



RLSS UK
Safeguarding

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

“Safeguarding is everyone’s business”.

RLSS UK is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and adults at risk and expects everyone involved in RLSS UK activity to share this commitment.

Children and Young People - What to do if you feel unsafe or want to report a safeguarding concern

Within RLSS UK we want to ensure that we provide you with a safe and welcoming environment where you feel you are respected and valued. If you feel unsafe or have any concerns then you should contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in the organisation (see section 8.0) or confide in a person that you trust (parent, coach or friend). These individuals can contact the DSL on your behalf. We are here to support you.

[Click here to ‘Report a Safeguarding Concern’](#)

All information regarding RLSS UK safeguarding can be found on the [RLSS UK Website](#)

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Control Sheet

Document Review

Name	Title
Representatives of	S.E.D.A.G
Representatives of	RLSS UK Board

Document Approval

Name	Title	Department	Signature	Date
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This document should be reviewed in line with the details in section 14 and updated to reflect relevant changes.



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1.0 Policy Statement

RLSS UK is committed to ensuring that children who participate in its activities including lifesaving, lifeguarding, community awards, education, sports, competitions and any other events have a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. All groups of people whatever their age, gender, language, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and culture have the right to protection from abuse and to be treated fairly. Everyone involved with a child or young person who may be at risk is uniquely placed to recognise and respond to abuse and poor practice across RLSS UK.

2.0 Application

- 2.1 This policy applies to **all** of those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work, volunteer or come into contact with children as part of their role within the RLSS UK. The policy and associated procedures will be promoted to all new staff, volunteers and participants as part of their induction process at the club, district and National level depending on their role. Clubs will have responsibility for maintaining quality and practices through their volunteers.
- 2.2 All organisations (including clubs, Approved Training Centre's/ Providers and trainers/ instructors who deliver non-regulated activity as a sole trader) and contractors working in partnership with RLSS UK will be expected to have their own safeguarding arrangements and policies in place (Template policies can be found [here](#)) It is the duty of these organisations and contractors to ensure their policies are effectively communicated to their volunteers and staff and that they maintain, and quality assure safeguarding practice. Clubs should ensure that a copy of their policy is sent to all members of staff and volunteers, and they will be required, after a reasonable time, to signify they have received it and are conversant with the content. It will be the duty of RLSS UK Safeguarding Team to be reassured that organisations are prepared.
- 2.3 This policy will be available via the RLSS UK website and clearly made available by each club and organisation.

3.0. Child protection statement

- 3.1 RLSS UK recognises that its staff and volunteers have a moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will all be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. We will be child centred and take a coordinated and partnership approach to safeguarding. We recognise safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- 3.2 RLSS UK will advise all clubs to adhere to local partnership¹ safeguarding practices.
- 3.3 This policy also includes the RLSS UK stance with regards to Modern Slavery. Modern Slavery takes many forms including forced and compulsory labour, slavery, servitude and human

¹ In line with the Local Child Safeguarding Partnership arrangements and guidance for the areas where clubs are located.



trafficking. It is the violation of human rights and the RLSS UK has a zero-tolerance approach to Modern Slavery. We will also take any concerns in this area seriously.

- 3.4 RLSS UK will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format or language. Please contact the RLSS UK Safeguarding Case Officer for further information. This policy is also available on the RLSS UK website.

4.0 Legislation & Statutory Guidance

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within UK and Irish legislation and government guidance. They take the following into consideration:

- Children Act 1989 - UK
- The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000
- Children Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- All Wales Child Safeguarding Procedures 2019
- Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Children (Scotland Act 1995)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (2021)
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)
- Children and Young People Act 2020
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011
- Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015
- Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI (2017)
- Regional core child Protection Policies and procedures for NI (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- When to Call the Police: Guidance for Schools & Colleges 2020
- The Children First Act (2015)
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Children Act (Ireland) 2001
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
- Children First Act (Ireland) 2015



5.0 Definitions in Child Safeguarding

To assist in understanding this policy a number of key definitions need to be explained:

Child² - In England, Northern Ireland, Ireland and Wales a child is someone under the age of eighteen whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

In Scotland a young person becomes an adult at 16 but under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 they are a child until they reach the age of 18.

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment;
- Preventing harm to children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care and;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with National guidance³.

Safeguarding concern - When there is information that a child, young person has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, by their own or someone else's behaviour.

