CONTROLLED POLICY

B02 – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Policy Reference	B02	**Version**	1.0
Policy Owner	PHSSL Staffing Limited	**Approved By**	Lade Awosika, Director
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Applies To	All PHSSL Staffing Limited staff, agency workers and relevant contractors	**Supersedes**	New policy

1. Purpose

PHSSL Staffing Limited is committed to safeguarding children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation and avoidable harm. This policy explains the responsibilities of PHSSL staff and agency workers to recognise concerns, respond appropriately, report without delay and cooperate with safeguarding processes during recruitment, placement and assignment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to directors, employees, recruiters, compliance staff, coordinators, agency workers, temporary workers and relevant contractors. It applies wherever PHSSL workers may have contact with children or young people, including education, health, social care, community, residential, supported-living and other client settings.

3. Safeguarding Commitment

- Children's welfare and safety are paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Children and young people should be listened to and treated with dignity and respect.
- Concerns must be reported promptly and must never be ignored, concealed or investigated informally by an agency worker.
- PHSSL will use safer-recruitment controls appropriate to roles involving children.
- PHSSL will cooperate with clients, local authorities, police, DBS, regulators and professional bodies where appropriate.
- People who raise genuine safeguarding concerns must not be victimised.

4. Legal and Practice Framework

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and applicable DBS arrangements.
- Education Act 2002 and Keeping Children Safe in Education where relevant to education assignments.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Applicable local safeguarding partnership procedures and client safeguarding arrangements.

5. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a child is a person under 18 years of age. Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare includes protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

6. Forms of Abuse and Harm

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional or psychological abuse.
- Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Neglect.
- Domestic abuse affecting a child.
- Child criminal exploitation, including county lines.

- Child sexual exploitation.
- Online abuse, grooming and harmful digital contact.
- Trafficking and modern slavery.
- Female genital mutilation.
- Forced marriage and honour-based abuse.
- Radicalisation and extremist exploitation.
- Bullying, discriminatory abuse and peer-on-peer or child-on-child abuse.
- Fabricated or induced illness and other forms of maltreatment.

7. Possible Indicators

Possible indicators may include unexplained injuries, fearfulness, sudden changes in behaviour or attendance, poor hygiene, hunger, inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, withdrawal, aggression, unexplained gifts or money, going missing, concerning online contact, controlling relationships, substance misuse, repeated injuries, disclosure or marked deterioration in wellbeing. Indicators do not prove abuse but may require safeguarding action.

8. Responding to a Child's Disclosure

- Listen carefully and remain calm.
- Take the child seriously.
- Do not promise secrecy or absolute confidentiality.
- Do not ask leading, probing or repeated questions.
- Do not investigate or confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain in age-appropriate language that the information must be shared with people who can help keep them safe.
- Record the child's own words as accurately as possible.
- Report immediately through the client's safeguarding route and to PHSSL management as required.

9. Immediate Danger

Where a child is in immediate danger, requires urgent medical attention or a serious crime may be occurring, the worker must prioritise safety and contact emergency services where necessary. The client's designated safeguarding lead or responsible manager and PHSSL management must then be informed as soon as practicable.

10. Reporting During an Assignment

PHSSL workers must know the safeguarding reporting route at each assignment. In education this will commonly include the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy. In health, care or other settings, the worker must follow the client's safeguarding procedure. PHSSL must also be notified through the agreed escalation route where a safeguarding concern involves a PHSSL worker, assignment, suitability issue or other matter requiring PHSSL action.

11. Concerns About a PHSSL Worker

Any allegation that a PHSSL worker has harmed, abused, exploited, groomed or behaved inappropriately toward a child must be escalated immediately. PHSSL will consider immediate restriction or removal from assignments, client action, local authority procedures, police involvement, DBS referral duties, disciplinary or employment action and professional-regulator notification where applicable. Protective action does not mean an allegation has been proven.

12. Allegations Against Adults Working With Children

Where an allegation concerns a person who works with children, PHSSL will cooperate with the client's safeguarding lead and relevant local authority arrangements, including the Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent function where applicable. Staff must not conduct an unauthorised parallel investigation that could prejudice safeguarding or police enquiries.

13. Low-Level Concerns and Professional Boundaries

Behaviour that does not appear to meet the threshold for a formal allegation may still be inappropriate or inconsistent with professional standards. Low-level concerns about boundaries, communication, favouritism, inappropriate contact, use of social media or other conduct should be reported under the client's procedure and to PHSSL where relevant. Patterns of lower-level concerns may indicate a more serious risk.

14. Child-on-Child Abuse

Abuse can be perpetrated by another child. Sexual violence, sexual harassment, bullying, coercion, exploitation and harmful online behaviour must not be dismissed as banter or normal behaviour. Workers must report concerns through the client's safeguarding process and take immediate steps required to protect children.

15. Online Safety and Communication

- Workers must use approved communication channels and follow client rules.
- Personal social-media relationships with children encountered through an assignment are prohibited unless a clearly authorised professional arrangement exists.
- Workers must not exchange inappropriate personal images, messages or private contact details.
- Concerns about grooming, sexual images, threats or harmful online activity must be reported promptly.
- Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record children unless expressly authorised for a legitimate professional purpose under client procedures.

