources

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) <http://ceop.police.uk/>
- Keeping Children safe in Education 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Keeping Safe Resources <https://iris.sense.org.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=7094>
- The Safe Network <http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx>
- Unicef, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/Our-mission/UN-Convention/>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

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