Safeguarding allegation - Where a person who is either a staff member, member, volunteer or contractor working on behalf of RLSS UK has⁴:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she 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.

Parent - Refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

Abuse of Trust -The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 section 3 created the offence of abuse of trust. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse with a person under 18, or to engage in any other sexual activity with, or directed towards such a person, if in either case that person is in a position of trust in relation to the under 18-year-old. This applies even if the relationship is consensual. See also Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and Children First Act (Ireland) 2015.

² Defined by the Children Act 1989

³ Defined by the Children Act 1989

⁴ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020



A person aged 18 or over ("Person A") is in a position of trust in relation to a person under that age ("Person B") if any of four conditions are satisfied. One relates to the education field and is as follows: "Person A" looks after persons who are under 18 and are receiving full-time education in an institution and "Person B" is receiving such education within that institution. This applies within RLSS UK and includes those in a professional support role and volunteers.

Abuse⁵ - A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Please see Appendix B for types of abuse

Poor practice:

Sometimes, concerns may relate to poor practice(see [RLSS UK's Low Level Concern Policy](#) for more details), where an adult or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing distress to a child or young person. In the application of this policy, poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes the principles of this document or RLSS UK Code of Conduct. Where poor practice is serious or repeated this could also constitute abuse and should be reported immediately.

It is essential all staff, members and volunteers, particularly coaches, instructors and trainers understand and maintain professional boundaries when working with children.

6.0 RLSS UK Commitment to Supporting Children and Young People

We expect all those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work, volunteer or come into contact with children and young people during RLSS UK activities to:

- Protect them from abuse whilst they are participating in any activity associated with RLSS UK;
- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children;
- Create a culture where children, parents⁶ and others who may have a concern are encouraged to report their concerns or the abuse that has happened to them;
- Have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities to safeguard children;
- Take appropriate action in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.

⁵ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

⁶ Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.



RLSS UK will:

- Provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, mental wellbeing and moral development of the individual child or young person.
 - Appoint an Executive Lead for Safeguarding and a Trustee Board Lead. This person will ensure that safeguarding runs as a thread throughout all our activities, both at strategic and operational levels.
 - Implement a safeguarding governance structure with assigned roles and responsibilities including the identification of DSL's (and Deputies).
 - Promote the RLSS UK's safeguarding arrangements to all of those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work, volunteer or come into contact with children and young people.
 - Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
 - Maintain and securely store confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns.
 - Reinforce the importance of working with all partner agencies with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for those who we are aiming to protect from the risk of abuse;
 - Provide the details about the action that will be taken by RLSS UK when a safeguarding concern is reported.
 - Notify the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as soon as there is a significant concern;
 - Recognise that all of those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work with and volunteer for RLSS UK have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
 - Ensure that staff, members and volunteers involved in child protection issues receive appropriate support and supervision.
-
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
 - Ensure that all RLSS UK staff, volunteers, members including clubs, branches and affiliated bodies are required to adhere to the RLSS UK Code of Conduct and/or Code of Practice. These policies are available on the RLSS UK Website [RLSS UK and IQL UK Policies | Royal Life Saving Society UK \(RLSS UK\)](#)
 - Ensure that staff and volunteers working for RLSS UK with roles and responsibilities for children and young people (including RLSS UK Trustees and Branch officials) will be subject to appropriate safe recruitment checks and safeguarding training.
 - Ensure that all members of staff, members and volunteers are trained in and receive regular updates in reporting concerns; advise all DSL's to maintain current safeguard training and send them regular safeguarding updates.
 - Advise all clubs and anyone representing RLSS UK to ensure that all volunteers and staff receive up to date and appropriate safeguarding training.
 - Encourage clubs and anyone representing RLSS UK to engage with all parents and other relevant individuals to ensure that they are made aware of the responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures.
 - Clearly advertise and promote the details of the designated members of staff for child protection.