16. Missing Children and Exploitation

A child who goes missing, repeatedly absents themselves, is collected by unknown adults, displays unexplained wealth or appears controlled by others may be at risk of exploitation. Workers must follow the client's missing-child and safeguarding procedures and report relevant concerns without delay.

17. Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage

Concerns about female genital mutilation, forced marriage or honour-based abuse require immediate safeguarding attention. Certain professionals may have specific statutory reporting duties. PHSSL workers must follow applicable legal duties, professional requirements and the client's safeguarding escalation procedure.

18. Radicalisation

Concerns that a child is being drawn into terrorism or extremist activity must be reported through the client's safeguarding arrangements and, where applicable, Prevent procedures. Staff must respond to indicators objectively and must not stereotype children on the basis of religion, ethnicity or background.

19. Consent and Information Sharing

A child's wishes and feelings should be considered according to age and understanding, but safeguarding information may need to be shared without consent where necessary to protect the child or another person. Information sharing must be lawful, relevant, proportionate and limited to those who need it.

20. Recording

- Make the record as soon as possible.
- Include date, time, location and persons present where known.
- Record what was seen, heard or disclosed, using the child's own words where possible.
- Separate fact from opinion.
- Do not alter or destroy original records.
- Record actions taken and persons notified.
- Store and transmit safeguarding records securely.

21. Safer Recruitment

PHSSL will apply safer-recruitment procedures proportionate to the role. These may include identity and right-to-work checks, full employment history and gap review, references, appropriate DBS checks where legally eligible, qualifications, professional registration, training, competency and suitability assessment. Required checks must be satisfactorily completed before a worker is supplied to a role involving children.

22. DBS Referral Considerations

Where the legal criteria are met, PHSSL will consider and fulfil any duty to refer a person to the Disclosure and Barring Service. A referral obligation will not be avoided because a worker resigns, stops taking assignments or leaves before an internal process is complete.

23. Education Assignments

Workers supplied to schools, colleges or other education settings must comply with the client's safeguarding arrangements and relevant education requirements, including Keeping Children Safe in Education where applicable. They must know the Designated Safeguarding Lead, reporting route, staff code of conduct and expectations concerning professional boundaries.

24. Health and Social Care Assignments

Workers supplied into health or social care settings involving children must follow the provider's safeguarding, incident-reporting and clinical or care procedures. PHSSL remains responsible for its own recruitment, worker-management and employment-business duties and will cooperate with the provider's safeguarding processes.

25. Whistleblowing and Escalation

A worker who believes that a safeguarding concern is being ignored, concealed or inadequately addressed should escalate through PHSSL's Whistleblowing / Speaking Up Policy and may contact an appropriate external safeguarding or regulatory body where legally entitled. Immediate risk must always be prioritised.

26. Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is highly sensitive. It must only be shared for legitimate safeguarding, legal, regulatory or employment purposes. Staff must not discuss cases casually, on social media or with unauthorised colleagues, friends or relatives.

27. Training and Competence

PHSSL will ensure that workers supplied to roles involving children have safeguarding knowledge and training appropriate to the assignment and client requirements. Training should cover recognition, disclosure handling, reporting, professional boundaries, online safety and escalation. Refresher training will be required where appropriate.

28. Client Responsibilities and Cooperation

Clients remain responsible for safeguarding arrangements within their services, including local procedures, supervision, designated safeguarding roles and statutory responsibilities applicable to them. PHSSL will cooperate with safeguarding enquiries, provide relevant worker information lawfully and take appropriate action concerning its workers.

29. Management Responsibilities

- Ensure safeguarding concerns are escalated promptly.
- Support workers who report genuine concerns.
- Coordinate with clients and safeguarding authorities where required.
- Take proportionate action concerning workers subject to allegations.
- Maintain secure safeguarding records.
- Consider DBS and professional-regulator referrals where applicable.
- Monitor safeguarding themes and learning through governance.

30. Worker Responsibilities

- Complete required safeguarding training.
- Read and follow the client's safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Do not investigate allegations independently.
- Keep accurate and confidential records.
- Cooperate with lawful safeguarding enquiries.

- Escalate if serious concerns are not acted upon.

31. Related PHSSL Staffing Policies

- A01 Governance and Quality Assurance Policy.
- A03 Records Management, Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.
- A04 Complaints, Concerns and Service Feedback Policy.
- A05 Duty of Candour and Open Communication Policy.
- B01 Safeguarding Adults Policy.
- B03 Whistleblowing / Speaking Up Policy.
- C01 Recruitment, Selection and Safer Employment Policy.
- C02 DBS, Right to Work, References and Pre-Employment Checks Policy.
- C06 Lone Working and Worker Safety Policy.
- D03 Placement, Booking, Allocation and Cancellation Policy.

32. Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding compliance will be monitored through recruitment and compliance audits, incident and allegation reviews, complaints, worker feedback, client feedback and governance processes. This controlled policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner following significant legal or regulatory change, a serious safeguarding event, audit findings or identified learning.

Approved by	Lade Awosika
Position	Director
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