Safeguarding Children procedures and Child Protection Policy

This policy is based on 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'.

The Reddings Playgroup is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical, mental and emotional welfare of every child, both inside and outside of the school premises. We implement a holistic preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of children is at the forefront of all action taken. We make it clear to ALL staff, volunteers, students, parents and carers that The Reddings Playgroup is committed to protecting children through all its practices.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance. It will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that members of the committee, the Playgroup manager and staff understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of child abuse, and know to refer concerns to the DSL.
- Promoting a culture where children feel safe to communicate their needs and experiences within nurturing relationships.
- Identifying and making provision for any child that has been subject to, or is at risk of, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Creating a culture of safer recruitment by adopting procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a risk to children.
- Ensuring that the Playgroup manager and any new staff and volunteers are only appointed when all the appropriate checks have been satisfactorily completed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is **Kayleigh Scarrott**, she can be contacted on 07795 992514. This information is displayed in the setting so that it is clear who should be contacted should there be any concerns. In her absence child protection matters will be dealt with by the deputy playleaders **Rebecca Cowles or Laura Stockwell,** who can also be contacted on 07795 992514.

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1.1 Safeguarding children and Child Protection (including Whistle blowing)

We follow Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance and procedures. Everyone working at The Reddings Playgroup recognises their responsibilities towards the children and families in our care.

Roles and responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Update Safeguarding training every 2 years as per the training requirements as set out in Annex C of the EYFS. (Sept 25) Currently safeguarding training is provided by GSCP.
- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Provide a safe environment in which children can develop.
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
- Be aware of the Playgroups systems which support safeguarding, including any policies, procedures, information and training provided upon induction.
- Be aware of the role and identity of the DSL.
- Undertake safeguarding training – this will be regularly updated.
- Receive and understand child protection and safeguarding (including online safety) updates, e.g. via email, as required, and at least annually.
- Be aware of the local early help process and understand their role in it.
- Be aware of, and understand, the process for making referrals to CSCS, as well as for making statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 and their role in these assessments.
- Make a referral to CSCS and/or the police immediately, if at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child.
- Support social workers in making decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the DSL.
- Be aware of and understand the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Be aware that a child may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or may not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- Promote dialogue and understanding, and ensure all children feel listened to and understood.
- Empower children and allow them to understand their rights to safety and privacy.
- Avoid victim-blaming attitudes, and challenge it in a professional way if it occurs.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases.
- Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, that they will be supported, and that they will be kept safe.
- Speak to the DSL if they are unsure about how to handle safeguarding matters.
- All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, FGM and exploitation and will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the playgroup, inside and outside of home, and online.
- Staff will also be aware that children can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse.
- All staff will understand that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific definition or one label alone.
- Staff will understand that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap one another; therefore, staff will be vigilant and always raise concerns with the DSL.
- All staff must follow the GSCP guidance and procedures which are consistent with 'Working together to safeguard children'. Staff are not responsible for investigating concerns or determining the truth of any allegation or disclosure.
- All concerns regarding the welfare of children must be recorded and discussed with the DSL prior to discussion with parents.
- Staff must immediately report:
  - Any suspicion that a child is injured marked or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to knocks or scrapes received in play.
  - Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious.

- Any behaviour which gives rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. Worrying drawings or play).
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment or emotional maltreatment.
- Any concern that a child is presenting signs of symptoms of abuse or neglect or any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance.
- Any hint of disclosure of abuse from any person.
- Any concern regarding person/s who may pose a risk to children e.g. Living in a household with a child present.
- Concerns over parents' mental health or serious suspicion of drug or alcohol abuse.
- Concerns over domestic violence.
- Any concern regarding persons who may pose a risk to children who are working in the setting, including:
  - Failure to follow setting policies and procedures.
  - Inappropriate conduct e.g. inappropriate sexual comments and behaviours.
  - Excessive one to one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities.
  - Taking of and/or sharing child abuse images.

- Staff should be aware of NSPCC information on grooming Grooming: recognising the signs | NSPCC Learning

Playgroup Committee duty:

- The committee will monitor and review our safeguarding arrangements annually. This will include a scrutiny of the completed welfare checklists for child protection, and suitable people, a review of training (including safer Recruitment training) and our single central record of staff, students and volunteers.
- They will evaluate that the safeguarding policy is effective and that GSCP procedures are being followed and that staff are equipped to fulfil their role in this. Report a child protection concern | Gloucestershire County Council
- They are responsible for ensuring that any allegations against persons working in the setting are dealt with effectively.
- They are also responsible for ensuring that new starters, including students and volunteers, receive a comprehensive induction.
- They ensure that staff have opportunities to discuss any welfare concerns, and identify any training needs, keeping an up-to-date record of training.
- The Playgroup Committee will inform Ofsted of:
  - Changes to the person who is managing the provision and changes to the name or registered number of the company, changes to the nominated person, any new person's name, date of birth, full name, former names, or aliases used by them, and their full address, any change to the name or address of any person mentioned above.
  - They will also inform Ofsted of any cases or food poisoning affecting 2 or more children looked after on the premises, any serious accident or injury to, or serious illness of, or the death of any child while in our care, and any action taken.
  - Any allegation of serious harm against, or abuse of, a child by any person looking after children on the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere,) or by the staff or any person living, working or employed on the premises, or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and the action taken in respect of these allegations; any other significant event that is likely to affect the suitability to look after children of the setting or any person caring for children on the premises.
  - All staff are asked to sign an annual declaration stating that they are suitable to look after children. This requires that they declare any convictions, cautions or bind-overs, including those regarded as spent. This will also include referral to or inclusion on the DBS Barred List, restricting or preventing them from working with children.
  - Staff are also required to inform The Reddings Playgroup if they are aware that any person living on the same premises as them has been disqualified from working with children. In the case that a disqualified person is living on the same premises as a member of staff. In this case, it would be deemed that the member of staff could no longer work with children, which would lead to dismissal.

