



Safeguarding Children policy (England, Scotland and Wales)

Author Procedure and Governance Manager

Owner Director of Services

Approval

Approved by ARAC: November 2023

Amendment (if required) The three nations (Scotland, Wales, and England) have been merged; Safeguarding adults and safeguarding children have been separated; the policies and procedures have been separated from each other and now apply to all departments across Crisis (not just Client Services). Additional guidance documents created regarding modern slavery, referral writing, radicalisation.

Date of amendment: November 2023

Reason for amendment: Changes in sector wide good practice; learning from safeguarding audit (Client Services)

Review

Frequency of review: 1 year

Next review date: November 2024



Together
we will end
homelessness

Contents

- Key Points Summary..... 3**
- Background and Scope 3**
- Policy 3**
- Monitoring and Reporting..... 10**
- Appendix 1 13**
- Appendix 2..... 18**

Key Points Summary

Crisis has a legal and moral obligation to protect its members from harm, some of whom will be aged 16 or 17. It also has obligations in respect of any children that Crisis staff may come into contact with in the course of their work, or in respect of whom staff have reason to be concerned e.g. if concerns are reported to them by members or concerns arise due to children having contact with members who may present a risk to them. Safeguarding is a key part of that, and it is everyone's responsibility.

The Safeguarding Children Policy and [Procedure](#) should be followed where there are concerns that a child is, or is at risk of, experiencing harm or abuse. Children are defined as people under 18 years of age in England and Wales. In Scotland, people aged under 16 are defined as children for safeguarding purposes.

Where there is an emergency e.g. a health emergency and/or a crime, staff should call the emergency services. Safeguarding, if it is relevant, is a process that would be followed after the immediate situation has been dealt with.

Crisis' child safeguarding duties apply to children (anyone aged under 18 in England or Wales, or under 16 in Scotland, including unborn children if there are reasons to be concerned for its welfare).

Background and Scope

Crisis works predominantly with single people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. However, we recognise that the people using our services may have children or have access to children. We have a wider duty of care to these children and if a member of staff or volunteer receives information that leads them to have a safeguarding concern about a child then they must follow the guidelines set out in the Safeguarding Children Procedure.

We also provide activities and opportunities to support Crisis' work to members of the public, through our shops, e-commerce and fundraising activities, including some directly managed events. All staff must be mindful of safeguarding issues for children who are involved in such activities, whether or not they are members.

Crisis members aged 16 and 17 years old are legally defined as children in England, but not in Scotland. We have clear procedures on safeguarding both children and adults at risk who use our services.

The Safeguarding legislation across all three nations applies to children. The obligations and requirements vary slightly across the three nations. See [Appendix 1](#) for more details.

This policy applies to all Departments at Crisis. Client Services staff will follow a different procedure from colleagues in other Departments. See the Safeguarding Children procedure for more details.

Policy

Policy statement

This policy applies to all children (under 18s in England and Wales; under 16s in Scotland), all of whom are automatically subject to the safeguarding legislation, including any who use Crisis services and to any children with whom Crisis members may have contact.

Crisis is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of its members who are aged under 18 (who are defined as children in England and Wales but not in Scotland). It is also committed to protecting any other children its staff may come into contact with, or have concerns about even if they are not directly in contact with them, by ensuring that we have

appropriate arrangements in place to provide a safe and secure environment and to deal effectively with any safeguarding issues that arise.

People aged under 16 are assumed not to have the mental capacity to make their own informed decisions. Crisis has a legal duty and a moral obligation to follow the safeguarding process (as detailed in the Safeguarding Children procedure) in relation to any child (whether or not they are a Crisis member) if there is reason to believe or suspect that they are experiencing or at risk of abuse.

We will ensure that our policies and procedures comply with the law ([Appendix 1](#)) and reflect good practice, and that our safeguarding arrangements are proportionate and based on common sense.

Diversity statement

Any children who come into contact with Crisis can expect to be treated with respect and dignity by volunteers and staff and can expect any disclosure of abuse or harm, or the risk of abuse or harm, to be taken seriously.

Children are inherently less likely than adults to be able to protect themselves from abuse.

Staff and volunteers must follow this policy and procedure regardless of the race, class, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion or belief, and/or marriage or civil partnership status (if old enough to enter into such an arrangement) of the child involved, and regardless of whether or not they have a disability. Any such characteristics should be considered as part of the safeguarding process, and used to inform the approach taken when working with that person, both in safeguarding and in other aspects of support e.g. safety and inclusion planning, access to local specialist services.

