

Believe Alternative Provision - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Eve Richards

Introduction:

All organisations which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and/or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (whether paid or unpaid) working for the organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Staff / volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide whether abuse has occurred but to refer on concerns to Children's / Adults Social Care for further investigation.

Policy statement:

Believe Alternative Provision has a duty of care to safeguard all children and young people involved in Believe Alternative provision projects.

All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Believe Alternative Provision will ensure the safety and protection of all children and young people involved in Believe Alternative Provision through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Believe Alternative Provision.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

A child centred and co-ordinated approach to safeguarding:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this

responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

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

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Policy aims:

The aim of the Believe Alternative Provision Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice within the organisation and with any partner agencies:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Believe Alternative Provision.
- allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice:

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

- Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the community.
- Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children and young people in order to harm them.

- A coach, youth worker, counsellor, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with children and young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection.
- All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guideline in this document.

Indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse: 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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. 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.

Physical abuse: 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 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 in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Good Practice Guidelines:

All Believe Alternative Provision personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

Good Practice Expectations with all Believe Alternative Provision Staff:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all children and young people and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child or young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children and young people (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or young person or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children and young people to share in the decision-making process.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual or physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when

the child or young person is constantly moving. Children and young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.

- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Ensuring that if mixed groups are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children or young people's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children and young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if Believe Alternative Provision officials are required to transport children and young people in their cars.

Practices that should be avoided whenever possible:

The following should be avoided except in emergencies.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of child's parents (or carers) and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- avoid spending time alone with children and young people away from others.
- avoid taking or dropping off a child / young person to an event or activity unless this has been agreed in advance and is a barrier to a young person attending a group/activity.

Practices that are not appropriate in any circumstance:

The following **must** never be sanctioned. You **must** never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- share a room with a child or young person.
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- allow children and young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
- reduce a child / young person to tears as a form of control.
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child or young person.
- invite or allow children / young people to stay with you at your home unsupervised.
- buy/offer to buy gifts for a young person (unless part of a project and agreed by more than one member of staff); all gifts in these cases should be bought using Believe Alternative Provision funds and recorded as to the rationale of why this was deemed appropriate for review by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children / young people, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child / young person involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child / young person to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Use of a Private Dwelling for Education Sessions:

On occasion young people will be seen in their own homes for educational sessions. For the purposes of this policy a private dwelling constitutes a meeting room in a home or a dedicated space within a residence. When working with a young person in a private dwelling the following must be adhered to:

- **Prohibition of Personal Spaces:** Personal living spaces, bedrooms, or a staff member's own residence are not appropriate for educational sessions.

- "Safe Space" Requirement: A private dwelling must be a designated safe space, separate from personal living areas.
- All staff and volunteers have been selected using the Believe safer recruitment policy and are fully up to date with their training and DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks.
- Risk Assessment: All staff to carry out a home-based check and risk assessment prior to commencement of a session considering factors like safety, access, and potential hazards.
- Other adults/young people in the home: We require at least two unrelated adults to be present at any education session in the private dwelling, with at least one not owning or renting the dwelling. Any other young person or child under the age of 18 on the premises is the responsibility of the parent/adult onsite and not the staff member.

Reporting Incidents

Incidents that must be reported/recorded:

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child or young person are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a child or young person during a project session.
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- if a child or young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- if a child or young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If a child or young person discloses any kind of abuse, exploitation, fears of harm, reporting of self harm or threats to harm others.

Providing information to Police or Social Services

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours UNLESS you have immediate concerns about the wellbeing of a child and it should then be reported immediately to Children's Social Care who are available 24 hours a day.

Not all concerns will require a referral to Social Care but they should still be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will help to decide what action should be taken. In these instances the information should still be recorded and any actions noted.

Decisions will be made on the evidence at hand and any previous reports that have been recorded with regards to the child.

Recorded concerns should include the following:

- the child or young Person's name, age and date of birth.
- the child or young Person's home address and telephone number.
- whether it is known whether there is any current Social Care involvement with the child / young person.
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- the nature of the allegation/concerns. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- a description of any visible bruising or other injuries - body maps can be useful in these circumstances and are available from the DCPO. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- details of witnesses to the incidents.
- the child/Young Person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred. Staff must be careful not to ask any leading questions.
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- if the child/Young Person was not the person who reported the incident, has the child/young person been spoken to? If so what was said?
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded. Confirmation of receipt, including names and date. Where there are

immediate concerns for the safety of a child or young person the referral should be phoned through immediately and followed up in writing.