- Take strategic leadership responsibility for the Playgroups safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure that the Playgroup complies with its duties under the above child protection and safeguarding legislation.
- Guarantee that the policies, procedures and training opportunities in the Playgroup are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Guarantee that the Playgroup contributes to multi-agency working in line with the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- Confirm that the Playgroups safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practices of the LA as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures.
- Understand the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment, and ensure these are reflected in the playgroups' policies and procedures.
- Comply with its obligations under section 14B of the Children Act 2004 to supply the local safeguarding arrangements with information to fulfil its functions.
- Ensure that staff working directly with children read at least Part one of KCSIE.
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities in regard to safeguarding children.
- Ensure a committee member takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Ensure that staff have due regard to relevant data protection principles that allow them to share and withhold personal information.
- Ensure that a member of the committee is nominated to liaise with the LA and/or partner agencies on issues of child protection and in the event of allegations of abuse made against the Manager or another committee member.
- Adhere to statutory responsibilities by conducting pre-employment checks on staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.
- Ensure the Playgroup has clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems in pupils, including clear routes to escalate concerns and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Guarantee that volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- Make sure that at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- Ensure that all committee members receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training upon their induction and that this training is updated regularly.
- Confirm that there are procedures in place to make a referral to the DBS agencies if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.
- Ensure that appropriate disciplinary procedures are in place, as well as policies pertaining to the behaviour of children and staff.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including those in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Appoint a designated staff member to promote the educational achievement of LAC and ensure that this person has undergone appropriate training.
- Ensure that the designated staff member works with the VSH to discuss how the pupil premium funding can best be used to support LAC.
- Make sure that staff members have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC safe, particularly with regard to the children's legal status, contact details and care arrangements.
- Put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who become absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods, to help identify any risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and prevent the risk of their disappearance in future.
- Ensure that all members of the committee have been subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- Create a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns.
- Be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Managers duty:

- Ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the committee, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by staff.
- Provide staff with the appropriate policies and information upon induction.
- Support staff with how to put their training into practice by looking at safeguarding scenarios during INSET days. (Sept 25).

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** has a duty to:

- During term time, be available during playgroup hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Liaising with parents in all safeguarding matters, keeping them updated of actions taken, unless to do so would put the child at risk of harm.
- Referring a child to Children's Social Care if there are any concerns about abuse or neglect. Any referral will be made by telephone and then followed up in writing.
- Ensuring that everyone who has contact with children at The Reddings Playgroup is suitable to do so, including Safer Recruitment practices.
- Liaising with other agencies and services, attending multi-agency child protection conferences, contributing to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan.
- Ensuring that all practitioners are aware of the setting's Safeguarding Policy and that training is updated (either by attending training courses, reviews of updates from courses and meetings, yearly appraisals to assess knowledge and understanding, or through annual e-training).
- Keeping and storing records and passing them on to the child's next setting following agreed procedure, and recording this.
- Ensure that a child's protection file is transferred as soon as possible, and within five days, when transferring to a new school, and consider any additional information that should be shared.
- Keeping her own knowledge of safeguarding procedure and practice up to date.
- Ensuring that the setting's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually.
- Recording and reporting any concerns, and recording the reasons why action was or wasn't taken.
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Contribute to the assessment of children, and/or support other staff to do so.
- Liaise with the case manager and the LA designated officers (LADOs) for child protection concerns in cases concerning staff.
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare, including online and digital safety.
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- Ensure that child protection files are kept up-to-date and only accessed by those who need to do so.
- Ensure the Playgroups Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available publicly, and parents are aware that the Playgroup may make referrals for suspected cases of abuse or neglect, as well as the role the Playgroup plays in these referrals.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings; this includes understanding the difficulties children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and considering how to build trusted relationships that facilitate communication.
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

1.2 **Looked after children (LAC/PLAC)**

The Playgroup has a responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of LAC and PLAC, and for children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. The DSL will be provided with the necessary details of pupils' social workers and for PLAC, personal advisers.

Policy statement

- Children who are Looked After will have a separate 'Welfare file'. (See safeguarding Policy 1.1)

- Early years settings are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.
- Definition of LAC/PLAC: Children and young people become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).
- We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations: physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken in to the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.
- In our setting, we place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for Looked After children are based on the two important concepts, attachment and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and are the basis in developing positive dispositions for learning. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.

Multi agency working (see 1.3 Information sharing)

The Playgroup will be fully engaged, involved, and included in the child-centred approach towards local safeguarding arrangements. The Playgroup will develop trusting relationships between families and agencies to protect the welfare of its children, through the early help process and by contributing to multi-agency plans to provide additional support. Where a need for early help is identified, the playgroup will allow access for CSC from the host LA and, where appropriate, a placing LA, for that LA to conduct (or consider whether to conduct) a section 17 or 47 assessment.

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff, and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and social services to work well together. This can be found on the inside of the cupboard door.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur, and to working with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' HM Government 2024.

Pupils with SEND

When managing safeguarding in relation to children with SEND, staff will be aware of the following:

- Certain indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, may relate to the child's disability without further exploration; however, it should never be assumed that a child's indicators relate only to their disability
- Communication barriers may exist, as well as difficulties in overcoming these barriers

When reporting concerns or making referrals for children with SEND, the above factors will always be taken into consideration. When managing a safeguarding issue relating to a child with SEND, the DSL will liaise with the playgroups SENCO, as well as the child's parents where appropriate, to ensure that the child's needs are met effectively.

Early help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. The Playgroup will be proactive in ensuring that every child is able to access early years education to aid their development, protect them from harm and to identify concerns as early as possible.

Any child may benefit from early help, but in particular, staff will be alert to the potential need for early help for children who:

- Are disabled, have certain health conditions, or have specific additional needs.
- Have SEND, regardless of whether they have a statutory EHC plan.
- Are frequently missing or going missing from care or from home.
- Have family members in custody or is affected by parental offending.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health problems, or domestic abuse.
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Are privately fostered.

The DSL will take the lead where early help is appropriate. This includes liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. The local early help process will be followed as required.

1.3 Training, Support and Supervision

- Staff attend training from the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership. What you need to know about GSCP safeguarding children training courses | Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- At annual appraisals, training requirements for safeguarding are discussed, and courses booked as required, or any gaps in knowledge are addressed through the DSL or playgroup manager.
- Staff members will undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which will be updated on a **termly** basis and/or whenever there is a change in legislation.

The induction training will cover:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The Staff Code of Conduct.
- Part one of 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE)
- Information about the role and identity of the DSL.
- All staff members will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually.
- All staff will undergo child protection and safeguarding training, and update this training at least every two years.
- The DSL and deputy DSLs will also obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, ensuring they keep up-to-date with any developments relevant to their role.

1.4 Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The playgroup recognises the importance of proactive information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet children's needs and identify any need for early help.

Considering the above, staff will be aware that whilst the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place a duty to process personal information fairly and lawfully, they also allow for information to be stored and shared for safeguarding purposes – data protection regulations do not act as a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in the child being at risk of harm.

