



CV Life

## **Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy**

### **Our Safeguarding Statement of Commitment**

In May 2021, CV Life combined Culture Coventry Trust and Coventry Sports Foundation following the work that the Trustees undertook to review city wide needs.

Therefore, operating as CV Life, the Trust will have an expanded Purpose and Mission as defined by the place-based philosophy of CV Life.

The expanded Purpose of CV Life will ensure that the Trust seeks to fulfil the following promises:

**Promise 1 - We promise to offer enriching opportunities and experiences (People) - confidence, wellbeing, fulfilment**

**Promise 2 - We promise to invest in working with and for communities (Place) – empowerment, trust, optimism**

**Promise 3 - We promise to deliver through meaningful partnerships (Partnerships) - value, equity, respect**

1.1 The aim of CV Life is to create a safe environment for all children and young people by ensuring safe recruitment, promoting clear systems, embedding a culture of safeguarding, and by respecting and listening to children and young people.

1.2 We recognise we have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of all young people under the age of 18 and adults at risk<sup>1</sup> who engage with us. It is always unacceptable for anyone to experience abuse of any kind, including through social media or other online activity. Everyone has a legal right to protection from all forms of abuse.

1.3 We are committed to safeguarding practices and procedures and to providing a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment in which all can engage with the activities undertaken by CV Life.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure



1.4 In accepting this duty it does not exonerate the safeguarding responsibility of external organisations who use CV Life facilities. The primary safeguarding approach in these circumstances rests with those organisations. Our duty in this is to ensure we are content and scrutinise the safeguarding approach of external agencies and organisations. We will ensure they understand any safeguarding action required should be in accordance with their own policies. Should external organisations have any safeguarding concerns whilst using our facilities we expect these to be notified to CV Life.

1.5 All safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously, and CV Life will value, listen, and respect children and young people. We will encourage children and young people we engage with through our work, to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interest of the child or young person.

1.5 This statement of commitment also extends into Modern Slavery. This takes many forms including forced and compulsory labour, slavery, servitude, and human trafficking. It is the violation of human rights and CV Life has a zero-tolerance approach to Modern Slavery<sup>2</sup>. We will also take any concerns in this area seriously.

## **2.0 Aims**

2.1 CV Life has the following aims regarding safeguarding:

- Recognises that the welfare and interests of children and young people are paramount in all circumstances.
- Regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment or gender identity, race, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity sex, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, everyone has a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Acknowledge that some children and young people, including those with a disability or those from marginalised communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.
- It is not the responsibility of CV Life to decide whether abuse has taken place, however, it is the responsibility of staff, to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any protective action as necessary.
- Protect children and young people, from abuse whilst participating in any activity it has organised.
- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement



- Create a culture where children and young people, carers, those who interact or engage with children and young people and others who may have a concern are encouraged to report their concerns or the abuse that has happened to them.
- Ensure that all staff and those who are assisting CV Life are clear regarding their duties and responsibilities to safeguard children and young people are provided with the knowledge and understanding to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
- To make sure the procedures are widely promoted and are mandatory for all staff at CV Life. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in employment sanctions.
- Reinforce the importance of working with all partner agencies with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for those who we are aiming to protect from risk of abuse.
- Provide the details about the action that will be taken by CV Life when a safeguarding concern is reported. This may also include reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission details can be found [here](#).
- Ensure there is a safeguarding governance structure in place with assigned roles and responsibilities including the identification of Designated Safeguarding Leads within the Senior Management Team, along with representation through the Senior Leadership Team and at Board level, to ensure that safeguarding runs as a thread throughout all our activities and at both strategic and operational levels at CV Life.

### 3.0 **Application**

3.1 This policy applies to **all** members of staff (paid and unpaid), trustees, volunteers and contractors working on behalf of CV Life.

3.2 All team staff, volunteers and those working on behalf of CV Life must be sent a copy of this policy and signify they have received it and are conversant with the content. It is crucial Designated Safeguarding Leads and managers promote this policy and ensure safeguarding is embedded into the culture at CV Life. This will also apply to the Safeguarding Procedure document.

3.3 Where CV Life premises are being used by other organisations (for example a swimming club, or office rental) or staff are working in partnership with other



organisations, including affiliated organisations, they are expected to have their own safeguarding arrangements and policies in place. It is the duty of CV Life Centre/Venue Managers (or Deputy) to ensure partnership organisations where staff are deployed have suitable policies and a copy is available on the IT system.

#### **4.0 Legislation & Statutory Guidance**

4.1 The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within the UK Legislation and Government Guidance and have been developed to complement the safeguarding children and young people. This includes reference to the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2023
- Keeping Children and Young People Safe in Education 2024
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Position of Trust - Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

#### **5. Definitions & Terminology**

The following definitions are referred to in this policy:

**5.1 Child:** In England, Northern Ireland, and Wales a child is someone under the age of eighteen whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently (Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2023).

**5.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people:** Protecting children and young people from maltreatment, preventing harm to children and young people's health or development; ensuring children and young people grow up with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children and young people to have the best outcomes.

**5.3 Safeguarding concern:** When there is information that a child, young person, or an adult at risk (see the Adult Safeguarding Policy) has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, by their own or someone else's behaviour.

**5.4 Safeguarding allegation:** Where a person who is either a staff member or volunteer or is working on behalf of CV Life has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, young person or an adult at risk, may have harmed a child, young person or an adult at risk, or behaved in a way that



might lead to a child, young person or an adult at risk being harmed.