- name of member of staff/volunteer and job role.

Further information on making a referral is available at [Making a Referral | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)

Online Safety:

Believe Alternative Provision takes the online safety of children and young people seriously.

Believe Alternative Provision follows the safety protocols set out by the government guide '[Child Safety Online: A Practical Guide for Providers of Social Media and Interactive Services](#)' and works in line with our Believe Online Safety Policy which include the 4 C's of Online Risk: Content, Contact, Conduct, and Commerce.

The Principles of this which Believe Alternative Provision follows include:

- Deciding what content is acceptable on our service, and how we make this clear to users.
- Recognising that Generative AI is a risk for facilitating online harm (e.g., simulating harmful online interactions or generating inappropriate content) and must be used safely and effectively.
- Creating a Mobile Phone-Free Environment by default and only using devices owned and monitored by Believe Alternative Provision for sessions involving the use of online resources.
- We are clear on minimum age limits, and discourage those who are too young from accessing outside of session times.
- Plan and regularly update how we manage inappropriate or illegal content posted on our site. For under-13s, consider a walled garden environment and pre-moderating content before users see it. Also become familiar with the UK rules to advertising to children.
- Offer privacy settings options, including privacy-by-default, to give control to your users and 'invite only' to access content.
- Educate users about online safety as part of the experience on our platform and online sessions.
- Integrate safety messages into the user journey – when accepting a friend request, services updates, etc - both for new and existing users and link to online

guidance available through the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#).

- If any staff in Believe Alternative Provision suspects that any children, young people or their family may be at risk online, they would treat this as they would any other safeguarding issue; and escalate it using Believe Alternative Provision's normal, internal procedures, by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Exploitation:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 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.

Criminal Exploitation:

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child criminal and sexual exploitation may constitute modern slavery and human trafficking, which requires a referral through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

The involvement of children in county lines is a form of exploitation. County lines involvement (gangs/networks exporting illegal drugs using dedicated deal lines) can be indicated by children having unexplained gifts, carrying weapons, or being found in unknown accommodations (trap houses/cuckooing).

In line with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SCB Exploitation Strategy Believe Alternative Provision ensures that all staff are trained to understand the signs of exploitation and identify early concerns that relate to potential abuse and exploitation.

All staff follow Child Protection procedures and refer to Children's Services as appropriate using the Effective Support Document as a guide to deciding on the threshold to refer.

All staff are aware of the exploitation risk assessment tool and how it can inform their ongoing work with children and young people.

Believe Alternative Provision follows the guidance set by the Cambs and Peterborough SCB at:

[Child Sexual Exploitation | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)

[Child Criminal Exploitation | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)

The Prevent Duty and radicalisation:

The threat we face from terrorism is real and the Prevent strategy recognises that we can't arrest our way out of the problem. The Prevent strategy therefore aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The focus of Prevent is on the significant threat posed by international terrorism and those in the UK who are inspired by it. But it is also concerned with reducing threats, risks and vulnerabilities posed by domestic extremists such as those from the far right and far left, extreme animal rights activists and those involved in Northern Irish related terrorism.

Prevent is supported by three objectives:

Responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it (ideology).

Preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support (individuals).

Working with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address (institutions).

If any staff in Believe Alternative Provision suspects that any children, young people or their family may be at risk of radicalisation, they would treat this as they would any other safeguarding issue; and escalate it using Believe Alternative Provision's normal, internal procedures, by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead or by getting further support from the Prevent team:

Prevent@cambs.pnn.police.uk and referring to Children's Social Care as appropriate.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence):

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should be clear with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

- All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their setting it does not mean it is not happening. It may be the case that abuse is not being reported. As such it is important that when staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).
- It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature. Examples of which are listed below. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- All staff must understand that misogyny is a deep-seated dislike, aversion, or prejudice directed at women and girls and misandry is a strong dislike, contempt, or prejudice directed at men and boys. Believe Alternative Provision operates with a zero-tolerance approach to misogyny and misandry.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’).
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nude images and/or videos. This includes images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence (AI), including deepfakes.
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Domestic abuse:

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Female genital mutilation (FGM):

All staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM). If a member of staff discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, this must be reported to the police.