- In order to keep children safe, The Reddings Playgroup keeps accurate up to date records on them. This includes information about previous child protection concerns and records of who may collect the child. The DSL is responsible for keeping records about any concerns, even if it is not appropriate to make an immediate referral. These records should include:
  - Statements, facts and observable things (what was seen/heard)
  - Diagram (not photographs) of any injuries indicating position, size and colour.
  - Words the child uses (not translated into adult-speech) and non-verbal behaviours.

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or where a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, that member of staff:
  - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action but that someone else will have to be informed;
  - does not show shock, horror or surprise;
  - does not express judgement regarding the alleged abuser;
  - tries to ensure that the child making a disclosure does not have to speak to another member of staff;
  - clarifies the information;
  - tries to keep questions to a minimum and of an open-ended nature e.g. "Can you tell me what happened?" NOT "did X hit you?";
  - explains sensitively what will happen next, and explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told.
  - makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- A referral will always be made where there are concerns about significant harm, including where the child is already an open case e.g. A Looked after child, where the child is the subject of a CAF, has additional needs, or is already subject to assessment and intervention.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.
- Records about child protection will be kept away from the child's normal records. They will be kept in a file only accessible to the DSL and playgroup manager which will be stored in our lockable cupboard and / or on a password protected laptop. The information will be kept confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Safeguarding information will be photocopied and passed on to the child's next provision (school or other early years setting) in a file marked "Child Protection – Confidential, for the attention of the DSL for Child Protection (early years) or Designated Senior Person (schools).
- **Records will be kept until the child's 25th birthday**. Records may be passed on to Ofsted in order to safeguard children.
- Wherever possible we will work in partnership with parents and aim to share any records made. However, if it was felt that sharing these records would put the child at further risk of harm, they will not be shared. Children's welfare will be the overriding consideration.

For more information, see our **data protection and record keeping**, and **partnership** policies.

Procedure followed in the case of suspected abuse or neglect

- If abuse or neglect is suspected the DSL should be informed. Whatever the safeguarding concerns, The Reddings Playgroup staff will always work positively and non-judgementally with parents in order to support the child and their family to achieve the best outcomes. The DSL will:
  - Decide firstly if the child has any urgent medical needs.
  - Make enquiries to Children's Social Care and any other agencies involved with the family.
  - Seek advice from GSCP
  - Will consider child's wishes and any fears or concerns they may have.
- The DSL will then decide:
  - Whether to talk to parents, unless to do so may place the child at significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.
  - Whether to make a child protection referral to children's social care because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, and if this needs to be undertaken immediately (including when the child is already an open case e.g. A looked after child.

  OR
  - Not to make a referral at this stage.

- Whether further monitoring is necessary.

- If anyone is concerned that the DSL or playgroup manager are not taking concerns sufficiently seriously, or taking appropriate action, they must contact the Local Area Designated Officer on 01452 426565, Ofsted direct on 0300 123 1231. If the concern is over someone working with children, they should contact the above numbers directly.
- All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, should be fully documented.

Informing parents

- Parents are normally the first point of contact. The DSL will be responsible for this aspect.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this. This will be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.
- Referrals are made in accordance with the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2015) guidance.
- A referral form will be used to record all information passed on.
- Any referral by telephone will be followed up in writing within 48 hours. Ofsted will be informed via email immediately.

1.5 Safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse against staff (Including whistleblowing)

- Definition of 'allegation' – the term allegation means where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
    - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
    - possibly committed a criminal offence against or relating to a child, or;
    - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.
- The Playgroup will ensure all allegations against staff, including those who are not employees of the playgroup, are dealt with appropriately and that the playgroup liaises with the relevant parties.
- When managing allegations against staff, the playgroup will recognise the distinction between allegations that meet the harms threshold and allegations that do not, also known as "low-level concerns". Allegations that meet the harms threshold include instances where staff have:
    - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
    - Committed or possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
    - Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
    - Behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Whistle-blowing definition

This is the mechanism by which staff, students or volunteers can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Staff are responsible for bringing matters of concern to the attention of the DSL and/or external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Procedure

- Staff must:
    - Report any behaviour from colleagues which raises concerns to the DSL (unless the allegation is made against the DSL, then the concern should be made to the playgroup manager or the committee Chair).
    - Report any allegations against staff to the LADO and Ofsted.
    - Follow the procedures described as above under allegations against staff will be followed.

Procedures set out in our policies and guidelines safeguard children and protect staff from allegations. These procedures are:

- Ensuring that no member of staff, student or volunteer works alone with children, out of either the sight or hearing of others.
- The setting's Behaviour Policy is followed by adults at all times.
- Toileting will be carried out with the bathroom door open. Personal care is recorded so that we always know who has looked after a child. Anything out of the ordinary should be recorded.
- When changing children or when carrying out nappy changes, the child's privacy will be protected by use of room partitions/screens and is carried out in the main playgroup room so that staff can see each other. (Sept 25)
- We ensure that staff, students and volunteers are aware and remind them to keep themselves safe from the possibility of allegations.
- Encourage staff to report any concerns through the whistle blowing policy, to ensure they are confident as to how and when to do this. (Sept 25)

- The Playgroup Committee is responsible for dealing with allegations against any person working or volunteering at The Reddings Playgroup.
- **Staff are expected to report any concerns and are advised to make reference to our Complaints Procedure and Whistle-blowing Policy.**
- **Child protection procedures are slightly different to those described above, if an allegation is made against a member of staff, or any person working at the setting.** Allegations against staff will be handled by the Playgroup Committee.
- **If the allegation is against the playgroup manager, DSL or Committee members** the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted directly on 01452 426565, if they feel that a concern is not being dealt with adequately anyone may contact Ofsted directly on 0300 123 1231.
- Should an allegation be made against a member of staff, we will apply the same principles as in the rest of the policy, and always follow GSCP procedures and guidance. Detailed records will be kept, to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. Any allegation will be investigated properly following GSCP procedure.
- **All allegations will be investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.** Investigations into allegations against people who work with children may have up to four related strands:
  - Enquiries by Children's Social Care.
  - Investigation by the Police.
  - Investigation by the Playgroup committee under staff disciplinary procedures.
  - Investigation by Ofsted.
  -
- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the DSL (or playgroup manager if the complaint is against the DSL), who will record the details of the allegation.
- The DSL will take steps to ensure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical attention needed.
- The DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to seek advice on moving forward with the investigation. The setting staff will cooperate with any investigating agencies. This will inform the decision as to whether the member of staff should be suspended whilst the investigation takes placed.
- Any allegation will be reported to Ofsted within 48 hours. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.
- Consideration must be made throughout to the emotional needs of children, parents and staff.
- We will inform Ofsted of any allegation of serious harm or abuse of a child by any person, including volunteers, looking after children on the premises, (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere,) or by the playgroup Committee, or any person working or employed on the premises, and the action taken in respect of these allegations, as soon as reasonably practical, but at the latest, within 14 days. Failure to do so without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence. We will also inform the LADO and GSCP or the police, without delay.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police or Ofsted.