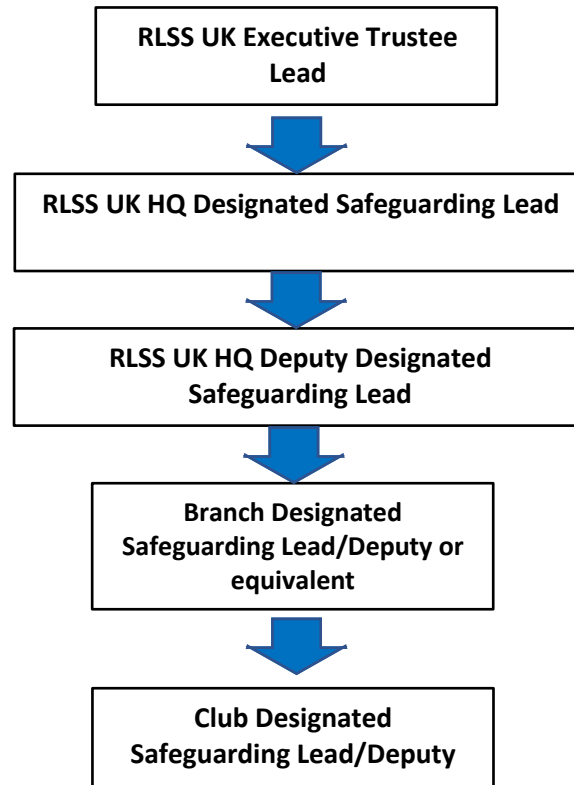
RLSS UK will support all children by:

- Allowing them to participate in activities in a way that is appropriate for their age and ability.
- Ensuring that they are coached and trained by appropriately qualified staff or volunteers who have been competently trained.
- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying;
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within all of its Clubs through training of officials;
- Responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress and anxiety;
- Recognising that a child who is abused or who witnesses violence/abuse may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- Offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support;
- Liaising and working together with all other partnerships, support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
- Accessing and utilising the necessary resources and guidance to identify children requiring mental health support;
- Reassuring victims/survivors that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe;
- Ensuring that they know there are adults in each of the club whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- Reinforcing good safeguarding practice to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.



7.0 Safeguarding Structure

The structure of the RLSS UK safeguarding team is as follows:





8.0 Key Safeguarding Roles

8.1 The details and contacts of the RLSS UK Safeguarding Team are;

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
RLSS UK Executive Trustee	Joanne Young	Safeguardingadvice@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK HQ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Lee Heard	Leeheard@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK HQ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Richard Flavell	Richardflavell@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK Safeguarding Case Officer	Jo Barrett	jobarrett@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK Deputy Safeguarding Case Officer	Donna Hill	Donnahill@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
Branch DSL	Names, email addresses and telephones should be published in club and approved training provider policies		
Club DSL	Names, email addresses and telephones should be published in club policies		

8.2 There is an expectation that all members of the RLSS UK Safeguarding Team will work closely together and where circumstances dictate share agreed responsibilities and functions. However, it will be the RLSS UK HQ DSL, or in their absence their deputy, that has primacy in terms of decision making around safeguarding concerns or allegations.

8.3 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the RLSS UK working practices and procedures at section 9.0.



