

Child Protection - Dealing with Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse Procedure

**GATESHEAD
COLLEGE**
EDUCATION
WITH
EMPLOYMENT
EDGE



No: STM-PRO-002	Version: 22
Issue Date: 01/09/2018	Review Date: 22/10/2022
Author: Darren Heathcote	Approved by: Chris Toon
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed by (name): John Gray	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed on (date): 23/01/2020

Version Level	Details of Change	Date
01	New document	30.03.06
02	Reviewed no changes	05.07.07
02	Contents transferred to new template /logo	19.03.08
03	Reviewed and updated in line with current practices	03.07.08
04	Reviewed - Section 6 Forced Marriages updated. Appendix 1 and 2 updated to reflect Gateshead LSCBs Child Protection Procedures	10.05.09
05	Reviewed and updated to reflect current practices and status	07.05.10
06	Reviewed, no changes	31.05.11
07	Reviewed and updated	14.03.12
08	Reviewed and updated to reflect changes to Working Together to Safeguard Children and Gateshead LSCB Procedures – March 2013	07.10.13
09	Reviewed – added reference to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Extended definition of bullying. Extended definition of Forced Marriage and added link to gov.uk Forced Marriage advice leaflet. Changed staff job titles. Added further detail of process following any complaint made against senior staff. Updated Local Authority contact details. New incident report form template.	21.11.14
10.	Reviewed and updated. Change to staff title, reference to Working Together to Safeguard Student changed April 2015, cycle of staff safeguarding training changed to an annual basis, staff responsibility to report concerns.	17/12/15
11.	Reviewed and updated to include reference to Prevent Duty Guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales (July 2015) and Keeping Children Safe in Education – (Sept 2016) Added references to: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Peer on Peer Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Breast Ironing, Domestic Abuse, Hidden Harm, Teenage Relationship Abuse, and Radicalisation/Extremism.	15/08/16
12.	Reviewed – updated reference to reporting and making a record of an incident, suspicion or concern, and record keeping. Updated staff contact details and case recording. Added reference to Intimate Care guidelines, and Restraining Students procedure.	01/02/17
13.	Referenced updates applied in February 2017 to 'Working to safeguard children' – March 2015. Changed refresh of 'Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer' training from 3 to 2 years for deputy safeguarding managers. Slight amendment to description of what bullying is taken from 'Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' – document updated July 2017 DfE. Added new web address for Gateshead Council publication - Further information on the definitions of child abuse, indicators of significant harm and recognising abuse. Added Tees CCP web address for information relating to the difference between suicide and deliberate self-harm. Added a web link to access Prevent Duty Guidance. Added a web link to access NSPCC description of child sexual exploitation. Added new web link to access information about Breast Ironing. Added a new web link to access information about FGM. Added a web link to access information about Domestic Abuse and the effect this has on children. Added link to electronic safeguarding referral form. Slight amendment to details about making a referral. Added 7 golden rules for information sharing in line with Gateshead LSCB procedures. Updated contact details.	
14.	1. Introduction - Updated reference to Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2015 (last updated December 2020). 2.3 – referenced deputy DLSO training requirements are the same as the DLSO. 3. Definitions – 3.1 added reference to a child-centred approach and working in the best interests of the child. 4. What is Child Abuse? – added further detail describing the type of additional support or 'early help' available to students. Added a list or description of children who may require 'early help' – taken from	