Staff and volunteers should endeavour to ensure that decisions made, either by them or by other parties, involved in the safeguarding process such as the local authority or partner agencies, are free from bias.

Definitions

Abuse

Abuse includes all forms of harm and mistreatment, may be a single act or repeated acts. The safeguarding legislation in Scotland refers to harm rather than abuse but the terms are interchangeable for the purposes of this policy.

The types of abuse covered by the child safeguarding legislation in England, Scotland and Wales include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation)
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- grooming
- female genital mutilation
- [radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism](#)
- domestic abuse, stalking and honour-based violence (DASH).

Child

In **England and Wales**, a child is defined as a person aged under 18 (including an unborn child) in England and Wales.

In **Scotland**, the definition of a child for safeguarding purposes is a person aged under 16 (including an unborn child).

Harm

'Harm' is generally understood to be:

- ill treatment
- the impairment of development and/or an avoidable deterioration in physical and mental health
- conduct that appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests (for example, theft or extortion).

Significant Harm

'Significant Harm' is generally understood to be where:

- a person's life is or could be under threat – for example, due to neglect or omission or physical abuse
- There is or could be a serious, chronic or long lasting impact on the person's health and/or physical, emotional or psychological wellbeing.
- A person has little or no choice over vital aspects of their life, environment or financial affairs.

Significant harm may arise from abuse and safeguarding actions are intended to protect children and young people from ill treatment and prevent the impairment of the child or young person's health and development.

Indicators of abuse

It is everybody's responsibility to be alert to the possibility of abuse and be aware of the signs and indicators. Concerns may arise as a result of a single incident, allegation or disclosure; or an accumulation of indicators and/or signs.

Indicators common to more than one type of abuse include:

- changes in behaviour or demeanour e.g. being more withdrawn or secretive than usual
- physical signs relating to health or wellbeing e.g. weight loss, cuts or bruises
- avoidance of, or signs of increased anxiety in, certain situations or with certain people

Some indicators will be more specific to certain categories of abuse e.g.

- spending more time online or on a mobile phone in cases of grooming
- avoiding or deflecting questions about where they have been or who they have been spending time with e.g. in cases of
 - radicalisation (maybe spending time with people who hold extreme views)

- county lines (may have been travelling outside their usual sphere when collecting or delivering packages on behalf of dealers) and/or
 - gang affiliation (may be spending time with known gang leaders and/or people with affiliations with organised crime).
- For more detailed information about indicators of abuse see the Child Safeguarding Procedure. For more information about radicalisation, see the [radicalisation guidance](#).

Local authority bodies

Because the title of the Local Authority body with statutory responsibilities for safeguarding may vary, in this policy we refer to it as the Appropriate Safeguarding Authority (ASA). The statutory authorities with safeguarding responsibilities vary slightly across England, Scotland and Wales. See Appendix 1 for more details.

Preventing Abuse

Crisis has a responsibility to take steps to prevent abuse to its members and any other children Crisis staff may come into contact with in the course of their work. We will do this through the following.

Safer recruitment

In England and Wales we will request a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for any roles (including those undertaken by both paid staff and volunteers) working with children for which we are legally entitled to do so. DBS checks will be renewed every three years for staff and volunteers working directly with children.

In Scotland, we will request a check from Disclosure Scotland for any roles (including those undertaken by both paid staff and volunteers) working with children for which we are legally entitled to do so. Disclosure Scotland checks will be renewed every three years for staff working directly with children.

Training and policies

We have a duty to help staff and volunteers recognise their responsibilities (through guidance, support and training) to children, to minimise risk, protect our members and children, and avoid situations where abuse or neglect might be more likely to occur.

Crisis will provide basic safeguarding training to all staff, and volunteers in Client Services. Specific training requirements for staff in particular roles are set out in the training schedule in [Appendix 2](#).

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the possibilities of abuse or neglect, and how to report any concerns they have.

All staff and volunteers should be aware of who to contact within Crisis if they have any concerns relating to safeguarding. Staff in Client Services should also know who to contact at the relevant ASA, and where to find their details when needed.

