

Enjoy Water **Safely**



Retford & District Lifesaving Club

(RDLSC)

Child Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed 2026

Person(s) responsible for updating the policy:	Peter Moyes
Date Approved/	January 2023 / Reviewed 2026
Date of next review	January 2027
Status	Approved

What to do if you feel unsafe or want to report a safeguarding concern

As a club we want to ensure that we provide you with a safe and welcoming environment where you feel you are respected and valued. If you feel unsafe or have any concerns then you should contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in the organisation (see section 6.0) or confide in a person that you trust (parent, coach or friend). These individuals can contact the DSL on your behalf. We are here to support you.

All information regarding RLSS UK safeguarding can be found on the [RLSS UK Website](#). As a club we will ensure that all safeguarding concerns and allegations are dealt with in accordance with the RLSS UK National Policy and Practices.

1.0 Policy statement

1.1 RDLSC is committed to ensuring that children who participate in its activities, including lifesaving, lifeguarding, community awards, education, sports, competitions and any other events, have a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. All groups of people whatever their age, gender, language, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and culture have the right to protection from abuse and to be treated fairly. Everyone involved with a child who may be at risk is uniquely placed to recognise and respond to abuse and poor practice across RLSS UK.

1.2 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the RLSS UK working practices and procedures at <https://www.rlss.org.uk/rlss-uk-safeguarding-policies-and-procedures#:~:text=Safeguarding%20is%20everyone's%20responsibility,in%20relation%20to%20questionable%20conduct>.

2.0 Application

2.1 This policy applies to **all** of those who occupy positions of responsibility, volunteer or come into contact with children as part of their role within the club. The policy and associated procedures will be promoted to all volunteers and participants as part of their induction process at the club.

2.2 RDLSC will ensure that a copy this policy is sent to all volunteers and they will be required, after a reasonable time, to signify to the Club DSL that they have received it and are conversant with the content.

2.3 This policy will be made available to all of those taking part in activities in the club.

3.0. Child protection statement

3.1 RDLSC recognises that its volunteers have a moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will all be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. We will be child centred and take a coordinated and partnership approach to safeguarding. We recognise safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

3.2 As a club we will ensure that we adhere to local partnership¹ safeguarding practices.

3.3 This policy also includes the club's stance with regards to modern slavery. Modern slavery takes many forms including forced and compulsory labour, slavery, servitude and human trafficking. It is the violation of human rights and the RLSS UK has a zero-tolerance approach to Modern Slavery. We will also take any concerns in this area seriously.

¹ In line with the Local Child Safeguarding Partnership arrangements and guidance for the areas where the club is located.

3.4 The club will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format or language.

4.0 Definitions in Child Safeguarding

To assist in understanding this policy a number of key definitions need to be explained:

Child² - In England, Northern Ireland, 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 2026).

In Scotland a young person becomes an adult at 16 but under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 they are a child until they reach the age of 18.

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment.
- Preventing harm to children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with National guidance³.

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

Safeguarding allegation - Where a person who is either a member, volunteer or contractor working on behalf of the club has⁴:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child,
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Parent - Refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

Abuse of Trust

The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 section 3 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.

A person aged 18 or over ("Person A") is in a position of trust in relation to a person under that age ("Person B") if any of four conditions are satisfied. One relates to the education field and is as follows: "Person A" looks after persons who are under 18 and are receiving full-time education in an institution and "Person B" is receiving such education within that institution. This applies within the RLSS and includes those in a professional support role and volunteers.

² Defined by the Children Act 1989

⁴ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Abuse⁵ - A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children 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.

Please see Appendix A for types of abuse

Poor practice:

Sometimes, concerns may relate to poor practice (see [RLSS UK's Low Level Concern Policy](#) for more details), where an adult's or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing distress to a child or young person. In the application of this policy, poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes the principles of this document or RLSS UK Code of Conduct. Where poor practice is serious or repeated this could also constitute abuse and should be reported immediately.