	KCSIE. Added contact details for Gateshead Council Early Help Service. Added a paragraph regarding Children Missing from Education and the referral process. 4.3 – Added reference to geographical exploitation of children. 4.8 - Added description of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Added description of consent. 4.9 – added further details about so-called 'Honour-based' violence. 5.2 – staff are now asked to comment on any local knowledge which may impact on the safeguarding arrangements for the student. 6 – change of title from Nominated Safeguarding Officer to Designated Safeguarding Lead.	
15.	4.1 Updated web link to Gateshead Council indicators of abuse. 4.2 Updated reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2019. Updated early help indicators. Section 10 – updated links to Information Sharing. Section 13 – updated links to LSCB Policies, procedures and guidance. Updated Safeguarding referral form to the newest version.	
16.	Added details of escalation in respect of a staff concern that child safeguarding is not being addressed correctly within the college or by other agencies.	26.11.19
17.	Updated reference to Children Missing Education. Gateshead Local Safeguarding Board changed name to Gateshead Safeguarding Children Board. Reference to Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer changed to Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer (DLSO). Removed section 2.4 as information is repeated in 2.3. 4.1 Added link to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019) 4.13 added reference to Prevent Duty guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales update April 2019. 13 Updated reference to Working together to safeguard children 2015 – last update December 2020.	14.01.20
18.	Reviewed and amended	27.11.2019
19	Reviewed and amended	23.01.2020
20	Reviewed no changes	15.07.2020
21	Reviewed and amended	10.10.2020
22	Author updated Reference to addendum removed Change in DLSO	22.10.2021

Key search words for this document

Child Protection Allegations Suspicions abuse

1. Aims and Objectives

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires governing bodies of further education institutions to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions. In order to fulfil their duties under sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002, all education settings to whom the duty applies should have in place the arrangements set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children – March 2015 (last updated December 2020), Chapter 2: paragraph 4.

1.2 The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18.

1.3 The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which changed the definition of Regulated Activity including who is eligible for a barred list check.

1.4 This document provides the procedure to follow in every case of an allegation, suspicion or concern of child abuse.

1.5 This document will be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that the procedures are in keeping with those of Gateshead Safeguarding Children Board. For cases where there is a concern about a child living outside of Gateshead, contact should be made with Children's Social Care team in the relevant Local Authority.

Scope

All young people under the age of 18 years of age who undertake employment, work placement, training or education directly or indirectly with Gateshead College. The procedure would also apply to a concern about any child brought to the attention of College staff or volunteers.

2. Training

2.1 The College acknowledges that for the procedure to be effective it is important that staff receive adequate training. Safeguarding and child protection training is a mandatory element of the College staff induction and refresher training must be undertaken on an annual basis.

2.2 Volunteers who work with children are also to be made aware of the College's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection, together with their responsibilities. Please refer to 'Using Volunteers Guidance Notes' in document management.

2.3 The DLSO (Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer) and deputies will undertake training in inter-agency working that is provided by or to standards agreed by, the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Board and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep his/her knowledge and skills up to date.

3. Definitions

3.1 Safeguarding children – the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is **child-centred**. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests of the child**. In this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

3.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated December 2020) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

3.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Child protection refers to the activity undertaken to protect a child who is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Under section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002: **Harm** means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; **Health** means physical or mental health; and **ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical.

3.4 The Equality Act 2010 which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs and; and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information.

4. What is Child Abuse?

4.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2021) provides the following definitions of abuse:

Abuse: 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. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: 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 in education.

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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) can be accessed by using this link: [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

Further information on the definitions of child abuse, indicators of significant harm and recognising abuse can be accessed at <https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9185/LSCB-Policies-procedures-and-guidance>

4.2 Early Help

Gateshead College has in place a range of support that can be offered to a child to ensure that they can be kept safe and can achieve their full potential. This type of support is sometimes called 'early help' or 'additional support' and is designed to ensure emerging potential risks to being safe and achieving their potential can be tackled and prevented from getting worse. While all children may need additional support at some time or other, the recently updated Keeping Children Safe In Education – September 2019 sets out clearly that there are some children more vulnerable than others who are most likely to need this type of . It states:

“Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care; and
- is a privately fostered child”.

Staff who have concerns about a child, must share this information with the DLSO. The DLSO will then consider if a referral will be made to the child's home local authority.

The Gateshead Council Early Help Service are contacted by telephone helpline between 9.am to 5.pm (Monday to Thursday) and 9.am to 4.30pm (Friday) on 0191 4333319 or 0191 433 5019.

All staff in education must read Part 1 and Annexe A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. While we may not teach or support children with any of the risks described above, they affect a significant number of children nationally and we must be aware of our role in identifying concerns, sharing information and supporting children affected by them.