All managers within Client Services and any staff who undertake one to one work with clients should attend Local Safeguarding Board (LSB) Child Safeguarding training, where available, to help raise awareness of local practice and procedures and also to develop working relationships.

The Crisis Safeguarding Officer at each Skylight/Service (usually the Skylight Director or Head of Service: see Safeguarding Responsibilities) will be responsible for arranging local LSB training for all relevant staff and for maintaining and updating local training records of all staff's safeguarding training, with support from the Learning and Development team.

The Crisis Safeguarding Officer for Enterprise and Commerce (which includes shops and e-commerce/e-commerce warehouse) will attend relevant training including with a LSB, and ensure shops and e-commerce managers, staff (including agency staff) and volunteers attend relevant training in safeguarding. They will maintain and update relevant training records.

Reporting and action

All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, acted upon and handled in accordance with the Child Safeguarding Procedure. Crisis will work when necessary with appropriate local agencies, to ensure that children are protected through the effective operation of its safeguarding procedures.

Any such partnership work and related information sharing must be in line with [Member Information: Gathering, Recording and Sharing](#).

Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

Trustees have overall responsibility for safeguarding in the organisation. The Trustees delegate the day to day operations of the charity to the senior management team (SMT).

The Senior Management Team

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to satisfy itself that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, that they have been communicated to all staff (including volunteers and employment agency staff) and that the policies and procedures are actually working to protect children.

Staff and volunteers

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers working within Crisis to be aware of any potential safeguarding issues and to report concerns where they believe a child has been or is at risk of abuse or significant harm. This responsibility extends to all and not just those specifically working directly with children.

Crisis Safeguarding Lead Officer

The Crisis Safeguarding Lead Officer (CSLO) has overall responsibility regarding safeguarding. They are responsible for coordinating action within Crisis and ensuring the application of safe and best practice in safeguarding matters. They are a member of the Senior Management Team.

Crisis Safeguarding Lead Officer is: Executive Director of Client Services

Email: juliet.mountford@crisis.org.uk

Tel: 07815 011647

Appropriate Crisis Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

Within Crisis there are a number of Safeguarding Officers whose responsibility it is to lead on safeguarding matters for their area of operations. If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns for the wellbeing of a child, then they must report it to the appropriate Crisis Safeguarding Officer (CSO).

The appropriate CSOs are as follows:

- For staff and volunteers working in Client Services it is the relevant Skylight Director or Head of Service.

