PHSSL CARE LIMITED

CONTROLLED POLICY

B02 – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

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Policy Owner	PHSSL Care Limited
Approved By	Lade Awosika, Director
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Applies To	All PHSSL Care Limited staff, workers and relevant contractors
Supersedes	New policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out PHSSL Care Limited's arrangements for safeguarding children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation and avoidable harm. It supports safe, child-centred care and ensures that staff know how to recognise, report and respond to safeguarding concerns.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all PHSSL Care Limited staff, workers, managers and relevant contractors. It applies whenever a child or young person is receiving, seeking or affected by PHSSL Care Limited's care and support, including concerns about other children within a household or environment.

3. Policy Statement

The welfare and safety of the child or young person is paramount. PHSSL Care Limited will take all safeguarding concerns seriously, act promptly, listen to children and young people, work with parents and carers where safe and appropriate, and cooperate with statutory safeguarding agencies.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy will be applied with regard to the Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004; Working Together to Safeguard Children and current statutory safeguarding guidance; the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, particularly Regulations 13 and 17; the Human Rights Act 1998; Equality Act 2010; Mental Capacity Act 2005 where applicable to young people aged 16 and over; Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; and current CQC and local safeguarding arrangements.

5. Child-Centred Safeguarding

Children and young people should be seen, heard and taken seriously. Their wishes, feelings, communication needs, identity, development and lived experience should inform safeguarding decisions, while recognising that adults remain responsible for taking necessary protective action.

6. Forms of Abuse and Harm

Safeguarding concerns may include physical abuse; emotional abuse; sexual abuse; neglect; domestic abuse; child sexual exploitation; child criminal exploitation; trafficking and modern slavery; online abuse; bullying; harmful sexual behaviour; forced marriage; female genital mutilation; radicalisation; discriminatory abuse; and other forms of exploitation or significant harm.

7. Possible Indicators

Indicators may include unexplained injuries, fearfulness, withdrawal, sexualised behaviour, sudden behavioural or school changes, hunger, poor hygiene, unsafe supervision, concerning online activity, missing episodes, unexplained money or possessions, controlling relationships, repeated injuries or inconsistent explanations. Indicators require professional curiosity and must not be ignored.

8. Immediate Danger or Medical Emergency

If a child or young person is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention, staff must take emergency action, including contacting emergency services where necessary. Immediate protection must not be delayed while routine reporting arrangements are completed.

9. Staff Duty to Report

Any staff member who sees, hears, suspects or receives information suggesting that a child or young person may be at risk must report the concern immediately through PHSSL Care Limited's safeguarding arrangements. Staff must not assume that another person will report it.

10. Receiving a Disclosure

Staff should listen calmly, take the child seriously, avoid expressing shock, avoid leading or investigative questions and never promise secrecy. The child should be told, in an age-appropriate way, that information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe.

11. Recording Concerns

Records must be factual, timely and clear and should include the child's own words where important, what was observed or disclosed, dates and times, people present, immediate actions, who was informed and any advice received. Opinion should be clearly distinguished from fact.

12. Preserving Evidence

Where a crime may have occurred, staff should avoid unnecessary disturbance of possible evidence and should not conduct their own investigation. Relevant records and information must be preserved and police or safeguarding-agency advice followed.

13. Management Response

Management will assess immediate risk, ensure protective action, consider the child's needs and family circumstances, make or support referrals to children's social care or other appropriate agencies, and consider police, medical, regulatory or commissioner involvement.

14. Referral to Children's Social Care

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, or where other safeguarding thresholds are met, PHSSL Care Limited will refer to the appropriate local authority children's social care service in accordance with local procedures.

15. Working With Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should normally be involved in safeguarding matters where this is safe and appropriate. Information should not be shared with a parent or carer before referral where doing so could increase risk, prejudice an investigation or place the child or another person at risk.

16. Consent and Information Sharing

Consent should be considered when sharing information, but safeguarding information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful and proportionate reason to protect a child or another person. Staff must never allow uncertainty about information sharing to prevent necessary protective action.

17. Children's Competence and Young People's Capacity

The ability of a child or young person to understand and participate in decisions should be considered according to age, maturity and circumstances. For young people aged 16 and over, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 may apply to relevant decisions. Safeguarding responsibilities remain even where a young person appears able to make decisions independently.

