

Kent Refugee Action Network Safeguarding Policy

Version Control

<i>Version</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>20.11.2023</i>
<i>Status</i>	<i>Final</i>
<i>Drafted by</i>	<i>LPM / ASM</i>
<i>Approved by</i>	<i>BoT</i>
<i>Approved date</i>	<i>30.11.2023</i>
<i>Review frequency</i>	<i>Every year</i>
<i>Next review date:</i>	<i>January 2025</i>

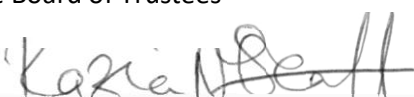
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1. Statement of Intent and Sign off:

- 1.1 This policy has been written to provide easily accessible and practical advice for KRAN staff and volunteers who have concerns about children and vulnerable adults they come across in their direct work, in particular in situations where children are separated from their families, i.e. UASCs (unaccompanied asylum-seeking children).
- 1.2 KRAN's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy lays out how we protect all children, young people and vulnerable adults that use our services and applies to:
- Trustees
 - Staff (including temporary)
 - Volunteers
 - Partners and collaborators
- 1.3 We believe that everyone working and volunteering for KRAN has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to perform their duties in a way that prioritises their protection. We recognise that safeguarding can be both complex and emotive and as such benefits from a collaborative approach (balanced with privacy and need-to-know considerations).
- 1.4 We will make sure that all children and young people, and vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of refugee status, age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 1.5 We recognise the additional needs of children and vulnerable adults with refugee or asylum status, minority ethnic groups and disabilities and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.
- 1.6 All our work with children is informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and by the Children Act 1989. Copies of these documents are easily accessible online. Other relevant acts are:
- Children Act 2004
 - Children and Families Act 2014
 - Children and Young Person's Act 2008
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- 1.7 These acts assign the responsibility to prevent or stop children from being abused or ill-treated to specific agencies. These agencies are social services and the police. KRAN's role within this is to:
- identify child protection and safeguarding concerns
 - refer them to these agencies with statutory duties, and
 - to follow up and check that they are being responded to
- 1.8 Arrangements and/or statutory provisions for adults (over 18 years of age) can vary to those for children (up to 18 years of age) and the policy highlights these differences.
- 1.9 At KRAN we also respond diligently to welfare concerns. A welfare concern is less serious than an imminent threat to life or a real and present danger and as such may not be investigated or considered for a speedy intervention by social services, but it is something that has a detrimental impact on the young person and could evolve into a child protection or safeguarding situation if not addressed.

Signed:  Date: 25/07/24
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Signed:  Date: 25/7/24
CEO

2. What is Safeguarding ?

2.1 Safeguarding for children is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

2.2 Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

2.3 Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

2.4 Safeguarding adults includes:

- Protecting their rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent the risk of abuse or neglect, and to stop them from happening.
- Making sure people's wellbeing is promoted, taking their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs into account.

3. Designated Safeguarding lead in KRAN:

The designated safeguarding lead in KRAN is responsible for:

- Coordinating child protection and vulnerable adult action within KRAN services.
- Raising concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Ensuring safeguarding protocols are followed within the organisation including reporting, recording and external referrals. This also implies that the safeguarding lead will also be responsible for maintaining a confidential recording system within KRAN.
- Making external referrals where necessary.
- Ensuring that KRAN is represented at multi agency meetings for example Strategy meetings and Child protection Conferences.
- Ensuring all staff are fully trained with safeguarding training and have full knowledge of internal safeguarding policy.
- Report on safeguarding risks to the board.