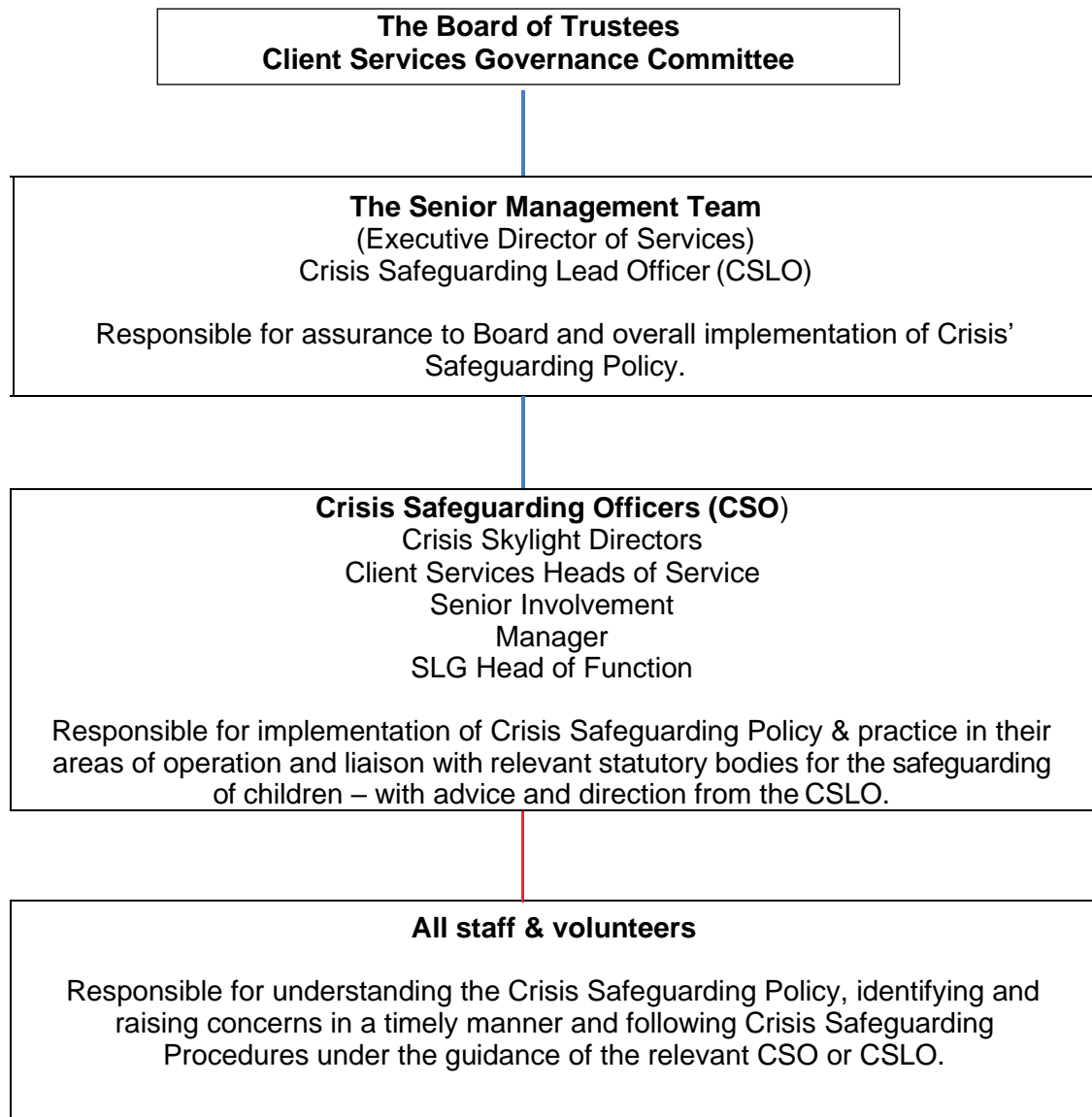
- For staff and volunteers in Enterprise and Commerce it is the Senior Involvement Manager.
- For staff and volunteers in other Crisis departments with access to Crisis members or the general public it is the relevant Head of Function, who will be a member of the Strategic Leadership Group.

Responsibility for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are in place and adhered to within Client Services rests with the relevant managers.

Where a Crisis member also volunteers or accesses training in a Crisis shop, e-commerce, Changing Lives grant or Venture Studio the relevant staff should communicate and share relevant information to ensure individuals are safeguarded. For more guidance on this, see [Member Information: Gathering, Recording and Sharing](#).

Any staff who remain unsure about their CSO should report any concerns to their manager who will report it to their CSO. This may be the CSLO.

Crisis safeguarding responsibilities flow chart



Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring, Reporting and Quality Assurance

Crisis will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and ensure that any learning and good practice is shared and informs policy review and service development.

When a decision has been made to refer a safeguarding concern relating to a member to the ASA, the CSO will ensure that a safeguarding alert is raised on MAPS, which automatically notifies the CSLO by email.

Where safeguarding alerts are raised relating to children who are not Crisis members, in many cases they will not be raised by Crisis staff as they will not be best placed to do so. For example, if a report is made to the police or someone is admitted to hospital, the police or NHS would be responsible for making a referral after Crisis has informed them of their concerns. Where alerts are raised by Crisis staff in relation to children who are not members:

- If the reason for raising the alert is due to a Crisis service or a connection with a Crisis service this will be recorded in full in an incident report
- If the alert is being raised for reasons that are not connected to Crisis, an incident report should be completed stating only the date and the nature of the report and to whom it was reported, with no reference to personal data of those concerned.

Safeguarding alerts raised on MAPS should be updated to record the decision of the local authority to investigate (or not). It is the CSO's responsibility to monitor safeguarding records for their service and ensure they are updated. Any further involvement from Crisis in safeguarding activities should be entered onto MAPS as soon as possible and in accordance with the [Case Management Standards](#).

The CSO will provide a report quarterly to the Directors of Operations on the safeguarding alerts raised in the previous period. The reports should be provided at the same time as the monthly KPI report and should include:

The date the alert was raised

- A summary of the report
- The current status of the alert – open/closed
- If closed - the outcome – accepted or not opened as Safeguarding by the ASA. If not opened as Safeguarding what action is being taken and by whom
- If open – current action being taken.