It is essential all staff and volunteers, particularly coaches, instructors and trainers understand and maintain professional boundaries when working with children.

5.0 Our Clubs Commitment to Supporting Children and Young People

5.1 We expect all those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work, volunteer or come into contact with children and young people during club activities to;

- Protect them from abuse whilst they are participating in any activity associated with RLSS UK;
- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Create a culture where children, parents⁶ and others who may have a concern are encouraged to report their concerns or the abuse that has happened to them.
- Have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities to safeguard children.
- Take appropriate action in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.

Our Club will;

- Provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, mental wellbeing and moral development of the individual child or young person.
- Promote the RLSS UK's safeguarding arrangements to all of those who occupy positions of responsibility, volunteer or come into contact with children and young people.
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
- Maintain and securely store confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns.
- 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 the risk of abuse.

⁵ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

⁶ Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

- Provide the details about the action that will be taken by our Club when a safeguarding concern is reported.
- Notify the local statutory agency as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Recognise that all of those who occupy positions of responsibility, who work and volunteer have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm;
- Ensure that staff, members, volunteers involved in child protection issues receive appropriate support and supervision.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure that all our volunteers and members adhere to the RLSS UK Code of Conduct and/or Code of Practice. These policies are available on the RLSS UK Website [RLSS UK and IQL UK Policies | Royal Life Saving Society UK \(RLSS UK\)](#) .
- Ensure volunteers with roles and responsibilities for children and young people are subject to appropriate safe recruitment checks and safeguarding training.
- Engage with all parents and other relevant individuals to ensure that they are made aware of the responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures through induction packs.
- Clearly advertise and promote the details of the designated members of staff for child protection.

Our Club will support all children by:

- Allowing them to participate in activities in a way that is appropriate for their age and ability.
- Ensuring that they are coached and trained by appropriately qualified staff or volunteers who have been competently trained.
- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment through training of officials.
- Responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress and anxiety.
- Recognising that a child who is abused or who witnesses violence/abuse may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- Facilitating details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support.
- Liaising and working together with all other partnerships, support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Accessing and utilising the necessary resources and guidance to identify children requiring mental health support.
- Reassuring victims/survivors that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Ensuring that they know there are adults in each of the club whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Reinforcing good safeguarding practice to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.