- Possibly committed or is planning to commit a criminal offence against a child, young person or an adult at risk or related to a child, young person or an adult at risk.
- Behaved towards a child, young person or an adult at risk in a way that indicates they are, or would be, unsuitable to work with children and young people or adults at risk.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, young people or an adult at risk.

**5.5 Low-Level Concern** A low-level concern is any concern about an adult, young person or child's behaviour towards a child or young person that does not meet the allegation threshold set out above (5.4) or is not otherwise serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult, young person or child may have acted in a manner which:

- is not consistent with an organisation's Code of Conduct, and/or
- relates to their conduct outside of work, including behaviour on social media and online platforms, which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult or young person's suitability to work with children.

**5.6 Abuse of Trust** The Sexual Offences Act 2003 Section 16 created the offence of abuse of trust. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse with a person under 18, or to engage in any other sexual activity with, or directed towards such a person, if in either case that person is in a position of trust in relation to the under 18-year-old. This applies even if the relationship is consensual.

**5.7 Abuse<sup>3</sup>:** A form of maltreatment of a child or young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children and young people.

## **5.8 Types of Abuse**

**Physical abuse<sup>4</sup>:** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or

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<sup>3</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2018 (Amended 2023)

<sup>4</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2018 (Amended 2023)



carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or young person.

**Emotional abuse<sup>5</sup>:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's/young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or young person 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 or young person 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 and young people. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's/young person's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child or young person 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 and young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children and young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse<sup>5</sup>:** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child or young person 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 and young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children and young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or young person 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 and young people. The sexual abuse of children and young people by other children and young people is a specific safeguarding issue.

**Neglect<sup>5</sup>:** The persistent failure to meet a child's/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's/young person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child or young person from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's/young person's basic emotional needs.

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



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

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

The four main types of bullying are:

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

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

**Child Sexual Exploitation (which can include Human Trafficking)** 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 using technology (WTSC, 2023).

**Criminal Exploitation** Criminal exploitation is also known as 'County Lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks threaten or trick children and young people into trafficking their drugs for them. They might threaten a young person physically or they might threaten the young person's family or friends. The gangs might also offer something in return for the young person's cooperation, this could be money, food, alcohol, drugs, clothes and jewellery, or improved status. Gangs target vulnerable children and young people who are homeless, living in care, or trapped in poverty. These



children and young people are unsafe, or unable to cope, and the gangs take advantage of this.

**Hate crimes** are acts of violence or hostility directed at people because of who they are or who someone thinks they are. For example, it includes being verbally abused by someone in the street because of disability or sexual orientation.

**Radicalisation** is the process by which an individual or group adopts increasingly extreme political, social, or religious views, potentially leading to violence or terrorism. It involves a shift in beliefs and attitudes, often involving harmful and hateful ideologies, that can be a precursor to extremist actions.

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

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

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

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





need to be alert to the possibility of a child or young person being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

**Forced marriage** (as distinct from a consensual "arranged" marriage) is defined as one which is conducted without the valid consent of both of the parties and where duress is a factor. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure and cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. Forced marriage is child abuse and can put children and young people and young people at risk of physical, emotional, and sexual violence including rape. Forced marriage can have a negative impact on a child's/young person's health and development (Forced Marriage Unit, 2022)

## **6 Reporting Procedures**

A) If a child or young person is in immediate danger call 999

B) If you have a concern, report to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Safeguarding Deputy immediately.

C) DSL/Designated Safeguarding Deputy action: Assess concern, record on CPOMS and action appropriately.

D) Record keeping: All concerns must be recorded factually.

E) Refer to the full CV Life Safeguarding procedures document for further information.

## **7. Safer Recruitment**



A Safer Recruitment Policy has been developed and reviewed in collaboration with Head of Human Resources and Safeguarding Manager to ensure that all recruitment practises align with current safeguarding legislation, guidance and best practice.

## **8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible. However, safeguarding concerns must always be shared with relevant agencies when it is in the best interests of the child or young person. Data will be stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act 2018

## **9. Training**

All CV Life members of staff (paid and unpaid) and trustees participate in Safeguarding awareness and procedures training every 2 years (annually for eligible employees who work directly with children and young people).

Wider training is delivered through the Safeguarding committee group, and delivered out to DSLs and Designated Safeguarding Deputy, as referenced against the CV Life training matrix.

## **10. Mental Health Statement (Safeguarding Policy)**

CV Life recognises that **mental health is a key part of a child or young person's wellbeing** and that poor mental health can, in some cases, be an indicator of abuse or neglect.

We are committed to:

- **Promoting positive mental health** and emotional wellbeing for all children, young people, and staff.
- **Identifying early signs** of mental health difficulties, including changes in behaviour, mood, or presentation.
- **Responding appropriately** to mental health concerns, including making timely referrals to relevant services.



- **Providing safe, supportive environments** where children and young people feel heard and respected.

All staff receive training to:

- Recognise signs of anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders, or suicidal thoughts.
- Know how to escalate concerns in line with our safeguarding procedures.

**Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions**, but they must be alert to emerging concerns and act to safeguard the child's/young person's wellbeing.

Where appropriate, we work in partnership with:

- Parents/carers
- Mental health services and local authorities
- Mental Health First Aiders

Safeguarding and promoting mental health are interlinked priorities. Concerns relating to mental health that pose a **risk of harm** will always be treated as safeguarding concerns and referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Designated Safeguarding Deputy.

## **11. Procedural implementation and review:**

**This policy was implemented in June 2023**

**Reviewed Date: July 2025**

**Review Date: July 2026**



*It will be reviewed on a yearly basis or sooner if required following an incident or, a change in legislation for example.*