- Where the management and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff will be suspended on full pay, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process.
- Local authority guidance is available in the Safeguarding File.
- As with any child protection matter, the situation will be dealt with confidentially and information shared on a need-to-know basis.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the DBS administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff, students and volunteers are made aware of the setting's Confidentiality Policy.

Support to families

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families.
- We make clear to parents, carers, students and volunteers, our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child and shared only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Child welfare files

- We will maintain and monitor a Child Welfare File for any child about whom other welfare concerns have been raised, children who are 'LAC/PLAC' or who have been part of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework). This will be separate from the child's personal file, and separate to any child protection file held. These will be maintained by the playgroup manager, or DSL if relating to safeguarding. The playgroup manager will also keep a register of all children for whom welfare files are being kept, which indicate the reason for keeping the file, and whether parental consent has been gained to maintain the file. The welfare file includes:
    - An indication as to whether a separate child protection file is being kept.
    - Any relevant assessments including CAF, initial core assessment, psychologist, EY advisory teacher.
    - Education and health care plan.
    - Any Personal Education Plans
    - Any documents relating to the child's SEN.
    - Any information relating to the child's behaviour and attendance.
    - Minutes or notes of any meetings/contacts with parents, including home visits, telephone calls, texts or emails. Including date/time, who the contact was with, record of discussion, outcomes and actions to be taken. Similarly notes will be taken of meetings with other professionals.
    - Documents relating to any other welfare concerns e.g. Key person notes, signed records of discussions.
- Information in children's welfare files must be shared with relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis. Parents' rights to privacy must be respected. Information should not be shared unless the setting has permission to do so. We would always share any concerns with parents, unless to do so may place the child at risk of significant harm.

- Welfare files must be forwarded to the next setting or school with parental consent.
- Staff will never be under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the setting. Any medication which might affect a staff member's ability to care for children effectively must be declared and medical advice must be sought. They will not be allowed to work directly with the children unsupervised unless they are deemed fit to do so by a doctor.

Care plan procedures

- The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family, and ensure appropriate information is gathered and shared.
- The setting recognises the role of the local authority social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parent's or foster carer's role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- At the start of a placement there is a meeting of professionals that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates and the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
- The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:
    - The child's emotional needs and how they are to be met;
    - How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed;
    - The child's sense of self, culture, language/s and identity – how this is to be supported;
    - The child's need for sociability and friendship;
    - The child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
    - How any special needs will be supported.

- In addition, the care plan will also consider:
    - how information will be shared with the foster carer, the child's parents and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
    - what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
    - what written reporting is required;
    - wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child's return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning; and with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings, fun-days etc alongside the foster carer.

- The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a relationship with his or her key person sufficient to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child.
- In the first three weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support.
- Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to firm a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage 7 areas of learning.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.

- Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the designated person and or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.

1.6 Uncollected children

Policy statement

- In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session/day, the setting puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by experienced and qualified practitioners who are known to the child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.
- We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Procedures

- Parents of children starting at the setting are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form:
    - Home address and telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative.
    - Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
    - Mobile telephone numbers.
    - Names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or grandparent.
    - Who has parental responsibility for the child.
    - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.

- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they provide us with written details of the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child. We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child and agree a password.
- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number.
- We inform parents that we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy in the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult 30 minutes after the end of the booked session.
- **If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:**
- The child's file and our diary are checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work. If all contact attempts are unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from the setting - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted. All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- If no-one collects the child after 30 minutes from normal end of session, and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.
- We contact our local authority Children's Help desk on 01452 426565.
- The child stays at setting in the care of two fully-vetted workers until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker.
- Social Care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they can't, the child will become looked after by the local authority. Under no circumstances do staff to go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.

- **Ofsted may be informed: telephone no. 0300 123 1231**

1.7 Missing children

Policy statement

- Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outing's procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures – Child going missing on the premises (indoors or out)

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/member of staff alerts the playgroup manager, and the following actions will be taken:
  - The playgroup manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
  - The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
  - Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
  - If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
  - The playgroup manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

If a child going missing on an outing

- This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the playgroup manager and/or other staff back in the setting. If the playgroup manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly:
  - As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
  - The playgroup manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
  - The playgroup manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the playgroup manager. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned there.
  - Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
  - In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
  - The playgroup manager contacts the police and may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staff aim to stay calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The playgroup manager speaks with the parent(s).
- The committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff who were on the outing.
- The key person / staff member writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the report.
  - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
  - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
  - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to keep everyone as calm.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The playgroup manager must ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the playgroup manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the playgroup manager and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The manager will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

1.8 Supervision of children on outings and visits

Policy statement

- Children benefit from being taken out of the setting to go on visits or trips to local parks or other suitable venues for activities which enhance their learning experiences. The Reddings Playgroup staff ensure that there are procedures to keep children safe on outings that; all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow the procedures below.

Procedures

- Parents sign a general consent on registration for their children to be taken out as a part of the daily activities of the setting.
- Parents are always asked to sign specific consent forms before major outings.
- A risk assessment is carried out before an outing takes place. If this is somewhere we have visited previously, we will use risk assessments from previous visits, provided that we are certain that no changes have been made.
- All venue risk assessments are made available for parents to see.
- Our adult to child ratio is high, normally one adult to three children, depending on their age, sensibility and type of venue as well as how it is to be reached.
- Named children are assigned to individual staff to ensure each child is individually supervised, to ensure no child goes astray, and that there is no unauthorised access to children.
- Outings are recorded in the diary and details of the outing are kept in the setting files stating:
    - The date and time of outing, the venue and mode of transport, names of staff assigned to named children.

- Staff take a mobile phone on outings, and supplies of tissues, wipes, pants etc as well as a mini first aid pack, snacks and water. The amount of equipment will vary and be consistent with the venue, the number of children and length of visit.
- Staff take a list of children with them with emergency contact numbers of parents/carers.

1.9 Safety and security on the premises

Policy statement

- We maintain the highest possible security of our premises to ensure that each child is safely cared for during their time with us.

Procedures

Children's personal safety

- We ensure all employed staff, students and volunteers have had a DBS check. A member of the committee holds an up-to-date Safer Recruitment certificate.
- Adults do not supervise children on their own.
- All children are supervised by adults at all times (either within hearing or sight).
- Whenever children are on the premises at least two adults are present.
- We carry out risk assessment to ensure children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises, nor activities.
- Any medicines or other dangerous substances such as cleaning fluids, are stored out of reach of the children.

