

Policy number	4.01
Subject	Safeguarding Adults and Children
Directorate responsible	Care Services
Date last reviewed/by whom	January 2025 - Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality
Date to be reviewed	January 2026

Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As an organisation Linkage is committed to ensuring compliance with best practice in terms of our safeguarding standards and guidance. Linkage has a zero tolerance of harm, and believes that it is unacceptable for adults, young people and children to experience abuse of any kind. Linkage upholds its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all adults and children at risk in line with the **Care Act (2014) and the Children's Acts (1989 /2004)**.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Linkage and its employees safeguard the welfare of adults, young people and children who may be at risk, are able to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and can respond appropriately to allegations of abuse.

Linkage aims to achieve this by ensuring that it:

- Complies with statutory and local guidance for safeguarding; and
- Promotes the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk by creating and maintaining a safe environment.

Linkage will, where possible, take a preventative approach - acting before abuse occurs, and will ensure that employees are trained to recognise and respond to allegations of abuse and neglect to include but not limited to Self-neglect, Domestic abuse and Modern Slavery.

Linkage will put the **adult or child** at the centre of the matter, with a **clear understanding of their needs and views** in relation to any action that we need to take and a presumption of informed consent.

Linkage will follow the core principles of Making Safeguarding Personal. The core principles for safeguarding adults are empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership, and accountability. Making Safeguarding Personal supports translating those principles into effective practice.

This policy is designed to provide employees, volunteers and Trustees with the overarching principles that guide a robust approach and commitment to safeguarding. These are awareness, training, procedures and quality assurance.

Scope

Trustees	✓	Employees	✓	Workers acting on behalf of Linkage	✓
Volunteers	✓	Students / People we Support	✓		

All the above groups will be referred to as "workers" throughout this policy. The group described as "employees" above includes those employed by Linkage; secondees placed within the organisation; and Linkage employees undertaking a placement or secondments/attachments outside the organisation.

Where visitors to a location, for example contractors, cannot be verified as to having completed Linkage's overarching principles to safeguarding, they must be chaperoned by a 'worker' to ensure safeguards to people we support / students for the duration of the visit.

This safeguarding policy applies to both the protection of children and the protection of adults defined as at risk of harm and includes anyone who by the nature of their contact with Linkage meets those criteria.

A child is anyone under the age of 18

An adult at risk is anyone aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and/or support.
- As a result of care and support, needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse.
- Is currently experiencing or is at risk of abuse.

Policy

Linkage will provide services in a manner that as far as possible prevents any child, young person or adult from experiencing harm.

When Linkage has reasonable grounds for concern that identifiable children or adults are being, have been, or are at risk of being seriously harmed, Linkage will raise their concerns in accordance with Linkage safeguarding procedures and where appropriate, statutory or regulatory guidance.

Linkage's core function is meeting the needs of vulnerable young people over the age of 16 and adult service user group, but may come across younger children because of its outreach activities

Occasionally people we support, and students may disclose information which specifically indicates they have been put at risk by those who deliver Linkage services. Accompanying robust procedures are in place to guide Linkage in recognising such incidents of alleged serious misconduct, to raise concerns internally, investigate and, if substantiated, to refer concerns to regulators and statutory authorities as required.

Linkage will fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities by.

- Listening to children, young people and adults at risk without judgement, valuing and respecting them, and ensuring their views and wishes are taken into consideration.
- Providing regular mandatory training and guidance for workers in dealing with situations where there are safeguarding concerns and providing clear procedures for raising concerns.
- Adopting robust safeguarding procedures and codes of practice for all workers
- Ensuring that all contracting and commissioning is undertaken with regard for safeguarding.
- Providing effective management for workers through robust supervision and support, and guidance for managers.
- Ensuring a suitably experienced safeguarding team is appointed within the organisation.
- Recruiting workers in accordance with safer recruitment good practice guidelines, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Routinely sharing good practice findings and lessons learned with workers as necessary.
- Ensuring that appropriate action is taken where there are concerns regarding workers' conduct with children or vulnerable adults. Concerns of this nature should be raised via the following methods:
 - Linkages' Whistleblowing procedures
 - Linkage Let Us Know Service
 - letusknow@linkage.org.uk
 - 01472 372300
 - Local Authority, Care Quality Commission or Ofsted whistleblowing procedures

Definitions used by Linkage for the purposes of this policy

Abuse

Abuse is a violation of a person's human or civil rights by another(s). It may be single or repeated acts. Abuse may be -

- Physical, verbal, psychological/emotional, sexual, financial (relates to money, property or things a person owns), discriminatory, or institutional abuse, or an act of neglect or omission.

Abuse can take many forms and does not have to fit into any of the above categories.

Service User

Any people we support, or student supported by Linkage.