Individual service reports will be collated into regional reports by Directors of Operations and forwarded to the CSLO who will review and produce the Client Services quarterly Safeguarding Report. This report may consider:

- Adherence to the policy, including meeting the policy deadlines

- Reasons for the alerts/intentions and quality of that decision – did it meet the safeguarding threshold, was this the right course of action
- Quality of the alert
- Quality of information recorded on MAPS
- Quality of input into safeguarding processes (feedback from police/social services/safeguarding team).
- Outcomes of safeguarding processes.
- Any follow up action required.
- Whether any incidents highlighted training issues or a need to amend Crisis' procedures.

The report will be reviewed at the Client Services Leadership Group meeting (CSLG). If CSLG consider, from their review of safeguarding alerts, that changes are needed to policy and procedure or training in Client Services this will be referred to the Procedure and Governance Manager for review and to be included in the CSSDG agenda.

The CSLO will provide a quarterly report to the Client Services Governance Committee (CSGC).

Serious or Notifiable incidents

Serious incidents (England and Wales)

The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. A serious incident is defined by the Charity Commission as an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to your charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with your charity through its work
- loss of your charity's money or assets
- damage to your charity's property
- harm to your charity's work or reputation.

See the [Incident Reporting Procedure](#) and [Structured Case Review Guidance](#) for more information.

In dealing with incidents of harm, abuse and neglect, there is potential that a situation could meet the threshold of a serious incident. If this is the case, the CSLO must be informed who will refer to the Chief Operating Officer and a decision will then be made whether it will be referred to the Charity Commission.

An example of a type of serious incident that may be safeguarding and will need to be reported to the Charity Commission is any allegation that a staff member or volunteer has physically or sexually assaulted either a Crisis member who is under 18 or a child who the staff member had contact with in the course of their work.

Where a serious incident that may be a safeguarding concern involving a Crisis member of staff or volunteer arises, the CEO will inform the Chair of the Board of Trustees. They will then keep them informed and notify them of the outcome.

See the Incident Reporting Procedure and Structured Case Review Guidance for more information.

Notifiable incidents (Scotland)

The OCSR requires charities in Scotland to report notifiable events. A notifiable event is defined by the OCSR as an event that has a significant impact on the charity or its assets. Types of notifiable events can be found via the [OCSR Guidance for Notifiable Events](#).

In dealing with incidents of harm, abuse and neglect, there is potential that a situation could meet the threshold of a notifiable event. If this is the case, the CSLO must be informed who will refer to the Chief Operating Officer and a decision will then be made whether it will be referred to the OCSR.

An example of a notifiable event that may be safeguarding and will need to be reported to the OCSR is any allegation that a staff member or volunteer has physically or sexually assaulted either a Crisis member who is under 18, or any other child they have come into contact with through their work.

Where a notifiable event that may be a safeguarding concern involving a Crisis member of staff or volunteer arises, the CEO will inform the Chair of the Board of Trustees. They will then keep them informed and notify them of the outcome.

Appendix 1

Legal & Policy Framework for Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding Children – Statutory bodies with safeguarding responsibilities

England and Wales

Local authorities in England and Wales have safeguarding duties for adults and children.

Scotland

The Local Authority, Police Scotland and NHS Scotland all have statutory responsibilities for child and adult protection.

In normal circumstances the Local Authority social work service should be the first point of contact in matters of child or adult protection.

Children's Legal Rights

England, Wales and Scotland

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the rights of every child in the world to:

- survive
- grow
- participate; and
- fulfil their potential.

UNCRC applies in England and Wales. As at September 2023, it is in the process of being incorporated into law in Scotland, via the following Bill: the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill**.

The **Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998** had the effect of bringing most of the **European Convention on Human Rights** into UK law, meaning that UK citizens (including children) can take a case to the European Court of Human Rights if they are not satisfied with the outcome of a case in the UK Courts. The rights brought into UK law by the HRA include:

- the right to life.
- the right to be kept safe from torture and cruel treatment
- freedom from slavery
- the right to a fair trial
- the right to respect for private and family life
- the right to an education.

Wales only

The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 means that children's rights must be included in all relevant legislation and policy in Wales.

Legislative Framework for Safeguarding Children

England and Wales

Children Act 1989

The Children Act 1989 states the legal definition of a child as 'a person under the age of 18'.