Mental health:

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Believe Alternative Provision staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken to follow Believe Alternative Provision's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Serious violence:

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation. If staff have a concern about a child, immediate action should be taken to follow Believe Alternative Provision's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Schools and education settings play a key role in sharing data with local violence prevention partnerships. Believe Alternative Provision employs multi-agency working in line with the *Serious Violence Duty* (Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022).

Gangs and Youth Violence:

All staff should be aware that gang membership can lead to criminal exploitation, such as drug dealing, using coercion, intimidation, and violence, including sexual violence. Young people can be coerced into taking part in 'County lines' which is a method used by criminal networks to export illegal drugs into different areas, often exploiting children and vulnerable adults to move and store drugs and money. Peer pressure, a need for belonging, to feel respected, to feel power or the need for protection are all reasons that make young people vulnerable to recruitment. Signs of gang involvement could be increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries, having more than one mobile phone and a sudden ability to buy clothes and items they would not have had before. If staff have a concern about a child, immediate action should be taken to follow Believe Alternative Provision's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Alcohol and Drug misuse:

All staff should be aware that young people can be vulnerable to drug misuse regardless of their ethnicity, socioeconomic background and current social standing. They are also made vulnerable by the drug misuse of care givers and are more likely to be subject to forms of abuse in the home and by others who frequent the home. Signs of drug or alcohol misuse by a young person can be Sudden or extreme change in friends, eating habits, sleeping patterns, physical appearance, requests for money, coordination or school performance. Irresponsible behaviour, poor judgment and general lack of interest. Breaking rules or withdrawing from the family. Signs of drug or alcohol misuse by a parent can present in a young person's physical and emotional needs not being met. If staff have a concern about a child, immediate action should be taken to follow Believe Alternative Provision's

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Forced marriage:

Forced marriage is a criminal offence and a serious form of abuse involving physical, emotional, financial, psychological or sexual coercion. Any marriage involving someone under 18 is automatically classed as forced. Victims face risks including domestic and sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies, enforced abortions, and emotional harm, with LGBTQ+ young people, disabled children, and those reliant on family care at heightened risk. Warning signs include extended absences from school, restrictions on movement, family disputes, or signs of depression, self-harm, or social isolation. Staff must be aware that involving families directly can escalate danger. If staff have a concern about a child, immediate action should be taken to follow Believe Alternative Provision's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Fabricated or Induced Illness:

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) is a serious form of child abuse in which a parent or carer exaggerates, fabricates, or deliberately causes illness in a child, often to seek medical attention or other benefits. It can range from lying about symptoms and manipulating test results to poisoning, withholding food, or even smothering a child, with the most severe cases usually affecting children under five. Warning signs include symptoms only appearing in the parent's presence, poor response to treatment, frequent changes of doctors, and excessive restrictions on the child's daily life. The causes of FII are not fully understood, but many perpetrators have histories of trauma, abuse, personality disorders, or Munchausen's syndrome. The impact on children can be severe, leading to emotional and behavioural difficulties, feeding problems, impaired development, inability to recognise genuine illness, and in extreme cases, death. If staff have a concern about a child, immediate action should be taken to follow Believe Alternative Provision's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and by speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Attendance as a safeguarding indicator:

Believe Alternative provision understands that poor or erratic attendance can be a sign of abuse, neglect, or other safeguarding issues. Believe Alternative Provision will follow their attendance policy and identify unusual absences (e.g., sudden changes in attendance patterns, unexplained absences) to the Designated Safeguarding Officer of the referring school or organisation.

The Temporary Accommodation Notification Duty (The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026) states that a child that has been placed in temporary accommodation is a key vulnerability indicator. Believe Alternative Provision recognises this and will work closely

with local housing authorities and schools when notified that a child has been placed in temporary accommodation.