4.3 Children missing from education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. College staff members must follow the Gateshead Council Local Authority procedure (or other Local Authority procedure depending on the student's home location). In the event of it becoming known by College staff that a student 16-17 years old has left the Gateshead or other home area and their whereabouts are unknown. The College should complete the following checks before advising the local authority that a child is potentially missing:

- Telephone calls to all contacts on the child's details
- Home visit(s) by College staff
- Speak to friends and/or known relatives at the college or at any other school if siblings
- Speak to college staff
- Ask neighbours living in the same area (during a home visit)
- Talk to professionals who may be working with the family

After the above checks have been completed and if College has not been notified that a student is seeking a college place elsewhere a 'Children Missing Education' (CME referral form) will be completed by the DLSO or a deputy (this form may be called something else in other local authorities) after the checks above have been undertaken.

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. If there is a known risk or suspicion of child protection/sexual exploitation, children's services must be informed immediately and highlight actions taken on the referral form.

Information that comes to the attention of staff about students at risk must be shared with the DLSO or a deputy and staff must complete a College Safeguarding e-referral form. The DLSO may ask the Retention and Achievement Team to look into attendance patterns and any recent communications, speak to relatives or friends, or speak to other college staff.

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. Should staff be in anyway concerned they must inform the DLSO, who will speak to the home local authority and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;

- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

4.4 Bullying

Bullying is defined as ‘Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences’ - Preventing and tackling bullying advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies. DfE – July 2017.

The student harassment/bullying and disciplinary procedures are available for dealing with incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying.

However, bullying should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Where this is the case, the matter should be reported to the Head of Student Services for referral to Gateshead Children’s Social Care. If the young person lives outside of Gateshead, the relevant Children’s Social Care team will be contacted for that area.

4.5 Deliberate Self-Harm and Suicide

Any child or young person who self-harms or expressed thoughts about this or about suicide has to be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention offered at this point. There should be immediate referral to the Student Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator – helen.keene@gateshead.ac.uk Student Services office, Baltic Campus, College landline 0191 490 2339 so that appropriate intervention can be actioned.

Definitions of self-harm Mental Health Foundation (2003)

- Deliberate self-harm without suicidal intent, resulting in non-fatal injury
- Attempted suicide is self-harm with intent to take life, resulting in non-fatal injury
- Suicide is self-harm, resulting in death

Deliberate self-harm - definitions vary but includes for example: cutting behaviours; other forms of self-harm, such as burning, scalding, banging, hair pulling, scratching; self-poisoning; not looking after their needs properly emotionally or physically; eating distress (anorexia and bulimia); addiction (for example, to alcohol or drugs); staying in an abusive relationship; taking risks to easily.

The difference between suicide and deliberate self-harm is not always so clear. For example, deliberate self-harm is a common precursor to suicide, also children and young people who deliberately self-harm may kill themselves by accident.

The document “Deliberate Self-Harm and Suicide: Safeguarding Children and Young People” North East England Regional Inter-Agency Procedures 2005 provides further information.

4.6 Child Sexual Exploitation

Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive “something” (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing sexual activities and/ or another performing sexual activities on them. Can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition e.g. persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile with no immediate payment or gain. Those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by age, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. It is unlikely that concerns about possible sexual exploration are as a result of a one off incident.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/>

4.7 Peer on Peer Abuse

Staff should recognise that children/young people are capable of abusing their peers. The College will take any concerns of this nature very seriously and concerns should be raised in the same way as any other concerns, directly to the Safeguarding Team. Peer on peer abuse can take the form of bullying (including cyber-bullying) sexting and any other form of sexual or physical abuse. Gender based issues can also occur for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

4.8 Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in colleges

Context

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is Sexual violence and sexual harassment?

Sexual violence

It is important that college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. College staff must immediately make contact with the DLSO or a deputy to share information and safeguard the learner. 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.

4.9 '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. Staff need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is an unacceptable form of abuse and violence against girls and women; it is known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna and is illegal in the UK. FGM is practised in at least 28 African countries as well as countries in Middle East and Asia.