4. Understanding our responsibility:

4.1 The agencies with statutory duties to protect children cannot fulfil these duties if they are unaware of a young person's protection needs. It is KRAN's responsibility to make them aware when such concerns come to our attention. We are often in a unique position to contribute in this way because of our engagement with young people. That engagement can take many forms:

- short but in-depth and honest engagement in casework

- very open and trusting in a mentoring partnership nurtured over time
- extensive, involving several hours day over weeks or months in teaching
- relaxed and unguarded in social activities and around sports sessions

4.2 These are all patterns of interaction and relationships that lend themselves either to disclosures being made by the young person in question, or to signs of abuse or danger being noticed by staff or volunteers. This can take many forms, for example:

- A young person may disclose that he/she is being abused in the project or elsewhere by a member of staff, another young person or another adult
- A young person may disclose a past history of abuse in the project or elsewhere
- A member of staff may become suspicious that a young person is being abused due to their behaviour, conduct or physical signs (ranging from injuries to variations of attire)
- A member of staff may receive information that makes them suspicious that a young person is being abused in the project or elsewhere
- A member of staff may become concerned about the conduct, behaviour or actions of another young person or member of staff
- A parent or other adult may disclose a past history of abuse and there is a likelihood that children and young people could continue to be at risk of abuse

4.3 Since KRAN is not a statutory childcare agency, it is not appropriate for staff to carry out investigations into suspicions of child abuse themselves, and it should be borne in mind that doing so could potentially undermine a formal investigation and hinder the safeguarding effort. The Children Act 2004, does, however, place a duty on organisations such as KRAN to take appropriate action and to make referrals to the police and social services. This 'Duty of Care' to take appropriate action and to make referrals to those agencies specialising in this area applies to all staff carrying out any activity on behalf of KRAN. This includes the Board of Trustees, paid staff, locums, interns and volunteers (under normal circumstances referrals will be coordinated by the team leader/head of function, SL or a member of the SMT). Our responsibility, then, is to:

1. identify,
2. refer and
3. follow up as necessary to ensure that child protection concerns are being responded to.

5. Procedure to follow:

5.1 For a child protection or a adult safeguarding concern , discuss your concerns with your line manager immediately. If your manager is unavailable, please speak directly with the designated safeguarding lead. It is the responsibility of KRAN to have a designated safeguarding lead named at all times. (For example, if the designated safeguarding lead is away on leave, not available due to external meetings, they must inform KRAN staff who will be the safeguarding lead in their temporary absence)

5.2 Your manager or a member of the SMT will call the social worker (if there is one) or the local team within social services working with children and families which will take referrals concerning child protection concerns. For Kent, if there is no allocated social worker who can be contacted, the form can be found here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/protecting-children/report-abuse> and the phone numbers are 03000 41 61 61 during working hours and 03000 41 91 91 for out-of-hours emergencies. The email address is social.services@kent.gov.uk . If ever needed, similar services for other local authorities in the UK can be found here: [Report child abuse to a local council - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-a-local-council)

5.3 In the case of separated children, who should have an allocated social worker, concerns should be raised with the young person's social worker after they are raised within KRAN. The actions following any safeguarding concern will be agreed on between the staff member and the Safeguarding lead. If contacting social services child protection services

instead, it is important that you are clear with the social workers you speak to that you are making a **child protection referral** because you have concerns about the **welfare of a child**. They must then treat the referral as they would any other referral concerning suspected abuse (sometimes confusion arises when a referral of an asylum-seeking child or family is made to social services for child protection purposes. Some social services' staff may try to refer the matter on to other teams within their local authority or elsewhere. It is therefore important that you insist that your referral is a child protection concern which needs to be dealt as such).