9.0 RLSS UK Safeguarding Procedures

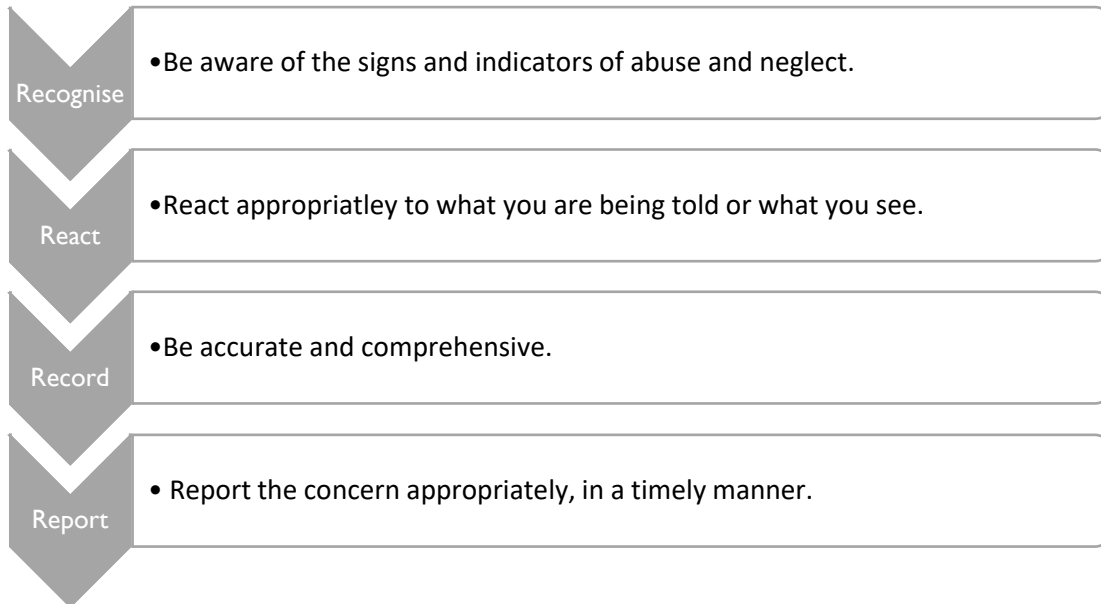
- 9.1 The aim of these procedures is to detail how RLSS UK staff, volunteers and members or others should respond if they have a safeguarding concern or suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer abuse. It outlines what to do if:
- a child makes a disclosure or reports that they, or someone else, has been abused,
 - the behaviour of an adult or child towards another child gives them cause for concern,
 - they have a safeguarding concern
 - they identify a breach of the RLSS UK Code of Conduct in relation to safeguarding
- 9.2 The procedures also detail the action that will be taken by the Club/Branch or RLSS UK HQ DSL or Deputy when a safeguarding concern is reported.
- 9.3 The RLSS UK [Code of Conduct](#) outlines the behaviour expected of staff, volunteers and anyone representing RLSS UK when they are interacting with all vulnerable groups. Following the Code of Conduct will help to protect children at risk from abuse and will ensure that professional boundaries are maintained.
- 9.4 Any breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported in line with the procedure for [reporting a safeguarding concern](#). Serious breaches of the Code of Conduct may also result in a referral being made to the police or a Local Authority if it is thought the breach amounts to a risk of harm to a child and/or constitutes a crime.



10.0 Reporting a Concern

10.1 All staff, volunteers and those working on behalf of RLSS UK have a responsibility to be alert to the fact that children and young people that may have been abused and that they **MUST** report safeguarding concerns.

10.2 By following the four simple safeguarding principles of Recognise, React, Record and Report, the RLSS UK can keep those children who may be at risk of abuse safe from harm.



10.3 Recognise

10.3.1 We should all be alert for the signs and indicators that children and young people who interact or engage with RLSS UK may be suffering abuse either within the organisation or in external environments (i.e. home, school etc). We should remember that children may be abused by other children and young people as well as by adults.

Indicators that a child may be being abused may include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her,
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g., becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Sudden or unusual distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Having difficulty in making friends.
- Being prevented from socialising with other young people.



- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite; or a sudden weight change
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

10.3.2 It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. Establishing a professional relationship with the child and their parent may assist in identifying any issues or concerns.

10.3.3 It is important to note that not all children are able to express themselves verbally. Communication difficulties, language barriers or specific disabilities may mean that it is hard for them to complain or to be understood. In some instances children particularly those with disability may need to be supported by an advocate⁷.

10.3.4 We also recognise that many children and young people may have experienced trauma in their past (Adverse Childhood Experiences) which could be affecting their behaviour and outcomes in life. We recognise that we have an important part to play in providing a safe environment for those who have suffered from such trauma and we will provide help and support through signposting them to specialist help and support.

10.4 React

10.4.1 It is always difficult to hear about or witness harm or abuse experienced by a child or young person. The following points will be helpful for both you and the child should they choose to disclose abuse to you:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said and try not to interrupt.
- Find an appropriate point early on to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow them to continue at their own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid asking questions that suggest an answer (leading questions).
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and have done the right thing in telling you. If the concern is serious explain that you will need to get support from other trained people to help keep the them safe. This must be shared even if the child doesn't want you to tell anyone else.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. If they are adamant that they do not wish the information to be shared, explain that you will have to tell the DSL (or Deputy) and that it will be discussed further with them.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure relates to a recent incident of physical harm or injury and try to protect any supporting materials e.g. clothing.
- Seek medical attention were appropriate.
- Report the disclosure to the Club/Branch DSL (or Deputy) **at the earliest** opportunity.
- Don't confront the alleged abuser.

⁷ [National Youth Advocacy Service – England and Wales. Children's Advocacy Guidance – Scotland. Advocacy for Children and Young People – NI and Advocacy Early Childhood - Ireland](#)



10.4.2 Where the concern or allegation is about a member of staff, member or a volunteer, this must like all other instances be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy. If the DSL or Deputy considers the circumstances to relate to a 'Safeguarding Allegation', they must report the incident to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or alternative. Depending on the circumstances it may also be necessary to inform the police.