Research in the UK has identified three key communities, Somalis, Kenyans and Nigerians. These groups have both a higher prevalence of FGM and a significant UK Population. The practice tends to occur in areas of high populations of FGM practising communities. Professionals need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffering FGM. The practice is usually carried out on girls between infancy and 15 years. It's also illegal to take abroad a British national or permanent resident for FGM, or to help someone trying to do this. Keeping Children Safe in Education, 'If a **teacher**, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the **teacher** must report this to the police'. In college this can be done with the support of the Safeguarding Team.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Breast Ironing

In the procedure, hot objects, including stones and hammers, are used to pound and beat girls' breasts to stop them growing, in the belief it makes them less desirable to men and discourages premarital pregnancy. Breast ironing originated in Cameroon, where it affects

as many as one in four girls. It also takes place in Nigeria, Benin and Chad. It is typically carried out by the girl's mother who will say she is trying to protect the girl from sexual harassment and rape, to prevent early pregnancy that would tarnish the family name, or to allow the girl to pursue education rather than be forced into early marriage.

As well as extreme pain, the practice can cause tissue damage and some medical experts have warned it could contribute towards breast cancer, cysts, abscesses and lead to problems with breastfeeding.

Forced Marriages

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is illegal in Great Britain. It is recognised as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. A marriage must be entered into with the free and full consent of both parties; you should feel you have a choice.

An arranged marriage is not the same as a forced marriage. In an arranged marriage, the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner, but both parties are free to choose whether to enter into the marriage or not. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking wages or not giving any money) can also be a factor. In some cases, people may be taken abroad without knowing that they are to be married. When they arrive in that country, their passport(s)/travel documents may be taken to try to stop them from returning to the UK.

There should be an immediate referral to the Head of Student Services, darren.heathcote@gateshead.ac.uk landline 0191 490 4611 or College mobile 07736364425 or deputy safeguarding leads so that appropriate and immediate action can be taken.

All those involved should bear in mind that mediation as a response to forced marriage can be extremely dangerous – concerns **should not be raised** with parents and/or others in the family/community. Refusal to go through with a forced marriage has, in the past, been linked to so-called 'honour crimes'.

Any professional believing that an individual is in danger of a forced marriage must take immediate action and should contact either the Forced Marriage Unit where experienced caseworkers will be able to offer support and guidance.

Tel: **(+44) (0) 207 008 0151** Monday – Friday 9-5pm
(+44) (0) 207 008 1500 Global Response Centre (out of hours)

or contact Northumbria Police Tel: 03456 043 043

Additional guidance can also be found in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2015 (Updated December 2020')

4.10 Domestic Abuse

The impact on the young person of witnessing, hearing or being subject to domestic abuse which is known to cause emotional distress. Gateshead College is a member of the Operation Encompass scheme. Operation Encompass is an initiative which looks at how key partners could work better together to safeguard and support young people, following a domestic abuse incident, where police have been called out. This is achieved by ensure that appropriate college staff are made aware when a young person has been present at a domestic abuse incident so that college staff can provide early support to young people in a way that means they feel safe and included at college.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/>

4.11 Radicalisation /Extremism

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Prevent Duty Guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales (July 2015) states: 'Section 26(1) of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Updated May 2021) ("the Act") imposes a duty on "specified authorities", when exercising their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. An

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (updated May 2021) places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must include the local authority and chief officer of the local police. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, following a referral from the police and where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. The Act requires partners of Channel panels to co- operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate. Schools and colleges, which are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education, are listed in the Act as partners of the panel.

Young people and vulnerable groups are particularly targeted by groups who may promote violent extremist activity. College staff should be aware of signs of radicalisation and have the confidence to report their concerns to the Safeguarding Team.

The College will also promote the ethos of the '**Prevent**' agenda by encouraging free and open debate but challenging extreme views.

The College will not host or allow its premises to be used by extreme groups and will seek to prevent the distribution of extreme literature.

The College will provide appropriate support through its own staff or by referral to external agencies, for any student in danger of radicalisation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

4.12 Restraining students

Using force to restrain or physically direct a learner should be regarded as a last resort. There are situations in which there is no safer alternative, but individual members of staff can minimise the chances of these arising by following the approved guidelines, Please see 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Students Policy Statement and Procedure' - STM-PRO-018.