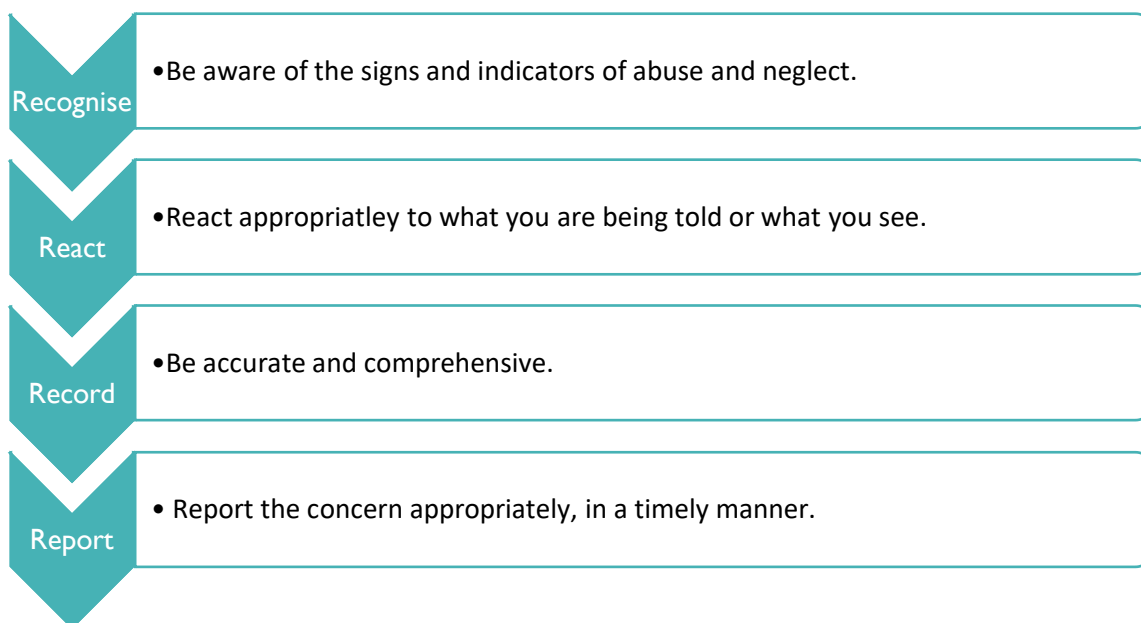
6.0 Club Safeguarding Roles

The details and contacts of the Club/Branch/Area Safeguarding representatives are;

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
Club DSL	Theresa Tomlinson	tjt2206@gmail.com	07947 103001
Branch DSL	Terry Draycott	terry@rlss-notts.org	07739 832214

7.0 Reporting a Concern

- 7.1 All club volunteers and members have a responsibility to be alert to the fact that children and young people may have been abused and that they **MUST** report safeguarding concerns.
- 7.2 By following the four simple safeguarding principles of Recognise, React, Record and Report, those affiliated to the club can keep those children who may be at risk of abuse safe from harm.



7.3 Recognise

- 7.3.1 We will be alert for the signs and indicators that children and young people who interact or engage with the club may be suffering abuse either within the organisation or in external environments (i.e. home, school etc). We should remember that children may be abused by other children and young people as well as by adults.

Indicators that a child may be being abused may include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries,
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent,
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her,
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another,
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g., becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper),
- Inappropriate sexual awareness,
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour,
- Sudden or unusual distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected,
- Having difficulty in making friends,
- Being prevented from socialising with other young people,

- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite; or a sudden weight change and
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

7.3.2 It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. Establishing a professional relationship with the child and their parent may assist in identifying any issues or concerns.

7.3.3 It is important to note that not all children are able to express themselves verbally. Communication difficulties, language barriers or specific disabilities may mean that it is hard for them to complain or to be understood. In some instances children particularly those with disability may need to be supported by an advocate⁷.

7.3.4 We also recognise that many children and young people may have experienced trauma in their past (Adverse Childhood Experiences) which could be affecting their behaviour and outcomes in life. We recognise that we have an important part to play in providing a safe environment for those who have suffered from such trauma and we will provide help and support through signposting them to specialist help and support.

7.4 **React**

7.4.1 It is always difficult to hear about or witness harm or abuse experienced by a child or young person. The following points will be helpful for both you and the child should they choose to disclose abuse to you:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said and try not to interrupt.
- Find an appropriate point early on to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow them to continue at their own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid asking questions that suggest an answer (leading questions).
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and have done the right thing in telling you. If the concern is serious explain that you will need to get support from other trained people to help keep the them safe. This must be shared even if the child doesn't want you to tell anyone else.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. If they are adamant that they do not wish the information to be shared, explain that you will have to tell the DSL (or Deputy) and that it will be discussed further with them.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure relates to a recent incident of physical harm or injury and try to protect any supporting materials e.g. clothing.
- Seek medical attention were appropriate.
- Report the disclosure to the Club/Branch DSL (or Deputy) **at the earliest** opportunity.
- Don't confront the alleged abuser.

7.4.2 Where the concern or allegation is about a member of staff or a volunteer, this must like all other instances be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy. If the DSL or Deputy considers the circumstances to relate to a 'Safeguarding Allegation', they must report the incident to local statutory agency. Depending on the circumstances it may also be necessary to inform the police.

7.4.3 When a safeguarding concern or poor practice has been identified concerning a specific child the parents should be notified **unless** this could put the child or another child at increased risk. Where

⁷ [National Youth Advocacy Service](#)

the DSL/Deputy has reported the incident to a statutory agency, for example the LADO or police, advice should be sought from them regarding this duty before notifying the parents/guardians/carers.