- 5.4 You should also refer your concern to the child protection above if you are not satisfied that the social worker is addressing or taking the concern seriously.
- 5.5 Once follow up actions have been decided between staff member and safeguarding lead, to making a referral of a child you know through your work at KRAN - you must give your name and role, and full contact details. You cannot remain anonymous within your professional role. Outline your concerns fully and completely and note or ask for the details of the person you are giving your information to.
- 5.6 You should ask whether and when you will hear back from social services, and note that statutory guidance advises referrers to chase up a referral after three days if they have not heard back. It may be the case that you do not receive any further information as details of future actions may be confidential. However, it may be the case that you are involved in future plans to protect the child, for example you may be invited to a child protection conference.
- 5.7 It is essential that you confirm your telephone conversation in writing and send a copy to social services.
- 5.8 If you have any concerns that your referral will not be followed up or about the person taking the referral, speak immediately with safeguarding lead or senior manager, who should raise the issue immediately with the appropriate manager or point of escalation within social services.
- 5.9 In cases of extreme concern, and when you believe there is a threat to life or that the child is in imminent danger, call the police. In an unlikely event that a child is brought to the service with serious injuries, it would be appropriate to telephone 999 for an ambulance/Police.
- 5.10 Ensure that a record is drafted or updated swiftly and accurately. Liaise with your manager regarding how the information is stored on PODIO in safeguarding app or elsewhere and who has access to it; it will be appropriate in some cases to keep information of this nature accessible to a very limited number of staff (see Appendix on record keeping guidelines)
- 5.11 We acknowledge that it may be inappropriate for social services to share information about responses and actions due to confidentiality, but we are also alert to the risk of a concern raised being overlooked.

6. Training and resources:

6.1 It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead of KRAN to ensure all staff and volunteers are fully trained and are equipped with knowledge to identify the safeguarding signs and have confidence and familiarity with the KRAN procedure to raise their safeguarding concerns as quickly as possible. This will be reviewed on regular basis. The safeguarding lead will also develop resources, training materials and templates to be used in matters of raising safeguarding concerns with Social services and other external partners.

Appendix Safeguarding concerns to be aware of:

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a term used in situations where a child or young person under the age of 18 experiences ill-treatment or impairment of development through a failure on the part of the parent or carer to ensure a reasonable standard of care and protection.

This may include things that a parent or carer does (such as hitting the child) or things that the parent or carer fails to do (such as starving or neglecting the child). Sometimes children are abused by adults who are trusted by the child or placed in a supervisory position in relation to the child, eg a teacher, foster carer, staff member at a children's home, detention or other residential setting. A carer could be any of these or a member of the extended family, or the child's refugee community or a neighbour with whom the child is living in an informal arrangement. Within the Children Act 1989, the term 'significant harm' is used when considering how seriously to take concerns about the safety or welfare of a child. 'Significant harm' usually refers to a series of acute and long-standing harmful events that can interrupt, alter or impair the physical and emotional development of a child. However, one serious but isolated incident could also result in significant harm. A child who has suffered or is likely to suffer 'significant harm' is considered to be a child in need of protection.

The policy acknowledges that it is not only adults who abuse children and that children may abuse children through bullying, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation and humiliation.

The following are brief descriptions of the four main categories as used by social services:

Physical injury: The actual or likely physical injury to a child, or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child.

Neglect: the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation. It can also mean an extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in a significant impairment of the child's health or development, including 'non-organic failure to thrive' (the failure to develop physically, emotionally or mentally for reasons other than disability).

Sexual abuse: the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person under 18. This means involving them in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent. Sexual abuse includes incest, and all forms of sexual activity involving children under 16, including pornography.

Emotional abuse: the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

Abuse by children and young people

- Children and young people, particularly those living away from home, are also vulnerable to physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse and bullying from their peers. Such abuse should be taken seriously and subjected to the same safeguarding procedures as apply to other circumstances. This abuse may come to the attention of staff:

- As a result of a young person disclosing that they have in the past abused another person.
 - As a result of a young person stating that they are currently abusing another young person.
 - As a result of an allegation made by a young person.
 - As a result of staff observing inappropriate behaviour.
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- Any concerns should be reported to the line manager. Where the young people are involved in a KRAN project a risk assessment will be undertaken in relation to the continuing involvement of alleged perpetrator/s and victim/s in the project in question. Where it is suspected that a young person may have been involved in an incident of sexual abuse or physical assault, social services will be informed. Incidents of bullying will also be investigated under this policy and reported.