Security

- Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. One adult is allocated to supervise safety at the door.
- Staff have implemented the use of Walkie Talkies to assist with any urgent security issues on the front door or when using the bathroom.
- The times of the children's arrivals and departures are recorded.
- The arrival and departure times of adults - staff, volunteers and visitors - are recorded.
- Our systems prevent unauthorised access to our premises. Although it is a shared building, there is no right of way for anyone from outside in to the building unless accompanied by a staff member.
- Doors are locked internally and can only be opened by adults from inside.
- Our systems prevent children from leaving our premises unnoticed.
- The personal possessions of staff and volunteers are securely stored during sessions.
- Children are encouraged to be aware of their own safety and tell an adult if they are worried. They take part in daily checks and become aware of the need for the doors to be closed etc.
- A doorbell on the main door alerts staff to anyone entering or leaving the building.

1.10 Complaints

Policy statement

We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courteous and careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of The Reddings Playgroup. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

All settings are required to keep a 'summary log' of all complaints that reach stage two or beyond. This is to be made available to parents as well as to Ofsted inspectors. All complaints, no matter how minor, are thoroughly investigated internally and used as an opportunity for us to improve practice. They are then reviewed to ensure that any changes required have been made and to ensure that we feel that complaints have been handled fairly and objectively. The investigation is led by the playgroup manager or in the case of the complaint being made against

her, the investigation would be led by the chairperson. Records of complaints are kept for three years and then destroyed.

Making a complaint

Stage 1

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with their key person or playgroup manager, if they feel that they are able to do so. Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. We would assure parents that we prefer to know if there is a problem, so that it can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Stage 2

- If stage 1 does not have a satisfactory outcome, if the parent feels unable to discuss the concerns, or if the problem recurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complaint in writing to the playgroup manager.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, all information relating to the investigation will be stored confidentially in a separate complaint file.
- When the investigation is complete, the playgroup manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome. She will also write to parents to summarise the complaint, any outcomes and actions taken as a result.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, and investigations will begin as soon as possible. Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Record, which is kept in a confidential file. The summary record is made available to Ofsted upon request.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the playgroup manager and chairperson. The parent should have a friend or partner present if required.
- An agreed written record of the discussion is made as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged in the Complaints Summary Record and stored in the Complaints file, as described in Stage 2. The complainant will have 14 days to appeal, after which time the matter will be considered closed.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parent and setting cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers but can help to define the problem, review the action so far, and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he can hold separate meetings with the setting personnel (playgroup manager and chairperson) and the parent, if it is decided that this would be helpful. The mediator keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the playgroup manager and the chairperson. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. The complainant is given a further 14 days to appeal. If no appeal is received, then the matter is considered to be closed. Again, the recording procedures are as described in stage 2.

The role of the Office for Standards in Education, Early Years Directorate (Ofsted) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board

- Parents may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this complaint's procedure.

- In addition, where there seems to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, for example with regard to safeguarding, health and safety, or legal requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to.
- The number to call Ofsted with regard to a complaint is: **0300 123 1231** Their address is: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

These details are displayed on our setting's notice board.

Safeguarding

- If a child appears to be at risk, our setting follows the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in our local authority.
- In these cases, both the parent and setting are informed and the playgroup manager works with Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Local Area Designated Safeguarding Officer (LADO) to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.
- In the case of a complaint about a member of staff with regard to Safeguarding, the procedures set out in our safeguarding policy (section 1.1) will be followed.

Records

- A record of complaints against our setting and/or the children and/or the adults working in our setting is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed.
- The outcome of all complaints is recorded in the Complaints Record which is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request. This is reviewed annually by the setting's management to ensure that any changes have been implemented and that all complaints have been handled correctly.
- Although complaints are kept confidential, any safeguarding concern over-rides confidentiality, and may have to be passed on the relevant authorities.

Copies of our Complaints Policy are available from staff/manager and on the webstie. If a parent does not wish to make a complaint in person, they can write to the chairperson.

1.11 Online safety (including digital devices such as mobile phones, smart watches and cameras)

Policy statement

- Staff must use technology in a way that does not expose children to harm or bring the setting into disrepute. They must not behave in a manner that would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children, or to act as an appropriate role model.
- Staff should always adopt high standards of personal conduct. Action may be taken against individuals who use inappropriate language, post inappropriate images, or make inappropriate comments in their private life – this could compromise their position in the work setting and lead to a loss of trust and confidence.
- Staff are advised to consider and set appropriately their privacy settings and should consider the appropriateness of images and material posted. Once posted on line, a message, photo, or video clip can be freely copied, manipulated and circulated, and will potentially exist forever.

Mobile phones and Smart watches

- The use of phones and smart watches by employees, students and volunteers, is to be kept to emergencies only.
- Personal phones (or any device which can take images) will be stored in the office area of the playgroup room. In an emergency, staff can be contacted on playgroup's phone. Business calls will only be made if adult/child ratios allow for them, and on the setting's phone. Phones must not be taken into the toilet area.
- Under no circumstances should mobile phones be used to take photographs of children, even with parents' consent.
- Parents and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones whilst on the premises. Should visitors need to make occasional phone calls whilst at playgroup, they will be advised of a quiet space where they can use their mobile phones, where no children are present.

Cameras and videos

- Digital cameras and iPad are used in the setting as part of the assessment and planning processes. Photographs are added to Tapestry, sharing with parents the activities and achievements the children have made. Parents sign an additional code of conduct when using Tapestry and a consent form for photo sharing within this software. Some photos may be used on the playgroup's social media account and the playgroups website. Parents sign consent forms to confirm how they would like their child's images to be used by the setting and staff adhere to this consent when using photographs in this way. Cameras/iPad must not be taken into the toilet area.
- If photographs of children are used for publicity purposes, parental consent must be given and safeguarding risks minimised, for example, ensuring children cannot be identified by name or through being photographed in a sweatshirt with the name of their setting on it.
- During sessions parents are not permitted to take photographs or use their mobile phones. During special occasions, such as concerts and parties, parents are permitted to photograph their own child but are advised not to share them on social media.

Taking and storing images of children

- Parents are asked to sign a consent form for photographs to be taken. It is explained that their child may appear in other children's photographs, and are sometimes used for training and our publicity materials, and parents are asked for permission for this.
- Any photographs taken for publicity materials, such as brochures, training or our website will not identify children individually and full-face pictures and close-ups are not used.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment

- Only ICT equipment belonging to the setting is used by staff and children.
- The playgroup manager is responsible for ensuring all ICT equipment is safe and fit for purpose.
- All computers have virus protection installed.
- The playgroup manager ensures that safety settings are set to make sure that inappropriate material cannot be accessed.