4.13 Intimate Care

The College takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the young people and adults at risk in its care. Meeting a student's intimate care needs is one aspect of safeguarding. Please see 'Intimate Care' guidelines – CLS-GDE-008-01.

4.14 Mate Crime

Mate Crime (or disability hate crime) happens when someone 'makes friends' with a person and goes on to abuse or exploit that relationship. The founding intention of the relationship, from the point of view of the perpetrator, is likely to be criminal. The relationship is likely to be of some duration and, if unchecked, may lead to a pattern of repeat and worsening abuse. People with learning disabilities may be situationally vulnerable to mate crimes. They may be living very isolated lives, but – like everyone – need friends. This need is easily exploited. In addition, many people with learning disabilities haven't had the usual opportunities to become 'streetwise' when growing up. Incidents can therefore be more likely to take place when they are in the community, on public transport or using services without support. Mate crimes are likely to happen in private, often in the victim's own accommodation. They can also happen via social media, where victims are financially or sexually exploited after being befriended online.

<https://arcuk.org.uk/safetynet/>

4.15 Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

In most cases college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services are the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

5. What to do if a student makes an allegation of abuse to you or if you suspect abuse

5.1 All allegations and suspicions must be taken seriously and this procedure must always be followed when an allegation is made or there is a suspicion of abuse.

5.2 If a student makes an allegation or discloses information, which raises concern about significant harm, the initial response should be to listen carefully to what is being said. If events are being freely recalled, the response should be to listen, rather than stop the student. However, it is important that the student should not be asked to repeat the information to a colleague or asked to write the information down. If there is an injury, it is acceptable to enquire how it was sustained.

- Disclosures about abuse rarely occur accidentally. If a student discloses to you, you should take this as an indication that you have built up a good relationship with the student.
- Be yourself. Do not try to be something different.
- Remember to respect the student and not to judge them. No matter how shocking and unpleasant the information you are hearing, try your utmost not to convey negative emotions to the student.
- Listen – the initial response should be to clarify the concerns. The student should not be pressed for information, led or cross-examined. The use of leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceedings. (You could be called as a witness).
- The information should be received with impartiality and with no implied judgements about the student or the student's carers or what he/she says has happened.
- Tell the student that you will try and help them, but be wary of making promises that you may subsequently be unable to keep. S/he should be told truthfully, and in accordance with her/his age and understanding of what will be done with the information and why, and what is known about what will happen next.
- Let the student know that s/he has shown courage in telling you.
- Promises of confidentiality should not be given as the matter may develop in such a way that these cannot be honoured.
- Tell the student that you need to get some help and that you will do whatever you can to make things better for them.
- Do not tell them that you will make the abuse stop, (very often you are unable to do this).
- Believe the student and be as supportive as possible. The student should be reassured that s/he is not to blame for the abuse or neglect which s/he may have suffered.
- In cases of suspicions, questioning about any suspicions you may have should not occur. The use of leading questions can cause problems for any subsequent investigation and any court proceedings.
- Discuss the allegation or suspicion with the member of staff nominated with responsibility for Child Protection immediately. The designated manager is the

Head of Student Services, Ext. 4611 mobile 07736364425. If he cannot be contacted, report the matter to the Deputy Principal Quality and Curriculum on Ext 2201/2202 or mobile 07785624846. Support can also be sought from the Student Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator Ext: 2339 and if they are unavailable, please contact either a Reception point or the Leadership Team's Personal Assistant Services Ext. 2202/2201 who will contact an appropriate Assistant Principal to support.

- Staff will be required to complete an electronic referral form as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. This will provide information supporting the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer or deputy to determine if the referral will be addressed as safeguarding concern or if another service/team will be asked to address the matter.
- Staff can access the Incident/Concern/Suspicion form here <http://devlive/SafeguardingMVC/Home/CreateCase> or download from Document Management via Digital Dashboard. The following information is required:
 - student name;
 - student ID no.;
 - student D.O.B.;
 - gender;
 - details of the incident, concern or suspicion, including any alleged abuse;
 - highlight if the student is in immediate danger
 - place where the incident happened
 - date and time;
 - your name and the names of others present;
 - a description of any injuries observed;
 - the account which has been given of the allegation, (as verbatim as possible)
 - any local knowledge which may impact on the safeguarding arrangements of the student
 - any other relevant information

5.3 All records will be kept in the college secure electronic safeguarding system, which is accessible to the safeguarding team. Records/notes must not be kept in student records held by course teams.