Adults at risk

An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or risk of it.

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The alerter is the worker who raises the safeguarding alert, this can be an external person.

Apology

Defined as "an expression of sorrow or regret"

Child

A young person up to the age of 18

Harm

Irrespective of whether the impact is significant or not harm is any act by another that has the potential to adversely affect a person's health, wellbeing, development or infringes on their rights.

Notifiable Safety Incident

Using the definition provided by CQC – a notifiable safety incident which must be reported by the registered manager means –

Any unintended or unexpected incident that occurred in respect of a service-user during the provision of a regulated activity that appears to have resulted in:

- The death of the service-user, including from the natural course of their illness or underlying condition
- An impairment of the sensory, motor or intellectual functions of the service-user which has lasted or is likely to last for a continuous period of 28 days.
- Changes to the structure of the service-user's body
- The service-user experiencing prolonged pain or prolonged psychological harm **Or**
- The shortening of the life-expectancy of the service-user; **Or**
- Requires treatment by a health care professional in order to prevent the death of the service-user or any injury which if left untreated would lead to one or more of the outcomes mentioned above.

Relevant Person

Defined as –

"The service-user or, in the following circumstances, a person lawfully acting on their behalf –

- On the death of the service-user
- Where the service-user is under 16 and not competent to make a decision in relation to their care or treatment, or
- Where the service-user is 16 or over and lacks capacity in relation to the matter"

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Registered Person / Registered Manager

The person acting as registered manager for a registered service at Linkage

Linkage Manager / Manager / Assistant Principal

Any manager within the trust. This includes Care, Education, Community Support and Linkage Day Services (Linkage Choice).

Safeguarding and protection alert

Formally raising a concern within Linkage about an action by another that could cause harm to a child, or an adult at risk

Significant harm

Defined as ill-treatment or the impairment of health and development. It is a term used in legislation to introduce the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in order to protect children.

Recognising the signs of Abuse

Some Linkage employees may be well-placed to spot abuse and neglect; in some cases, they may be the only professionals with whom the person has contact. The person may say or do things that hint that all is not well. It may be in the form of a complaint, a call for a police response, an expression of concern, or as part of a disclosure during an assessment or support plan review.

Regardless of how the safeguarding concern is identified and raised, everyone should understand what to do, and who to contact locally to get support and advice. It is crucial that professionals, Linkage employees and members of the public are vigilant on behalf of those unable to protect themselves, including:

- *Knowing about different types of abuse and neglect and their signs*
- *Supporting children and adults to keep safe*
- *Knowing who to tell about suspected abuse or neglect and*
- *Supporting adults to think and weigh up the risks and benefits of different options when exercising choice and control.*

Legislative Framework**Adults**

The **Care Act (2014)** outlines key principles for supporting adults who have been or are at risk of abuse or neglect and provides a framework for local authorities and partner organisations for making safeguarding enquiries.

Children

The standards in this policy build on and incorporate legislation and Government expectations in respect of children. This includes the **Children Acts 1989** and **2004** and the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. The Children's Act 1989 introduced the concept of **significant harm**, as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention into family life in order to protect children. Significant harm is defined as ill-treatment or the impairment of health and development.

In 2010 HM Government issued '**Working Together to Safeguard Children**'. The guidance is for statutory and voluntary organisations alike and covers all the expectations of Government in relation to safeguarding children in England. This has been further updated in 2013 and more recently in 2020.

Other relevant legislation and guidance:

- **Mental Capacity Act (2005)**

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- Mental Capacity Act - Code of Practice (2007)
- Mental Capacity Act - Deprivation of Liberty safeguards – Code of Practice to supplement the main Mental Capacity Act code of Practice (2008)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Mental Health Act (2007)
- Criminal Justice Act (2003)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Working together to safeguard children
- Children Act (2004)
- Safeguarding children and young people: roles and competencies for health care staff. Intercollegiate document (2014)
- NICE Guideline (CG89) When to suspect child maltreatment (2009-11)

Local Authorities Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Linkage managers are expected to make themselves fully aware of and adhere to Local Safeguarding Procedures set out by the Council for the locality in which the service is delivered. This policy and procedure must be read in conjunction with the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding/POVA procedures.

Managers are also responsible for ensuring information is shared with their workers to ensure they understand their role in ensuring compliance with Local Safeguarding Procedures.