Internet access

- Children do not normally have access to the internet and never have unsupervised access.
- If staff access the internet with children for the purposes of promoting their learning, written permission is gained from parents who are shown this policy.
- The playgroup manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded and risk assessments in relation to online safety are completed.
- Staff should never seek to communicate with children/make contact or respond to contact with children, outside a clear work context. They should never give any personal details to children, and if they have personal contact with parents/carers of children, they should make their manager aware. Any communication via computer or other devices should take place within professional boundaries, and should avoid communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming'.
- The designated person has overall responsibility for ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded and risk assessments in relation to online safety are completed.
- Children are taught the following stay safe principles in an age-appropriate way prior to using the internet:
    - only go on line with a grown up
    - be kind on line
    - keep information about me safely
    - only press buttons on the internet to things I understand
    - tell a grown up if something makes me unhappy on the internet
- Designated persons will also seek to build children's resilience in relation to issues they may face in the online world, and will address issues such as staying safe, having appropriate friendships, asking for help if unsure, not keeping secrets as part of social and emotional development in age-appropriate ways.
- If a second-hand computer is purchased or donated to the setting, the designated person will ensure that no inappropriate material is stored on it before children use it.
- All computers for use by children are located in an area clearly visible to staff.

- Staff report any suspicious or offensive material, including material which may incite racism, bullying or discrimination to the Internet Watch Foundation at Report online child sexual abuse imagery or 'child pornography' (iwf.org.uk)
- Suspicions that an adult is attempting to make inappropriate contact with a child on-line is reported to the Police or the IWF as above.
- The playgroup manager ensures staff have access to age-appropriate resources to enable them to assist children to use the internet safely.

Social media

- Children are not allowed to access social media sites.
- Staff, students and volunteers should avoid being 'friends' with current parents / carers in social network sites.
- Staff should be extremely sensitive when writing 'statuses' as to how parents might view the setting in the light of any comments made.
- Any breaches of confidentiality or discussing the setting on social networking websites will be taken very seriously and may lead to dismissal. And our procedures may be followed under section 1.2 'Allegations against members of staff'.
- In the event that staff name the organisation or workplace in any social media they do so in a way that is not detrimental to The Reddings Playgroup.
- Staff should report any concerns or breaches to the designated person in their setting.
- Staff avoid personal communication, including on social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. If a practitioner and family are friendly prior to the child coming into the setting, this information is shared with the manager prior to a child attending and a risk assessment and agreement in relation to boundaries is agreed.

Email

- Children are not permitted to use email in the setting. Parents and staff are not normally permitted to use setting equipment to access personal emails.
- Staff do not access personal or work email whilst supervising children.
- Staff send personal information by encrypted email and share information securely at all times.

Use and/or distribution of inappropriate images

- Staff are aware that it is an offence to distribute indecent images. In the event of a concern that a colleague or other person is behaving inappropriately, the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection (including whistle-blowing) policy, in relation to allegations against staff and/or responding to suspicions of abuse, is followed
- Staff are aware that grooming children and young people on line is an offence in its own right and concerns about a colleague's or others' behaviour are reported (as above).

1.12 Safer Recruitment (Suitable People)

Introduction

- We ensure that anyone who has access to children on our premises is suitable to do so. We do this through: Our Safer Recruitment practice. This is rigorously followed when recruiting staff members, as well as for the induction of students and volunteers. The DfE's DBS Workforce Guides will be consulted when determining whether a position fits the child workforce criteria.
- The appropriate DBS and suitability checks will be carried out for all committee members, volunteers, and contractors.
- All staff, students and volunteers have DBS checks carried out on them. Managers will record the DBS number and the date a check was obtained and the details of who obtained the check. (Sept 25) Arrangements are in place to supervise non-DBS checked staff, and risk assessments completed to assess any risk for staff in regulated activity.

- Staff are contractually obliged to disclose any police action taken against them and any circumstances which could lead to consideration of disqualification.
- We are committed to making referrals to the DBS and providing Ofsted with any relevant information indicating that any person meets the grounds for disqualification from Childcare.
- We will not employ anyone who is either on a DBS barred list or is disqualified from Childcare.
- It is essential that any members of staff disclose to the DSL or playgroup manager if any person who is living on the same premises as them has been disqualified from childcare. The member of staff may be disqualified because they live in the same household as another person who is disqualified, or because they live in the same household where a disqualified person is employed. All staff are asked to sign a document to say that they will inform the DSL or playgroup manager of any person who is disqualified from childcare who lives on the same premises as them.
- When selecting adults to work with children, we ensure that the member of the committee who has undertaken the training takes a lead in the selection process and is on the interview panel.

Procedures

Safer Recruitment Practice

- Safer recruitment practice is at the forefront of our recruitment process including:
  - Advertising and information for applicants.
  - References
  - Identity check and DBS
  - Qualifications check (Sept 25)
  - Other checks before interview
  - Selection of candidates
  - Interviewing of short-listed candidates
  - Offer of appointment to the successful candidate
  - Induction and supervision of newly appointed staff

Advertisements and information for Applicants

- Any advert for staff will demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding and protecting children by ensuring that all recruitment advertising materials contain a policy statement to this effect. All information we give to the interested applicant will highlight the importance placed on a rigorous selection process.
- The information will stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly, and that a DBS check application will be required straight away.
- The job description will set out the extent of the relationship with, and the degree of responsibility for, children with whom they will have contact. The person specification will explain:
  - The qualifications and experience needed for the role.
  - The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate.
  - How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process.
- The application will ask for:
  - Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known in the past.
  - A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school, including periods of further education of training. This must include – start and ends dates, explanations for leaving, and any reasons for gaps in employment.
  - Details of any relevant academic and/or vocational qualifications.
  - A declaration that the person has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, including those regarded as spent. This will also include referral to or inclusion on the DBS Barred List, restricting or preventing them from working with children.

- CV's drawn up by applicants in place of an application form are not acceptable because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present, and may omit relevant details.