10.4.3 When a safeguarding concern or poor practice has been identified concerning a specific child the parents should be notified **unless** this could put the child or another child at increased risk. Where the DSL/Deputy has reported the incident to a statutory agency, for example the LADO or police, advice should be sought from them regarding this duty before notifying the parents/guardians/carers.

10.5 Record

10.5.1 All records must be accurate and comprehensive. Wherever possible you should use the [RLSS UK reporting form](#) and ensure you also notify the Club/Branch DSL or Deputy DSL.

10.5.2 You must record all potential safeguarding issues including low level concerns. Such concerns may be an indicator that more complex harm is occurring and could identify patterns of abuse.

10.5.3 All records must:

- Be made as soon as possible after the event/concern is raised.
- Contain the date, time, people present, anything said (verbatim if possible).
- Detail the behaviour and demeanour of the person disclosing the safeguarding issue.
- Detail any action you have taken (for example how you have reduced risk or whether you have referred the matter to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy).
- Be a factual account of what has happened.
- Adhere to confidentiality (only share with appropriate people).

10.5.4 Do not record any opinion about what has happened. You are not there to judge or ascertain whether what you are being told is correct.



10.6 Report

Remember you have a clear responsibility to report the concerns that have been raised with you immediately. Any delay in reporting could potentially cause more harm.

Appendix A outlines a process chart of the reporting procedure

10.6.1 In the first instance you must report concerns that you have to the Club/Branch DSL (or Deputy) **on the telephone, in person or where appropriate, via email**. Where you use email, please ensure that you follow this up with a telephone call. The details of all safeguarding positions will be displayed on the Club/organisation websites and other communicating functions and in addition, the RLSS UK Website. You can also report the matter to the Central Safeguarding team (RLSS UK HQ), if a local contact is unavailable – details are included next.

Responsibility	Name	Office Hours	Out of Hours
RLSS UK HQ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Lee Heard	Leeheard@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK HQ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Richard Flavell	Richardflavell@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK Safeguarding Case Officer	Jo Barrett	jobarrett@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours
RLSS UK Deputy Safeguarding Case Officer	Donna Hill	Donnahill@rlss.org.uk	0300 323 0096 Press 0 when out of office hours

10.6.2 If a member of staff or volunteer is working away from premises controlled by the RLSS UK for a partner organisation, then the Safeguarding Policy of that organisation should be followed. Concerns must also still be reported to the RLSS UK HQ DSL or Deputy, and they will in turn offer any assistance to the other organisation.

10.6.3 Where the concern or allegation relates to the Club/Branch DSL then the matter should be referred to the RLSS HQ DSL or their Deputy.

10.6.4 Where the concern or allegation relates to the RLSS UK HQ DSL or their Deputy then the matter should be referred to the RLSS UK Executive Trustee of is unavailable the Chief Executive Officer.

10.6.5 Safeguarding concerns **MUST** be reported immediately (or where this is not possible at the earliest opportunity) so that the report can be assessed, and action taken to protect the person involved. **If any person is at immediate risk of harm or requires medical attention, then the emergency services should be contacted immediately by telephoning 999.**



10.6.6 Where you are unable to contact a DSL, advice can be sought from statutory agencies or by calling or emailing the following;

- England - <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council> or <http://www.gov.uk>
- Wales - [Reporting suspected abuse, harm or neglect \(safeguarding\) | GOV.WALES](#)
- Scotland – <https://www.mygov.scot/report-child-abuse>
- Northern Ireland - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>
- Ireland - [Report a Concern- Tusla - Child and Family Agency](#)
- Jersey - <https://safeguarding.je/report-a-concern/>
- Guernsey - <http://iscp.gg/>
- Local Police/ An Garda Siochana - Telephone 101 for non-emergency referrals and 999 for emergency response.
- NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/> or call 0808 800 5000.