Self-Harm and Suicide Ideation

- Young people who self-harm must be considered under the Safeguarding Policy and concerns should be reported to social services. For self-harming young people social workers/carers should try to get input and advice from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) so that management plans can be put in place. When a child is experiencing suicide ideation, this must be reported to social services immediately or referred to the emergency services.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) is practised predominantly amongst communities from sub-Saharan Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Arab World, Malaysia and Indonesia. In The Health and Social Care Information Centre has reported that from April 2015 to March 2016 5,700 newly reported cases of FGM in England were recorded, with 43 of these girls and women born in the UK1.
- The practice has its roots in cultural, moral and religious traditions (although there is, in fact, no direct link to any religious teachings) and failure to undergo the procedure can result in isolation for girls and women in their communities.
- Nevertheless, as female genital mutilation involves extreme pain and trauma for the child and is a potentially life-threatening procedure, and is illegal in the UK.
- If it comes to your attention that a young woman is about to undergo FGM here or in another country, a child protection referral must be made to social services as quickly as possible. They have a duty to investigate the risk to the girl as they would with any other allegation of abuse. It is essential that you do this.
- If you learn that a young woman has already undergone the procedure, particularly if this is quite recently, a referral should still be made to social services so that they can assess the need of the child for follow-up medical services or perhaps appropriate counselling.

Trafficked children

- This area of international crime is coming under increasing scrutiny by law enforcement and child welfare agencies in the UK and worldwide. Most of the asylum seekers KRAN works with, adults and children, have been smuggled into the UK. Trafficking differs from smuggling in that it involves an intent to exploit the victim after arrival in the UK.
- Trafficked children or their parents may have been told lies about what kind of life awaits the child in the UK, or parents may have been frightened or threatened into giving up their

children to traffickers. Sometimes children have been abducted or kidnapped. Some child victims of trafficking are orphans. Children may be trafficked into the UK for a range of purposes including sexual exploitation; domestic servitude; sweatshop, restaurant or other catering work; begging or pickpocketing or other criminal activity; and work in cannabis houses.

- Few of these children come to the attention of organisations such as KRAN. Their traffickers are careful to keep them out of the reach of welfare or advice agencies such as ours and many never enter the asylum system. However, KRAN staff need to remain alert to the possibility that any of the children we see may be caught up in the world of trafficking and act accordingly. These are abused children who need protection.
- Apart from a child 'disclosing' to you that they have been trafficked and need help, signs that might make you suspicious include:
 - A child attending our offices with an adult who is clearly not their parent or a close relative, for example the child may be unsure about the correct name of the adult.
 - A child saying that they are older than they look and/or are dressed in a more 'grown-up' way than seems appropriate.
 - Confusion about nationality which might come to light, for example if a child cannot speak fluently the first language of their stated nationality.
 - A child who is visibly frightened by the adult he/she is with or by the prospect of returning to where they live.
- If you have concerns that a child or young person may be the victim of trafficking, you must alert social services or the police. Try and talk to the young person on their own and ascertain if they are willing to wait in the offices until they can be taken to a place of safety. As in any of the above scenarios, they are likely to be extremely frightened. If your concerns are regarding an unaccompanied child, you should also refer to one of the specialist child trafficking Advisers within the Children's Section.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

- The age of consent in the UK is 16. However, it is an offence for adults 'in a position of trust' to have any sexual relations with a 16 or 17 year old over whom they may have power or authority. The Act prohibits any sexual activity with a child, causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child, or causing a child to watch a sexual act or being forced into a sexual relationship including forced marriages.
- If you have any concerns that an adult working in a position of trust with a child is abusing this position of trust, discuss your concerns with a manager with a view to reporting your concerns to social services Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or to the police.

If you hear allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer

- In the event of an allegation against a current member of staff relating to child protection concerns, or that this policy has been breached, this will be dealt with according to KRAN's disciplinary policy and procedure. Where the allegation relates to a current volunteer, an investigation will be carried out by the relevant manager/volunteer coordinator. The volunteer may also be disallowed from volunteering during the external investigation. A referral will also be made to the local authority via KRAN Chair/CEO.