References

- References are to be collected before employment starts (added September 2025)

- The application form will ask both professional and character references, one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Additional references may be asked for where appropriate. For example, where the applicant is not currently working with children, but has done so in the past, a reference from that employer will be asked for in addition to the current or most recent employer.
- References must be sent wherever possible to business, not a home address. Wherever possible, references should be obtained prior to interview so that any issues of concern raised by the reference can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate during interview.
- References must contain objective, verifiable information, and in order to achieve this, a reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children should be provided.
- References must include:
    - Length of time the person has known the applicant and in what capacity.
    - Post held with dates, salary and reason for leaving.
    - Ability and suitability to work with children.
    - Skills, strengths and weaknesses and how these have been demonstrated
    - Any current disciplinary investigation and/or sanctions.
    - Any allegations and/or disciplinary investigations relating to the safety or welfare of children, and the outcome of these (including where any sanction has expired).
    - Details of any criminal convictions, cautions or bind-overs
    - Sickness record
    - If the referee would re-employ the applicant and, if not details of why
    - Verification of the identity of the referee.
    - Any safeguarding concerns (added September 2025)

- The referee must be asked to confirm whether the applicant has been the subject of any disciplinary sanctions and whether the applicant has had any allegations made against them, or concerns raised which relate to either the safety or welfare of children, or about the applicant's behaviour towards children. Details about the outcomes of any concerns or allegations should be sought.
- Open references or testimonials will not be accepted.

Other Checks before Interview

- If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experiences relevant to working with children, which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by making contact with the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored during the interview.

Selection of Candidates

- Standard procedures will be followed to ensure that the best candidates are selected fairly. All applicants must be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.
- Safer recruitment means that all applications must additionally be:
    - Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed. Incomplete applications should not be accepted and will be returned to the candidate for completion.
    - Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided.
    - Considered with regard to any history gaps, or repeated changes in employment, or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons.
- All candidates will be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity, with a full birth certificate, passport or photo card driving licence, and additionally a document such as a utility bill or bank statement that verifies the candidate's name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.
- Candidates must also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of their qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

Interviewing short listed Candidates

- Questions will be set which test the candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for.
- The candidate's attitude towards children in general must be tested and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Any gaps and changes in employment history must be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from the information supplied by the candidate or by the referee,
- All candidates must bring to the interview documentary evidence as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act and in line with the DBS requirements.

Offer of Appointment

- Any offer of employment will be conditional upon all pre-employment checks being completed satisfactorily. This includes Enhanced Disclosure with Barred list check (DBS), verification of relevant professional status and any restrictions which may have been imposed.
- All checks will be confirmed in writing, recorded and retained on the candidate's personnel file, together with photocopies of documents used to identify identity and qualifications.

DBS Update service

- This is a subscription service which allows the applicant to keep their DBS check up to date on line. This allows employees to check a certificate on line without having to make another application. This can be carried out provided that we have the applicant's permission.

Record Keeping

- A record is kept of evidence to show that checks have been carried out in respect of staff, supply staff, volunteers and students.
- Satisfactory references are kept on the candidate's personnel file, in the case of supply staff, students and volunteers, in a central record within the organisation (Even if they have been recruited through an agency).
- Where information gained from either references or other checks, calls into question the candidate's suitability to work with children, or where the candidate has provided false information in support of the application, the facts should be reported to the Police and DBS.

Induction of staff, students and volunteers

- The induction of all newly appointed staff includes a planned and structured induction. This begins with an introduction to our child protection policy and procedures. This includes the making them aware of the identity of the DSL, and the role of staff in safeguarding.
- New staff are provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their own role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected.
- They are also made aware of our personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and our whistle-blowing policy.
- They are asked to carry out Safeguarding training on line, as a minimum.
- We have a six-week review period, during which a new member of staff will not be allowed to carry out regulated activity unsupervised. Once all checks and a DBS check are fully completed, and the induction period satisfactorily carried out, the member of staff will be asked to have a discussion with the manager and DSL in order to discuss how regulated activity can be carried out and the arrangements to ensure that children are fully protected.
- Safeguarding controls and supervision will be undertaken by the manager and DSL on a regular basis, and the member of staff will have an annual appraisal meeting.

1.14 Prevent duty and promoting fundamental British values.

Policy statement

From the 1st July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" This is duty is known as the Prevent Duty.

Procedures

- Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do, therefore to ensure that we adhere to and achieve the requirements of Prevent Duty, we will:
    - Provide appropriate training for staff as soon as possible, and ensure that they fully understand their duties. Part of this training will enable staff to identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation.
    - Build children's resilience by promoting fundamental British values, enabling them to develop the courage and confidence to challenge extremist views. The EYFS sets standards for learning, development and care, which are embedded within children's PSED, Communication development and Understanding the World.
    - We will assess the risk, by means of formal risk assessment, of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of the terrorist ideology. This will begin as we aim to develop respectful and open relationships with parents, using information gathered from registration forms, and our knowledge of families gained from home visits.
    - We will ensure staff understand the possible risks so they can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.
    - We will be aware of the online risk of radicalisation through the use of social media and the internet.
- As with managing our safeguarding risks, our staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection (children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or may seek to hide their views). The key person approach means we already know our children well and so we will notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly.
- We will not carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life, but we will take action when we observe behaviour of concern. The key person approach means we already have a rapport with our families, so we are well-placed to notice any changes in behaviour, demeanour or personality quickly.
- We will work in partnership with our local LSCB for guidance and support.
- We will assist and advise families who raise concerns with us, in order to be able to signpost appropriate support mechanisms.
- We will ensure that all staff will undertake Free online Prevent Duty Training.
- We will ensure that any resources used in playgroup are age appropriate for the children in our care and that our staff have the knowledge and confidence to use the resources effectively.
- Staff will have an on-going and open discussion about their own beliefs around British values, and what they mean to staff, children and families using the setting, ensuring that there is a balance created between celebrating and respecting difference, whilst being aware of the dangers of radicalisation.

"Fundamental British Values"

- For further information with regards to how the EYFS can help children and staff understand British Values and The Prevent Duty, please refer to sections Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Understanding the World (UTW)
- To help understand how this is put into practice on a daily basis at The Redding's Playgroup, a few examples are listed below:

Democracy: Making decisions together: PSED

- Managers and staff can encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging children to know their views count, value each other's views and opinions, and talk about their feelings. For example, saying when they do or do not need help.
- When appropriate demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views on what the theme of their role play area could be with a show of hands.
- Staff can support the decisions that children make, and provide activities that involve turn taking, sharing and collaboration.
- Children should be given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are listened to and valued.

Rule of Law: Understanding rules matter: PSED

- Staff can ensure that children understand their own and other's behaviours and its consequences, and to distinguish right from wrong.
- Staff can collaborate with children to create the rules and codes of expected behaviour, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and ensure all children understand rules apply to everyone.