11.0 Confidentiality and sharing information

- 11.1 Effective and timely sharing of information is essential for the early identification of a child's needs and to ensure that the most appropriate services are provided in order to keep them safe.
- 11.2 Those with concerns should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help the DSL (or the Deputy) and other professionals identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of the child concerned.
- 11.3 Concerns about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of a vulnerable individual, which must always be the paramount concern. The Data Protection Act (2018)⁸ and/or the General Protection Regulations (2018) **do not** prevent you from sharing information in relation to safeguarding.
- 11.4 You should not assume that someone else will pass on information.
- 11.5 RLSS UK staff or volunteers or those acting on their behalf of RLSS UK should aim to gain consent to share information but should be mindful of those situations where to do so would place the child or others at increased risk of harm. Advice concerning consent should be sought from the DSL or Deputy.
- 11.6 The DSL (or Deputy) must always be informed before information is shared with an external organisation except in cases where there is a risk of immediate or serious harm and an emergency referral is necessary. The DSL or Deputy will manage the process of sharing information with the police, local authority services and/or any third-party organisation.
- 11.7 Information should be kept confidential and should only be shared with other staff members and those working on behalf of RLSS UK who need to know the information. If there is any doubt about whether to share information, or who to share it with, advice should be sought from the DSL or Deputy.

⁸ The Data Protection Act 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent, if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk



12.0 Action by the Designated Club/Branch Safeguarding Leads or Deputies

Should the Club/Branch DSL not be available or appropriate then please refer information to the RLSS UK Safeguarding Team.

- 12.1 The DSL or Deputy, in conjunction with the other relevant leads, will manage the response to all safeguarding concerns.
- 12.2 When a safeguarding concern has been reported the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will:
- Make an initial assessment of the information received and ensure, if not already done so, the details are comprehensively recoded. If necessary, they will advise the reporting person on the quality of the submission and can ask for further detail to be added.
 - Identify any immediate risks to the individuals contained within the report and respond accordingly. This could include calling 999, ensuring all possible action is taken to remove, reduce or control the risks identified.
 - If the risk is not immediate the DSL or Deputy will use the Local Authority threshold tool for their area to make an assessment of the information. The purpose of this assessment is to ascertain, using all the information that is available, which level of need is appropriate for the child concerned. Most threshold tools have common themes in terms of the levels of need which are;
 - children with no additional needs (Level 1),
 - children with additional needs showing early signs of vulnerability (Level 2),
 - children in need who require statutory or specialist services (Level 3) and
 - children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Level 4).
 - If after assessment of all the information, it is ascertained that the circumstances outline a child with no additional needs (Level 1) there is no need to make a referral to the Local Authority and also no requirement to refer this to the RLSS UK HQ safeguarding team. Those who have responsibility for the child should be encouraged to access local support services in the usual way. This does not mean that any responsibility for monitoring the welfare needs of that child are absolved. Where circumstances change there may be a need to reassess the level of need and act accordingly.
 - If after assessment of all the information, it is ascertained that the circumstances outline a child with additional needs showing early signs of vulnerability (Level 2) there is no need to make a referral to the Local Authority and also no requirement to refer this to the HQ safeguarding team. The Club/Branch DSL and Deputy should however make contact with Local Early Help Services (if they are available) in order to address any identified needs. It is recognised identifying and providing early help before matters escalate often provides a better outcome for children. Where early help services are not available then advice should be sought from local safeguarding services.



- If after assessment of all the information, it is ascertained that the circumstances outline that the individual is a 'child in need' who requires statutory or specialist services (Level 3) or a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Level 4) the DSL or Deputy should make a referral to their local safeguarding services. Following this the guidance of the statutory agencies should be followed and where appropriate, and RLSS UK staff and volunteers will work in partnership with the agencies around the needs of the child. All such cases should be notified to the RLSS UK HQ DSL or their Deputy.
- Should the DSL or Deputy dispute the outcome from the Local Authority consideration will be given to follow the local escalation or professional difference policy which can be accessed on the local Children's Partnership website.
- All action taken will be recorded on RLSS UK Safeguarding systems via the RLSS UK Safeguarding team.
- The DSL or Deputy will actively monitor all referrals that are made and will make reasonable enquiries around progress with the Local Authority.
- Where it is decided that the information contained in the safeguarding concern constitutes a **Safeguarding Allegation** the DSL or Deputy will follow RLSS UK procedure for complaints and they will make a referral to Children's Social Care. Internal investigations will be conducted in line with best practice ([Conducting Workplace Investigations](#)).



