

# PLAY THERAPY UNITED KINGDOM (PTUK) SAFEGUARDING POLICY



PLAY THERAPY UK

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Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

PTUK as an organisation takes their safeguarding responsibilities seriously at all times. PTUK undertakes the following procedures to reduce to reduce any potential risk of harm to children and young people.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all PTUK members and staff.

The term safeguarding is used to refer to a number of areas of concern relating to children including:

Child Protection issues

Sexual exploitation

Radicalisation

Physical, emotional abuse or neglect

### **Introduction**

PTUK is committed to ensuring the safety and physical and emotional well-being of children. PTUK recognises that members who work therapeutically will come into contact with children who may be at risk of harm or exploitation including radicalisation as identified in the PTUK Prevent Policy.

In fulfilling these responsibilities PTUK and their members will remain mindful of their obligations under Health and Safety at work act (1974), the Children's Act (2004), the data

Protection Act (2018), the protection of Freedom of Information Act (2012) and the Counter-terrorism and security Act (2015).

PTUK staff and members have a duty to report suspected safeguarding concerns relating to a child to relevant DSL or external agencies dependent on the members place and status of work (working with an umbrella organisation or Private Practice).

PTUK as a membership body will ensure an appropriate member of the Senior Clinical Management Team is available to inform and signpost PTUK members to the most appropriate Children.

PTUK will ensure members receive information and advice on safeguarding issues including training as appropriate to their role as therapist.

PTUK will advise and update members regularly during the year regarding their responsibilities to ensure policies and procedures are in place to ensure they are safeguarding children.

PTUK will advise members on their responsibility to ensure they evidence their suitability to work unsupervised with children.

### **Key Safeguarding Principles**

PTUK takes safeguarding children seriously, advising PTUK members that everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play:

PTUK members working within an organisation

- Undertake safeguarding training level 2 and 3

- Read Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedures

- Identify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the setting

- Where a disclosure has been made report concerns in a timely manner to DSL

- Contact Clinical Supervisor for support

PTUK members working in Private Practice should

Undertake safeguarding training including DSL training

Write Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedures

Manage disclosures in line with policy and procedures identified by Local

Safeguarding Children's Board

Follow record keeping protocols

### **Definition of a Child**

For the purpose of this policy, a child is a person under 18 years of age.

### **What is Child Abuse?**

Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event and it can increasingly happen online.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

For the purpose of this policy safeguarding is defined as protecting children who maybe at risk of exploitation (including radicalisation), domestic violence, harm, neglect or abuse. 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. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

**Domestic Abuse** is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It is not just physical violence. Domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse. Abusive behaviour can occur in any

relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

**Sexual Abuse** A child is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This does not have to be physical contact and it can happen online. Children will often not realise that what is happening to them is abuse. Child Sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.

**Neglect** This is the most common form of child abuse. Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. A child may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care. A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm. They may not get love, care and attention they need from parents or carers. A child who is neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long-term damage – even death.

**Online Abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as from strangers. Children can feel there is no escape from online abuse as abusers can contact them day and night and the abuse can come into the safe places like their bedrooms. In the UK 'sex texting' is a reportable offence so schools have a duty to report this to the police when found.

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. It is not accidental. Children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is known as Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) There is no excuse for physically abusing a child. It causes serious, and often long-lasting, harm – and in severe cases, death.

**Emotional abuse** is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development. Children who are emotionally abused are often suffering another type of abuse at the same time – but this is not always the case. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them.

**Bullying and cyberbullying**, bullying is a behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks is often called cyberbullying.

**Child trafficking** and modern slavery are child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for child sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare or cooking. Children are often forced into labour in factories or agriculture or criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs and bag theft.

**Grooming** is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children can be groomed online, face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know. This might be a family member, friend or professional. Groomers might be male or female and can be any age. Many children do not understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abusive. NSPCC (2018)

**Peer-on-peer sexual abuse** is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children and can affect any age group (Department for Education (DfE), 2018). It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it. NSPCC (2021)

### **Managing disclosures**

PTUK members when dealing with a disclosure should follow the organisations policies and procedures, this will likely involve:

- listen carefully and stay calm; advise the child that you will need to inform someone
- make sure you have understood the matter under discussion, clarifying points if necessary
- reassure the child that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- inform the child that you must pass on the information now but only to those who need to know; inform them who you are going to tell
- take a note of the main points of conversation including names, times, dates, etc, together with any injuries observed

Report the conversation to the DSL in a timely manner, or if in Private Practice

- **UK:** Contact the Children’s Social Care Team/MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) at the Local Council, for the correct telephone number to call  
<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>.
- **Scotland:** [www.mygov.scot/report-child-abuse/](http://www.mygov.scot/report-child-abuse/)
- Report the information
- Complete the relevant form and email as soon as possible
- The children’s social care team will tell you what happens next, this might include Early Help Assessment, Statutory assessments or Children in need

In addition, the PTUK member should contact their Clinical Supervisor

### **Eligibility to work with children**

PTUK members must evidence they are able to meet safer recruitment protocols, whether on placement, self-employed or in private practice

- Enhanced DBS
- Curriculum Vitae with full working history, and you are able to account for any periods you were not working.
- References

### **Safeguarding training**

PTUK members working with children or supervising play therapist require regular safeguarding training to refresh knowledge and keep abreast of changes to legislation.

Safeguarding training should be undertaken every three years as a minimum requirement. Each UK region will have a responsibility to provide safeguarding training to professionals who work with children.

There are different levels to safeguarding training (L2-, L3, DSL) you need to ensure you have undertaken the most appropriate level of safeguarding training appropriate to your work.

Prevent and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) online training:

- **Prevent Awareness**, an introduction into the risks of radicalisation and the role that professionals and practitioners can play in supporting those at risk:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen2.html>

- **FGM**, an introduction to recognising and preventing FGM:

<https://www.fgmelearning.co.uk/>

**Other safeguarding training available:**

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Protecting Children from Domestic Abuse
- Safeguarding children with SEND/disabilities
- Protecting Children from County Lines

**Safeguarding Complaint about a PTUK Member**

PTUK members work in isolation unsupervised with children, PTUK members follow and implement the Ethical Framework when working therapeutically with children. PTUK believes children have the right to be safe at all times. Where a safeguarding concern was reported to PTUK Clinical Management Team about a PTUK member the Procedure for Managing Safeguarding Concerns Reported by a Members of the Public would be followed.

**Useful information and links:**

A Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a multi-agency body set up in every local authority led by three partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). Each LSCB has an independent Chair, that is, someone who doesn't work for social services. The Chair will work closely with the Director of Children's

Services.

Multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH), the MASH team are Qualified Social Workers co-located with the Children's Reception Team (CRT). Both teams work in conjunction with one another to safeguard children. The MASH team will only receive cases from CRT where concerns for children are evident and further investigation is required.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/912593/Keeping children safe in education part 1 Sep 2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912593/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_part_1_Sep_2020.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/safeguarding-children>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protectionChildLine>

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/839253/moj-county-lines-practical-guidance-frontline-practitionerspdf.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839253/moj-county-lines-practical-guidance-frontline-practitionerspdf.pdf)

<https://www.barnardos.ie/learning-development/protecting-safeguarding-children-online>