Section 47(1): where a local authority is informed or has reasonable cause to suspect a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm they must make enquiries as they consider necessary to decide if they should take action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Children Act 1989 was amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which established the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to review and report on serious child protection cases that are complex or of national importance (Sections 12 to 15).

England only

Children Act 1989

Section 17(1): it is the duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need

Children Act 2004

Section 10: sets out the local authority's duty to make arrangements to promote co-operation in safeguarding children (and establish Local Safeguarding Children's Boards).

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be advised within one day of any safeguarding alerts, and is available to provide advice and support to organisations.

Section 11(4): sets out an organisation's responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's welfare. These include:

- The need to work effectively with the LCSB
- To ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- To ensure staff and volunteers know how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to the local authority or the police
- Having a senior (board) level lead for the organisation's safeguarding
- Establishing a culture of listening to children and young people that takes their feelings and wishes into consideration

- Making arrangements which clearly set out the processes for sharing information with other professionals and the LCSB
- Having in place robust safer recruitment policies and procedures
- Having adequate support and supervision for staff, including safeguarding training
- Having clear policies for dealing with allegations against people working with children and young people.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work.

Organisations with responsibility for providing services to vulnerable groups have a legal obligation to refer relevant information to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Both, the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004, are amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. In addition to sections 12 to 15, mentioned above under England and Wales, there are some key provisions relating to England only including the following.

- The previous model of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) has been replaced by local safeguarding partners who will publish reports on local safeguarding practice reviews (Section 17).
- Child death review partners are required to review each death of a child normally resident in their area and identify matters that are relevant to public health and safety and children locally (Section 24).
- Local authorities must appoint personal advisers for care leavers up to the age of 25 (Section 3).

Social Work England is created as a regulatory body for the social work profession in England (Section 36).

Working Together to Safeguard Children: HM Govt July 2018

Guidance to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Scotland only

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC is the national framework in Scotland for the promotion, support and safeguarding of the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland.

The key purposes of GIRFEC are set out below.

- It sets out the key values and principles on children's rights in Scotland
- It promotes eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) to describe how a child or young person is doing at a point in time
- It supports practitioners to consider ways to improve the wellbeing for a child or young person through the National Practice Model
- It provides for there to be a clear point of contact for support for children, young people and their families
- It seeks to clarify who the 'lead professional' will be for any child or young person who is supported by a 'child's plan'
- It provides guidance on information sharing
- It is intended to improve how support is planned, delivered and co-ordinated for children who require extra support (for whom a 'child's plan' can be put in place).

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

The (non-statutory) [guidance](#) issued by the Scottish Government brings together all the requirements and expectations set out in the legislation and associated frameworks and guidance relating to child protection in Scotland. It describes the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children.

As the legislation has evolved over time, this guidance is the best place to look for up to date guidance or information for professionals who may work with, or come into contact with, children who are at risk of harm.

Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991

This states that a person has full legal capacity at 16 years of age. This means that a person aged 16 and over can both give and withhold consent and can, without parental consent, legally leave home, get married and sign a contract on their own account. However, where the statutory minimum age is 18 e.g. purchase of alcohol, the position in Scotland is the same as for England and Wales.

Wales only

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

This Act seeks to promote the well-being of people who need care or support. It states that the well-being of a person should be considered in relation to:

- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Education, training and recreation
- Domestic, family and personal relationships
- Contribution to society
- Securing rights and entitlements

- Social and economic wellbeing
- Suitability of living accommodation
- Control over day to day life and participation in work

Part 7 of the Act sets out Safeguarding duties and defines safeguarding as:

“Protecting children and adults from abuse and neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.”

Additional guidance

The Welsh Government published statutory guidance (which is advisory for voluntary organisations such as Crisis) “**Working together to Safeguard People**”. This includes guidance for safeguarding children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Appendix 2

Training Schedule

Details of staff training will be added once the Strategic Safeguarding Training Plan has been finalised. Queries about safeguarding training should be directed to learning.development@crisis.org.uk

50-52 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT

Tel 0300 636 1967 Fax 0300 636 2012

Email enquiries@crisis.org.uk Website www.crisis.org.uk

Crisis UK (trading as Crisis). Registered Charity Numbers: E&W1082947, SC040094. Company Number: 4024938