Links to the main local authority areas that Linkage work with are outlined below:

Adults	Children
Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
Northeast Lincs	Northeast Lincs
East Riding	East Riding

Associated Policies & Procedures

- 3.09 Disciplinary Policy and Guidance
- 1.02 Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints
- 4.02 Prevent
- 3.33 Whistleblowing
- 4.01a Alert-Us Procedure
- 3.24 Recruitment and Selection
- 4.42 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Recruitment

Linkage has robust systems and procedures in place to ensure the safe recruitment of all employees and volunteers within the organisation who come into contact with adults, young people and children. This includes requirements set out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Training

Managers should ensure that:

- All workers within the scope of this policy are aware of, and have access to this policy and guidance
- All new employees will have completed safeguarding e-learning within 12 weeks of commencing employment at Linkage

- Training must be completed before an individual can lone work
- Training will be updated minimally every two years for all employees

The Linkage training will ensure that employees:

- Understand the importance of providing high quality care
- Know the actions they must take in raising and reporting an alert
- Understand what abuse, neglect or poor practice might involve
- Can identify the early indicators of abuse or neglect
- Are aware of the actions of a Linkage worker that could be considered as a safeguarding alert
- Understand the importance of always referring to local safeguarding and protection procedures and protocols provided by commissioners
- Understand the importance of reporting all incidents & accidents that involve Linkage people being supported or students

Linkage expects all workers to attend any safeguarding and protection training made available to them by commissioners of Linkage services where required.

Sharing Information (Consent and Confidentiality)

Sharing information is an essential part of effective safeguarding practice. It enables multiple employees and/or agencies to build a complete picture of a situation where one individual or agency would be unable to do so. This enables early intervention and prevention work to be undertaken.

Confidential information is information, which is personal, sensitive, not already lawfully in the public domain, and shared in confidence or the reasonable expectation of confidence.

Confidential information may be shared with the consent of the person who provided it or to whom it relates. Consent can be withdrawn by the person at any time.

Confidential information may also be shared **without consent under the following circumstances:**

- If there is evidence or reasonable cause to believe that an adult is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, or of causing significant harm to themselves or others.
- Where an individual 16 years and over lacks capacity to consent supported by the Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- To prevent significant harm to children, young people and adults at risk
- Where required to assist authorities in the event of serious or organised crime

Safeguarding Leads

The following people and groups have specific responsibilities in relation to safeguarding as follows:

Board of Trustees

- Overall accountability for Linkage services with oversight of safeguarding at Board level.
- All trustees have responsibility for safeguarding; a safeguarding lead on the Board will be allocated..

Chief Executive

- To provide leadership across all directorates and areas of The Trust, ensuring all teams are accountable for their specific responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.
- To provide updates, where required, to the Board of Trustees.

Director of Care and Independence / Director of Lifelong Learning and Employability

- To provide leadership on all aspects of adults and children at risk within Linkage
- To positively promote safeguarding within Linkage ensuring that it has a high profile within the Trust
- To maintain oversight of the safeguarding process and address any issues raised by the Quality Team within service provision

Assistant Director of Quality and Safeguarding

- To be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Charity
- To maintain key contacts within the field of Safeguarding
- To attend any relevant safeguarding multi agency safeguarding forums as required
- Closing safeguarding alerts once satisfied that the risk of abuse or neglect has been removed or reduced to an acceptable level, in partnership with the manager responsible
- Reporting on the levels of safeguarding alerts to Executive Leadership Team, the Board of Trustees and sub-committees on a quarterly basis and / or when required
- To keep up to date on any changes to policy and new policies, which could affect the different services across areas of Linkage

Assistant Director of People and Culture

- To take the lead in ensuring safer recruitment compliance including DBS and background checks, verifying the suitability of candidates. Facilitate comprehensive safeguarding training for all recruits and ensuring ongoing training for existing staff
- Will implement and regularly update policies and procedures relating to staff roles and responsibilities.

Quality Team

- Answering queries on safeguarding that come in from employees and public
- Logging all safeguarding alerts received and processing them in accordance with the timescales as set out by commissioning authorities and / or CQC / Ofsted.
- Following up on actions identified or lessons learnt
- Supporting learning across the trust

Operations Managers / Assistant Principal (Safeguarding, Behaviour & Welfare)

- Be the designated lead within specific allocated areas across the Trust.
- To maintain oversight of all safeguarding procedures within allocated directorates.
- To keep up to date with changes to policy and legislation, working closely with the Head of Quality and Safeguarding, to ensure practice reflects guidance.

Registered Managers / Assistant Principals / Curriculum Managers

- Responsibility for submitting and investigating safeguarding alerts, as well as statutory responsibility for submitting regulatory notifications to CQC/Ofsted
- Advising that safeguarding alerts can be closed

Deputy Managers / Co-Ordinators

- To keep Linkage employees and volunteers informed on relevant safeguarding issues or policy updates
- Responsibility for submitting and investigating safeguarding alerts
- Advising that safeguarding alerts can be closed

External Contacts providing more information on their role

Care Quality Commission www.cqc.org.uk/

Ofsted <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Charity Commission www.charitycommission.gov.uk/

Disclosure & Barring Scheme

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about