Use of photographic or filming equipment:

There is evidence that some people have used sports events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children and young people in vulnerable positions. All projects should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Any child or young person being photographed by Believe Alternative Provision must first have given consent via a signed statement from their parent / carer. The photographs remain the property of Believe Alternative Provision and should not be held on personal devices of staff /volunteers.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers:

Believe Alternative Provision recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children or young people in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working for Believe Alternative Provision.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form alongside a CV (paid staff only). The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service, if an applicant already has this from a recognised partner from within the last three years then it is acceptable to use this as long as it has been agreed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Two confidential references, these references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

NB For those staff/volunteers not directly working with children then it is acceptable to have an application, reference, confirmation of identity.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 states that any volunteer or staff member who teaches, instructs, or supervises children frequently (more than 3 days in a 30-day period) is automatically in regulated activity and they must have an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information.

Interview and induction:

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should be given access to Believe Alternative Provision's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Training:

In addition to pre selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children and young people.

Believe Alternative Provision requires:

All frontline staff to attend a recognised basic safeguarding training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Relevant personnel to obtain relevant first aid training (where necessary).
Designated Safeguarding Lead to undergo Designated Child Protection training every 2 years.

All staff and volunteers are required to have their child protection training at least every two years. Where staff have other roles that allows them to attend accredited child protection training this will be classed by Believe Alternative Provision as a refresher if the member of staff / volunteer can provide dated evidence of the completion of the training.

All staff and volunteers will be required to read

Responding to disclosures, allegations or suspicions:

To respond to a safeguarding disclosure, a staff member should listen carefully and take the disclosure seriously, while reassuring the young person that it's not their fault and they did the right thing by speaking up. Avoid making promises of confidentiality, instead, explain that information must be shared with designated safeguarding officers for their safety. Do not investigate or get drawn into details beyond clarification, and make a factual, written record of the conversation, using the young person's own words. Finally, report the disclosure immediately to the designated safeguarding officer (DSL) according to the Believe Alternative Provision procedures.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Believe Alternative Provision, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place however, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Believe Alternative Provision will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague or other adult is, or may be, abusing a child or young person.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of internal investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Reporting concerns about poor practice from Believe Alternative Provision staff:

If following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the Designated Safeguarding Lead will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to Children's Social Care who will decide how to deal with the allegation.

Reporting concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child or young person has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer or any adult should be reported to the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child / young person in question and any others who may be at risk.

The Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead will refer the allegation to Children's Social Care who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child / young person will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social care.

If the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the allegation must be referred to Social Care.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Eve Richards) is unavailable (due to illness or on annual leave) either the setting will not be closed or there will always be an additional trained member of staff covering the DSL role with access to a shared safeguarding mailbox.

There are procedures as stated within the Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018/2023 and Chapter 2.5 of the Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Board Procedures which are used to manage allegations against adults who work or volunteer with children.

If you have concerns about an adult who works or volunteers with children, please contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice or support. The LADO has a countywide responsibility for managing allegations against adults who work or volunteer with children across all agencies and settings.

Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Email: LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Professionals:

Telephone: 01223 727 967 (Monday to Friday during office opening hours)

Telephone: 01733 234 724 (Emergency Duty Team - out of hours queries)

Confidentiality and Information Sharing with regards to Child Protection Enquiries:

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- the person making the allegation.
- social care/police.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek social care advice on who should approach

the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child) in line with the Believe Alternative Provision Whistleblowing Policy and procedures.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the *Data (Use and Access) Act 2025*, alongside the *UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018*. Please see Believe – GDPR and Data protection Policy for more details.

Enquiries and further action:

Internal enquiries and possible suspension - The Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Believe Alternative Provision Director will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Believe Alternative Provision Director must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child or young person should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, young people, parents and members of staff may need.

Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, www.bacp.co.uk

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse:

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children or young people).

Where such an allegation is made, Believe Alternative Provision will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social care or the police. This is because other children and young people, either within or outside projects, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is

automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying):

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children and young people to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately).
- Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Impose appropriate sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by staff and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the Believe Alternative Provision Designated Safeguarding Lead as in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

Related Documents:

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2026](#)

[Data \(Use and Access\) Act 2025](#)

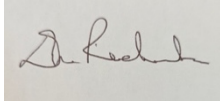
[UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018](#)

The Crime and Policing Act 2026

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

Signed



Eve Richards

Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead – Believe Alternative Provision

Date 01/09/2026

Date of Review: September 2027