Online and social media abuse:

- Many young people will use the internet and social networking sites as a matter of routine, but may not realise the risks and dangers associated with them. These can include:
 - chat-room grooming
 - the sharing of personal and identifying information with strangers through social media
 - gambling
 - being a victim of online bullying (cyber bullying)
 - seeing disturbing images or information online
 - radicalisation
- Staff should not share social media platforms with clients.
- Please see appendix for Pictures and photography guidance.

Radicalisation and the Prevent Agenda:

- All the terrorist groups which pose a threat to us seek to radicalise and recruit people to their cause. The percentage of people who are prepared to support violent extremism in this country is very small, but it is significantly greater amongst young people.
- There is no single way of identifying who is likely to be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Factors that may have a bearing on someone becoming vulnerable may include: peer pressure, influence from other people directly or via the internet, bullying, crime against them or their involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self-esteem or identity and personal or political grievances.
- If staff or volunteers have concerns they should raise them with their manager and if necessary report them to the local authority or the police.

Homelessness:

- Although homelessness is itself not a safeguarding issue, it can be a factor in children and young people (adult) at risk of harm due to stresses it creates. Please speak with your line manager and discuss the situation as soon as you become aware of it.

Cuckooing:

- Cuckooing is the term used to describe an individual or group that **takes over the home of an adult and/or their family, for the purpose of using it for illegal activity**. This could include using the home for county lines drug trafficking, supplying drugs to the local community and other illegal activities.
- Perpetrators cuckoo properties either by manipulation and/or force and it can occur in rented, owned or social housing. The impact on the individual being cuckooed and their family can be hugely significant, not only for their wellbeing and mental health, but it can also put them at risk of abuse, isolation, participating in criminal activities and losing their home.

County Lines:

- it is a form of criminal exploitation where gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and to transport them to other areas, markets and towns. It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse. County line gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by Police. More information can be found here: <https://learning.nsppc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>

Mental health issues:

- Young people with mental health issues may have support and care needs that make them less able to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and harm than other people. If you think this applies to a young person at KRAN, report your concerns as soon as possible.
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APPENDIX guidance on record keeping

All information needs to be recorded on PODIO, in the safeguarding application and relevant staff members should be tagged. It is the responsibility of the line managers to make sure that all teams are familiar with using PODIO and can record information on it.

Records need to cover the following areas:

- Everything and everyone that was seen and observed at the time of any incident that has raised concerns – including injuries and notes on the behaviour of children and carers. Records must be factual information only. If a personal opinion is added, then it should be made very clear that this is the case.
- Any allegations or disclosures made by children, carers or others. If possible, it is best practice to write down the actual words used in disclosures or allegations.
 - Any explanations given for injuries to the child.
- All action taken by staff including discussions with their line manager, contact with social services or the police, including the names and contact details of those spoken to.

Social services have strict deadlines about when they should take action following a referral. If KRAN staff are careful about recording exact times, it may help to follow up on the referral later on.

Safeguarding is one of the few areas of work with clients when our usual strict guidelines regarding confidentiality can be broken in the interests of protecting a child. It must be noted that there is a difference between confidentiality for a child and adult. However, it is always best to discuss this with your line manager first. Please refer to Confidentiality policy of KRAN and be aware that confidentiality can be broken in following circumstances:

- If the adult is at risk of imminent harm and/or danger
 - If a child involved is at risk of harm and/or danger
 - There is a risk of harm and or danger to public.
-

APPENDIX Guidance on Photography and image sharing

There are very limited circumstances in which KRAN would take and publish photographs of children young people and vulnerable adults. Please speak with your manager right away if you are working with external collaborators, facilitators and they intend to take pictures of KRAN young people. Remember that :

- Adults have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how they may be used. If an adult does not have capacity to make this decision, then a carer should do so on their behalf.
- Children, young people and their carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how they may be used.