Individual Liberty: Freedom for all: PSED & UTW

- Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff can provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. For example, allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, or talking about their experiences and learning.
- Staff should encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example, in a small group discuss how they feel about the transition from nursery to school.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated: PSED & UTW

- Managers and leaders create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and race are valued and children are engaged with the wider community.
- Children should acquire a tolerance and appreciation of and respect their own and other cultures: know about similarities and differences between themselves and other families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share practices, celebrations and experiences.
- Staff should encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other people's opinions.
- Staff should promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

What is not acceptable

- Actively promoting intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- Failure to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregating boys and girls.
- Isolating children from the wider community.
- Failure to challenge behaviours (whether this is staff, children or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- That any child should be treated less favourably than other child, for any reason. All children and families will be treated with unconditional positive regard.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Legislation

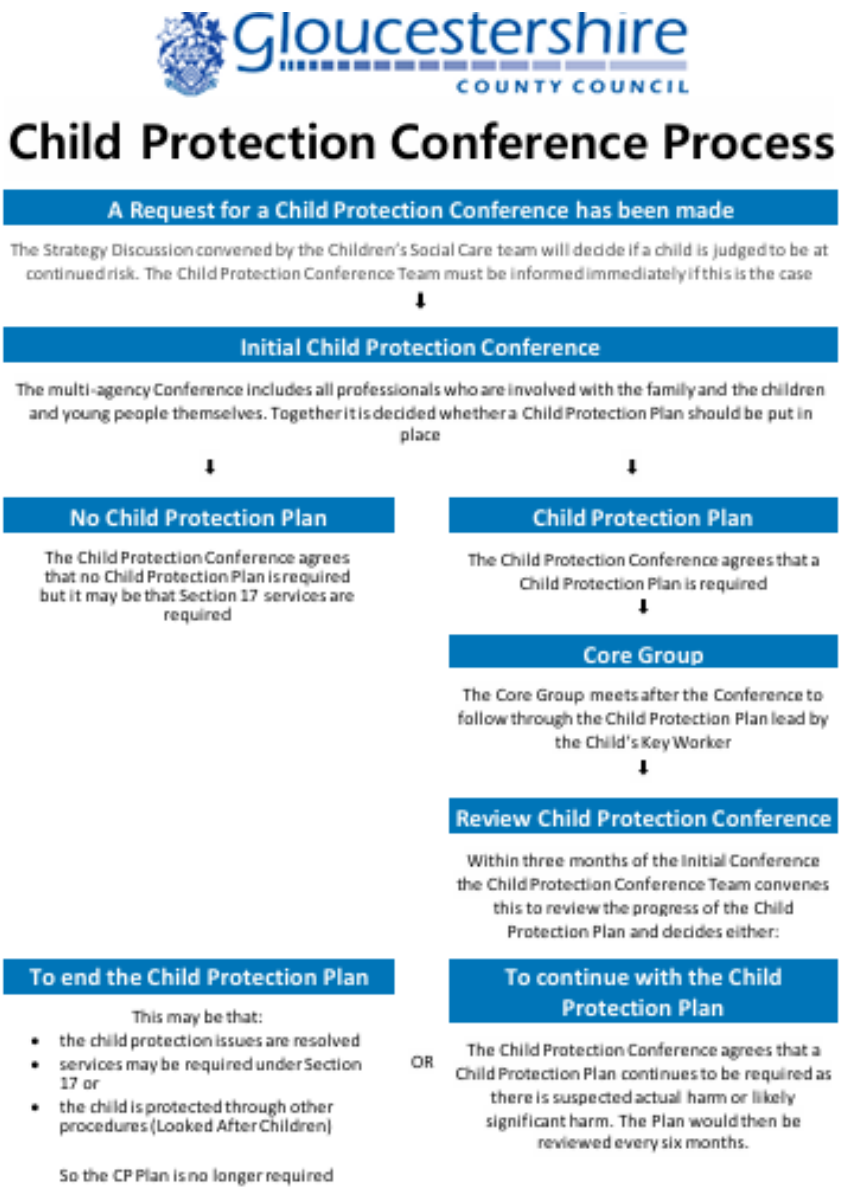
- Children Act 1989
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by the Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Apprenticeships, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022

Statutory guidance

- Home Office (2023) 'Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- HM Government (2020) 'multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation'
- HM Government (2023) 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation'
- Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2023) 'multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage'

1.15 Appendix 1 - Child protection process flow chart



Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL

Referrals to Social Care

Professional has made a referral to Social Care

If a professional has a concern about a child, or unborn baby, then follow the General Procedures provided

⬇

Confirm in writing

If due to urgent concerns, a MARF was not completed at the time of the initial contact, then the referral must be followed up in writing within 48 hours and sent to childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

⬇

Assessment

If accepted the referral will lead to an Assessment being commenced to determine whether there is suspected actual harm or likely significant harm

⬇

Strategy Discussion

The Strategy Discussion is convened by the appropriate Assessment Team where there is suspected actual harm of likely signification harm

⬇

Section 17
Child in need of services

Section 17 services are required when there are health or development concerns. These are determined through an assessment of need and are appropriate when the child is judged not to be at risk of significant harm or any previous concerns have been Resolved

⬌

Section 47
Child in need of protection

A Section 47 enquiry is required because it is judged there is suspected actual harm or likely significant harm to the child. An assessment is carried out and it may be decided that Child Protection Conference is required, which should then be held within 15 working days

Outcome of Assessment

The Assessment may confirm child protection concerns in which case a Child Protection Conference should be held within 15 working days of the last strategy discussion. (It may also determine that services are required under Section 17).

Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL

Child Protection Process

Professional has concerns

If a professional has a concern about a child, or unborn baby, then follow the General Procedures provided

⬇

Consultation with Supervisor

Professional discusses concerns with supervisor or Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide next steps

⬇

Discussion with Parents

Professional discusses concerns with parent/ carers of the child and explains what steps they will take next (if this does not put the child at further risk or affect a police investigation)

⬇

MASH

Where there are urgent concerns, professional contacts Gloucestershire MASH on 01452 426565 (option 3)

⬇

Seeking advice from Children's Social Care

If you work with children and families and have safeguarding concerns which are not of an urgent nature and would like a conversation to consider threshold and planning, please contact the Community Social Work Team on 01452 426263.

Alternatively, if you ring 01452 426565 and select option 2, you will be transferred to the Early Help service for their response. However, where possible, please contact the Community Social Work team in the first instance.

⬇

Making a Request for Service to Children's Social Care

Unless there are urgent concerns, professional completes a Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF). This is passed on to a social work team and the caller will be contacted by a social worker within 24 hours (unless there are immediate risks in which case the professional will be put through to a social work team straight away). The social work team will discuss whether the referral is appropriate and what action can/ will be taken. Please use the Gloucestershire Children's Services Portal to submit a MARF.