13.0 Case Referral Management Panel

- 13.1 The Case Referral Management Panel is made up of staff at RLSS UK HQ who are appropriately experienced and trained in safeguarding. The RLSS UK HQ DSL shall take the lead and oversee the operation of the Case Referral Management Panel. The role of the Case Referral Management Panel is to make an initial assessment on how to deal with all reported concerns (other than low level concerns which will be dealt with at a club and Branch Level) relating to children and young people, what level each case will be dealt with at and give advice on the actions to be taken by the organisation. The decision will be made whether the situation is one that can be dealt with internally, or one requiring that information be shared with statutory agencies i.e. MASH and/or the Police. Additionally, it will monitor and review progress on all safeguarding cases.
- 13.2 Where appropriate the Case Referral Management Panel will be responsible for reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission. A serious incident is defined by the Commission as an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant;
- Harm to RLSS UK beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the organisation through its work
 - Loss of RLSS UK's money or assets
 - Damage to RLSS UK's property
 - Harm to RLSS UK's work or reputation

For the purposes of this guidance, "significant" means significant in the context of the RLSS, taking account of its staff, operations, finances and/or reputation.

14.0 **Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Advisory Group (SEDAG)**

- 14.1 This group has a key function in the Society's duty of care to all beneficiaries of RLSS UKs work, ensuring that RLSS UKs policies for safeguarding, diversity, equality and inclusion are fit for purpose and are practically applied.
- 14.2 Whilst it is the responsibility of the advisory group to ensure the Society has robust Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity policies in place, the Advisory Group also has a key role ensuring the policies reflect best practice across the sector and are implemented consistently across the organisation.
- 14.3 SEDAG will maintain an operational safeguarding risk register.



14.0 Procedural Implementation and review

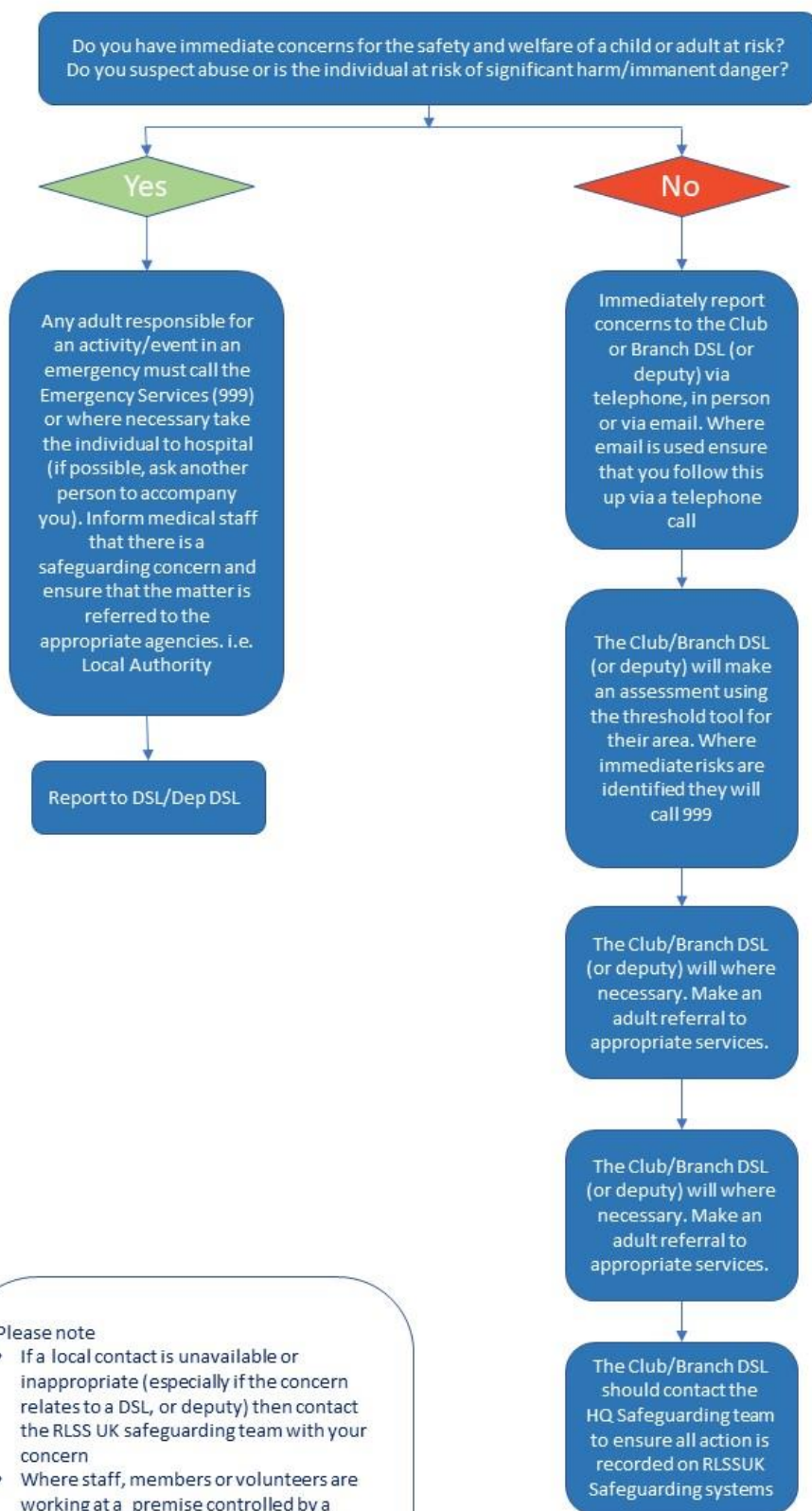
14.1 These procedures were implemented on 1st May 2023 and will be reviewed on an annual basis or in response to changes in safeguarding legislation and/or best practice.