- A written consent must be requested from the adults and or carer of children before taking any picture and using it. The consent must state the purpose of the image, how long it will be stored or displayed.
- Special care must be taken to ensure that images are not exploitative and sexual in nature and are not open to misuse.
- All images must be stored securely and no identifying information should be available.
- If carers, social workers, professionals are intending to photograph young people at KRAN activity or event, they must be made aware of our policy. Any concerns regarding photos, videos should be reported to the line manager or safeguarding lead as quickly as possible.
- If KRAN uses any external photographers, they will be advised of our safeguarding policy and they should acknowledge that they have read, understood and will abide by the KRAN policies.

APPENDIX Guidance on particular situations that might arise

You witness an adult carer being violent towards a child on KRAN premises or at an outreach location

- There will inevitably be differences of opinion about what constitutes violence towards a child. Try and consider the term 'significant harm' as described above. Ask yourself if the child has been injured or physically harmed in this incident.
- The first priority of the staff member witnessing the incident and the manager they call to support them, is to ensure the physical safety of the child concerned. This may involve calling the emergency services in order to obtain medical treatment for the child (e.g. a doctor or an ambulance), or possibly to prevent the adult from leaving the premises with the child (the police). This will be particularly important if you do not know where the family will be going after their visit to the office.
- If you cannot ascertain that the child has been harmed, this does not mean that you should ignore the situation. The child may not have been injured on this occasion but the behaviour you witnessed may have given you cause for concern. Perhaps the child flinched as if used to being hit, or perhaps the adult was verbally abusive towards the child, making you believe that the relationship between them was harmful for the child. Record your concerns and discuss the issues with your manager.
- This is a difficult situation. It may seem right to spend some time with the parent/carer explaining to them that their behaviour towards their child is not acceptable and may lead to intervention by statutory services now they are in the UK. However, if you have real concerns about the child's safety, your role is to alert social services before you speak to the parent/carer, and to allow the professionals to make the assessment about the child's safety.

A child specifically tells you that they have been hurt by someone

- This is known as 'disclosure'. The child should be reassured that it was right to talk about the abuse. You should explain that you cannot keep the matter a secret and that you will have to tell some other people so that something can be done to protect the child in the future. You should immediately inform your line manager so that a decision can be made about whether to discuss the matter with social services and who should do this.
- You need to find out just enough about the alleged abuse in order to refer the matter to social services or the police; they are trained in investigative interviewing. It is not your role to interview the child in depth.
- If you need to ask the child questions or clarify what they are saying, make sure that you use open-ended/non-leading questions, e.g. 'Please tell me what happened'. 'Please explain that

a bit further.’ It has been known for the prosecution of cases of child abuse to collapse because the accused has been able to argue that ideas have been put into children’s heads by those interviewing them.

- If you are speaking to the child through an interpreter, check that the interpreter is also aware of the importance of the exact words used to discuss the disclosure with the child.
- You see bruising or other signs of possible physical abuse
- Ask the child and the parent/carer how the injuries happened. If the explanations given do not seem reasonable, or if there is inconsistency about explanations given by different people (or by the child and the parent/carer), you must discuss your concerns with your line manager immediately. Social services may need to be contacted and all relevant information passed on.
- If you are not able to speak to the child or parent/carer about bruises you have seen, you should still discuss with your manager, as it may be that you refer the matter to social services.

There are concerns about the appearance or behaviour of a child which suggest the child may be neglected

- Discuss the concerns and the most appropriate course of action with your line manager as soon as possible. There should be consultation with social services to raise these issues if you have any doubt about the care being offered to the child by his/her parent or carer. Examples of this may be no food, poor clothing, denial of warmth, not attending to medical issues or not attending essential and, in some cases, non-essential health appointments.
- In cases of domestic violence it is important to involve Social Services Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference or MARAC.
- Living in a home where domestic abuse happens can have a serious impact on a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their behaviour. And this can last into adulthood. The NSPCC says: “Mums or dads who suffer domestic abuse don’t always realise how it affects their child. They might think that because their child doesn’t see what’s happening that they’re not affected. But we know that living in a home where domestic abuse takes place can be really harmful for a child.
- Domestic abuse can have a very serious impact on a child’s behaviour and wellbeing, even if they’re not directly harmed themselves. Children witnessing domestic abuse is recognised as ‘significant harm’ in law

An allegation of abuse is made to you by another person

- This must be taken seriously and referred to social services. The person making the allegation should be encouraged to talk directly to social services but you also have a responsibility to act in accordance with these procedures.