18. Domestic Abuse

Children may be harmed by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse. Concerns about domestic abuse must therefore include consideration of the safety and wellbeing of children in the household as well as the adult victim.

19. Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation

Staff must be alert to exploitation involving grooming, coercion, exchange, gangs, county lines, sexual activity, criminal activity, debt, threats or online contact. A child may not recognise themselves as a victim and apparent agreement does not remove safeguarding concerns.

20. Online Safety

Concerns involving social media, messaging, online grooming, sexual images, cyberbullying or other digital risks must be reported and managed as safeguarding matters where appropriate. Staff must maintain professional digital boundaries.

21. Missing Children and Young People

Where a child or young person receiving support is missing or cannot be located when their whereabouts are a safety concern, staff must follow the individual care plan, risk assessment and emergency escalation arrangements and contact relevant authorities as required.

22. Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage

Concerns about female genital mutilation or forced marriage must be treated as safeguarding matters and escalated immediately. Staff and regulated professionals must also follow any specific legal reporting duties that apply to their role.

23. Radicalisation and Extremism

Concerns that a child or young person may be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremist influence should be reported through safeguarding channels and managed in accordance with applicable statutory and local arrangements.

24. Allegations Against Staff

Any allegation that a staff member, worker or contractor has harmed, may have harmed, or behaved in a way that may indicate risk to a child must be reported immediately. Management will take protective action and consult or refer to the appropriate safeguarding authority, including the Local Authority Designated Officer arrangements where applicable.

25. Safer Recruitment

PHSSL Care Limited will use safer recruitment arrangements appropriate to roles involving children and young people, including identity, employment-history, reference, right-to-work and Disclosure and Barring Service checks where legally eligible and required.

26. Professional Boundaries

Staff must maintain clear professional boundaries and must not develop inappropriate personal, financial, sexual, online or secretive relationships with children, young people or their families. Gifts, social media and communication must follow PHSSL Care Limited policy.

27. Whistleblowing and Speaking Up

Staff who believe safeguarding concerns are being ignored, concealed or inadequately addressed should use PHSSL Care Limited's Whistleblowing / Speaking Up Policy and may raise concerns through appropriate external channels where necessary.

28. External Notifications and Referrals

Management will consider required notifications or referrals to CQC, local authorities, police, commissioners, professional regulators, the Disclosure and Barring Service or other authorised bodies according to the circumstances and applicable requirements.

29. Training and Competency

Staff will receive safeguarding children training appropriate to their role and the people they support. Training will be reinforced through induction, supervision, updates, scenarios, competency checks and learning from safeguarding events.

30. Staff Responsibilities

Staff must remain alert to signs of harm; listen to children and young people; report concerns immediately; take emergency action where necessary; record accurately; maintain appropriate confidentiality; preserve evidence; cooperate with safeguarding processes; and complete required training.

31. Management Responsibilities

Management will maintain effective child-safeguarding systems; ensure staff training and safer recruitment; support timely referrals; manage allegations appropriately; cooperate with statutory agencies; maintain records; make required notifications; and monitor safeguarding themes and actions.

32. Learning and Quality Assurance

Safeguarding concerns, referrals, allegations and incidents will be reviewed through governance arrangements. Learning may result in changes to care planning, risk controls, staffing, training, supervision, recruitment, policies or wider service systems.

33. Related PHSSL Policies

- A01 Governance and Quality Assurance Policy
- A04 Records Management, Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- A06 Duty of Candour Policy
- B01 Safeguarding Adults Policy
- B03 Whistleblowing / Speaking Up Policy
- B05 Mental Capacity, Consent and Best-Interest Decision-Making Policy
- B06 Modern Slavery and Exploitation Policy
- C01 Recruitment, Selection and Safer Employment Policy
- C05 Professional Boundaries and Gifts Policy
- E02 Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting Policy
- F01 Information Sharing and Communication Policy
- F02 Social Media, Photography and Digital Communications Policy

34. Review and Document Control

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following significant legal or statutory-guidance change, a serious safeguarding incident, inspection findings, local safeguarding changes, audit findings or identified weaknesses. The current approved electronic version is the controlled master. Printed or locally saved copies are uncontrolled unless specifically issued and recorded as controlled copies.

Approved by	Lade Awosika
Position	Director
Approval method	Approved electronically
Approval date	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027