14.2 The following additional RLSS UK policies are also relevant to this document:

- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Use of Photography and Film Image
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Professional Boundaries Guidance and Practice
- Youth Image Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Social Media and Internet Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Good Practice Guidance
- Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct



Appendix A – Safeguarding Reporting Procedure



Please note

- If a local contact is unavailable or inappropriate (especially if the concern relates to a DSL, or deputy) then contact the RLSS UK safeguarding team with your concern
- Where staff, members or volunteers are working at a premise controlled by a partner organization follow their procedures
- Where the concern or allegation refers to the RLSS UK DSL or their deputy then the matter should be referred to The RLSS UK Executive Trustee



Appendix B - Types of Abuse

Physical abuse⁹: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue.

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Related issues in addition to the above categories, there are other forms of harm or abuse that should involve the notification of the police and other organisations working together to protect children. These include:

⁹ Working together to Safeguard Children 2018



Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victims to defend themselves.

The damage inflicted by bullying is often underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development and can be a source of significant harm, including self-harm and suicide. Bullying can include emotional and/or physical harm to such a degree that it constitutes significant harm.

The four main types of bullying are:

- Physical abuse: hitting, kicking, stabbing and setting alight including for filming with mobile telephones and theft, commonly of mobile phones
- Verbal or mobile telephone / online (internet) message abuse (e.g. racist, sexist or homophobic name-calling or threats: this type of physical bullying may include sexual harassment
- Mobile telephone or online (internet) visual image abuse: these can include real or manipulated images
- Emotional abuse e.g., isolating an individual from the group or emotional blackmail

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based forms of child physical, sexual and emotional abuse can include bullying via mobile telephones or online (internet) with verbal and visual messages.

Child Sexual Exploitation which can include Human Trafficking

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (WTSC, 2018).

Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is also known as 'County Lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks threaten or trick children into trafficking their drugs for them. They might threaten a young person physically or they might threaten the young person's family or friends. The gangs might also offer something in return for the young person's cooperation, this could be money, food, alcohol, drugs, clothes and jewellery, or improved status.

Gangs target vulnerable children who are homeless, living in care, or trapped in poverty. These children are unsafe, or unable to cope, and the gangs take advantage of this.



Hate crimes

Hate incidents and hate crime are acts of violence or hostility directed at people because of who they are or who someone thinks they are.

For example, it includes being verbally abused by someone in the street because of disability, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief and transgender identity.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It is dangerous and a criminal offence. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It does not enhance fertility and it does not make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health

Domestic Violence & Abuse

The cross-Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Honour based violence

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.



Forced marriage

A forced marriage¹⁰ (as distinct from a consensual "arranged" marriage) is defined as one which is conducted without the valid consent of both of the parties and where duress is a factor. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure and cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. Forced marriage is child abuse and can put children and young people at risk of physical, emotional and sexual violence including rape. Forced marriage can have a negative impact on a child's health and development (Forced Marriage Unit, 2018).

Radicalisation

The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media. Whilst there is a National Prevent agenda¹¹ all concerns should be reported through normal child protection procedures.

¹⁰ [Forced Marriage Guidance](#)

¹¹ [Prevent Guidance](#)