You have suspicions that an adult is posing as a relative of a child when they are not

- You must contact social services. As explained above, there could be good reasons why the adult believes it to be in the child’s best interests to act as their relative but is afraid to explain the truth. Equally, adults involved in the trafficking of children for various kinds of exploitation often pose as their parents in order to get them into the country (see below).
- It may be that social services will assess that the adult is a suitable care-giver for the child and the situation can be regularised for immigration and support purposes so that the child becomes a legitimate part of the household. It is also possible that the assessment by social services may conclude that this is not a suitable place for the child to live.

You suspect that a client is significantly younger than their stated age

- Whilst the opposite scenario is more common, it is not unknown for children to claim to be older than they really are because they have been told to do so by traffickers or other adults who have influence over their lives. This scenario could alert you to the possibility that the child is at risk of harm as their needs as children are not being met. If possible, try and talk to the young client on their own and ask them if they feel safe with the adults they are with. If you have any cause for concern, make a referral to social services. In this scenario, social services may need some persuasion to become involved for child protection reasons. Make your concerns clear.

You come across a household which includes a young person under the age of consent who is in a sexual relationship or married

- It is illegal for any young person under the age of 18 to enter a sexual relationship, whether heterosexual or homosexual.
- Marriage is permitted by law at the age of 18.
- Being married does not affect the fact that someone under 18 is still legally a child. In some cultures it may be the norm for young couples to marry when they are both below the age of 16, or for a young girl to be married to an older man, but young people below the age of 18 who were married outside this country are not recognised as married under UK law.
- If the young person is under 18, it is illegal for a child under the age of 18 to be considered as married in the UK. You must raise the concerns immediately with your line manager / DSL who would make an immediate child protection referral as outlined above.
- If the young person is 18 or over, and with a spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend, social services have very little power to become involved from a child protection point of view. If there are concerns that the relationship may be abusive, social services or the police may intervene under domestic abuse legislation, including under the Serious Crime Act 2015 which includes measures to protect victims of coercive or controlling behaviour.
- If you have concerns that a young person is in a harmful relationship, try and talk to them on their own at first. It may be that your relationship with a young person in this situation is of more use in empowering the young person to escape the abusive relationship than is the limited power of intervention of social services. If your concerns continue after talking to the young person, or if you cannot speak to them and are still worried, contact the police.
- The young woman may be pregnant or may have a young child. If she is under 16, then make an automatic referral to social services. If the young mother is over 16, try to obtain a sense of the vulnerability of the young woman and the resources available to her through the strength of her relationship with her partner. She may be struggling with the demands of caring for a young child or with the stresses and strains of pregnancy. If you have any doubts about her ability to cope make a referral to social services who should do all they can to enable the young mother and child to be cared for and supported together.
- You should remain alert to the possibility that you may come across boys and young men who are victims of child abuse in different forms. Almost all children find it incredibly difficult to talk about abuse, and boys often find it especially difficult. Approach the situation with sensitivity but remember that boys need protecting as much as girls, and procedures apply equally to them.

APPENDIX role of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of KRAN is ultimately accountable for ensuring that KRAN abides in full with its legal and regulatory safeguarding obligations. It discharges that responsibility by:

- ensuring this policy is legally compliant and aligned to best safeguarding practice
- regarding safeguarding as a governance and risk management priority for the organisation
- delegating operational responsibility for the implementation and periodic, external, review of this policy to the Senior Management Team and Safeguarding Lead
- requiring regular reports from the SL to the Board on all key safeguarding risks
- ensuring we have a culture of Whistleblowing effective in contributing to a safe environment
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made and following Safer Recruitment practices
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through induction, supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- implementing the code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- managing any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints procedure
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- recording and storing information professionally and securely