7.5 **Record**

7.5.1 All records must be accurate and comprehensive. Wherever possible you should use the RLSS UK reporting form and ensure you also notify the Club/Branch DSL or Deputy DSL.

7.5.2 You must record all potential safeguarding issues including low level concerns. Such concerns may be an indicator of more complex harm is occurring and could identify patterns of abuse.

7.5.3 All records must:

- Be made as soon as possible after the event/concern is raised.
- Contain the date, time, people present, anything said (verbatim if possible).
- Detail the behaviour and demeanour of the person disclosing the safeguarding issue.
- Detail any action you have taken (for example how you have reduced risk or whether you have referred the matter to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy).
- Be a factual account of what has happened.
- Adhere to confidentiality (only share with appropriate people).

7.5.4 Do not record any opinion about what has happened. You are not there to judge or ascertain whether what you are being told is correct.

7.6 **Report**

Remember you have a clear responsibility to report the concerns that have been raised with you immediately. Any delay in reporting could potentially cause more harm.

7.6.1 In the first instance you must report concerns that you have to the Club/Branch DSL (or Deputy) **on the telephone, in person or where appropriate, via email**. Where you use email, please ensure that you follow this up with a telephone call.

7.6.2 If a volunteer is working away from premises controlled by the Club for a partner organisation, then the Safeguarding Policy of that organisation should be followed. Concerns must also still be reported to the Club/Branch DSL (or Deputy), and they will in turn offer any assistance to the other organisation.

7.6.3 Where the concern or allegation relates to the Club/Branch DSL then the matter should be referred to the RLSS HQ DSL or their Deputy.

7.6.4 Safeguarding concerns **MUST** be reported immediately (or where this is not possible at the earliest opportunity) so that the report can be assessed, and action taken to protect the person involved. **If any person is at immediate risk of harm or requires medical attention, then the emergency services should be contacted immediately by telephoning 999.**

7.6.5 Where you are unable to contact a DSL, advice can be sought from statutory agencies or by calling or emailing the following;

- Nottinghamshire Multi-agency safeguard hub 0300 500 80 90
- Local Police - Telephone 101 for non-emergency referrals and 999 for emergency response.
- NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/> or call 0808 800 5000.

8.0 Procedural implementation and review:

8.1 These procedures were implemented on 1st January 2023 and will be reviewed on an annual basis or in response to changes in safeguarding legislation and/or best practice.

8.2 The following RLSS UK additional policies are also relevant to this document:

- Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Use of Photography and Film Image
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Professional Boundaries Guidance and Practice
- Youth Image Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Social Media and Internet Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Good Practice Guidance
- Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Codes of Conduct

These policies are located [here](#).

Appendix A - Types of Abuse

Physical abuse⁸: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

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

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

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result 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 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 basic emotional needs.

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

⁸ Working together to Safeguard Children 2018

Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, 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, 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 and visual messages.

Child Sexual Exploitation which can include Human Trafficking

Child sexual exploitation 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 through the use of technology (WTSC, 2018).

Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is also known as 'County Lines' and is when gangs and organised crime networks threaten or trick children 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 who are homeless, living in care, or trapped in poverty. These children are unsafe, or unable to cope, and the gangs take advantage of this.

Hate crimes

Hate incidents and hate crime 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, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief and transgender identity.

Female Genital Mutilation

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 Violence & Abuse

The cross-Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

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 being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Forced marriage

A forced marriage⁹ (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 at risk of physical, emotional and sexual violence including rape. Forced marriage can have a negative impact on a child's health and development (Forced Marriage Unit, 2018).

Radicalisation

The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media. Whilst there is a National Prevent agenda¹⁰ all concerns should be reported through normal child protection procedures.

⁹ [Forced Marriage Guidance](#)

¹⁰ [Prevent Guidance](#)