5.4 Some children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and/or impairment may need special consideration since possible abuse may be masked.

6. The Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer

- The DLSO (Designated Safeguarding Lead officer with responsibility for child protection is the Head of Student Services, Ext. 4611 mobile 07736364425. If he cannot be contacted, report the matter to the Deputy Principal Quality and Curriculum on Ext 2201/2202 or mobile 07785624846. Support can also be sought from the Student Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator Ext: 2339 and if they are unavailable, please contact either a Reception point or the Leadership Team's Personal Assistant Services Ext. 2202/2201 who will contact an appropriate Assistant Principal to support.

7. Responding to an Allegation or Suspicion of abuse (see later section for responding to allegations against staff and volunteers)

7.1 Any allegation or incident of abuse or suspicion must be reported to the Head of Student Services immediately.

7.2 If the nominated member of staff cannot be contacted, alternative contact staff as named above, will in accordance with this procedure respond to the matter and as appropriate, refer the case to Children's Social Care Team. The Head of Student Services will be notified as soon as possible about the action taken.

7.3 Staff who are working outside of the Gateshead area should contact their Head of Department about any concern who will contact the Head of Student Services.

7.4 If suspicions or allegations are about relatives, friends, colleagues, professionals or otherwise, the concerns must not be discussed with them.

7.5 Duty to refer: A referral must be made to Children's Social Care, if it is believed or suspected that:

- a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm; or
- a child would be likely to benefit from family support services with the agreement of the person who has parental responsibility.

When there are concerns about significant harm, the referral must be made immediately. In urgent situations, out of office hours, the referral should be to the Emergency Duty team (see Appendix 1 for local contact details).

A referral should be made even if it is known that Children's Social Care is already involved.

If the concern relates to harm caused by another child, both children must be referred i.e. the suspected perpetrator and victim.

Concerns must be shared with the relevant external authority, when in doubt.

7.6 Urgent medical treatment: if treatment is required, medical attention must be sought immediately and the duty Consultant Paediatrician informed of the nature of the concerns and a referral must be made to the Children's Social Care Team in accordance with Gateshead LSCB procedure – Paediatric Assessments_ <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/1820/Children-s-social-care>

7.7 Ensuring immediate safety: Action taken should ensure that no child is left in immediate danger; the safety of children is paramount in all decisions relating to their welfare.

Consideration should also be given whether action is required to safeguard and protect the welfare of any other children.

7.8 Confidentiality: the overriding consideration must be the protection of a child. See section below on information sharing and confidentiality.

7.9 Listening to the student/child: If the student can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral and s/he should be asked for his/her views. Whilst these views should be considered, the Head of Student Services (or in their absence the staff member dealing with the matter), has responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the safety of the student and/or any other children.

7.10 Parental Consultation: In general, concerns should be discussed with the family and where possible the family's agreement sought to making a referral, unless this may, either by delay or the behavioural response it prompts, or for any other reason, place the child at increased risk of significant harm.

A decision not to seek parental permission before making a referral must be recorded with the reasons for not doing so explained.

Where the parent refuses to give permission for the referral and, if appropriate following discussion with the Head of Student Services unless to do so would cause undue delay, it is still considered that there is a need for a referral:

- the reason for proceeding must be recorded;
- the Children's Social Care Team should be told permission has been withheld;
- the parent should be contacted to inform them that after considering their wishes a referral has been made.

The staff member making the referral should discuss with the Children's Social Care Team what action will be taken to inform the parents of the child if their permission has not been sought prior to referral and a note of that conversation should be made.

8. Making a referral: The Head of Student Services or a suitably trained staff member will make contact with the Referral and Assessment Team (or Emergency duty team out of hours) where the child is living (see Appendix 1 for local contacts).

8.1 The referrer will follow the instructions provided by the Local Authority in relation to how the Local Authority wishes the referral to be made.

8.2 If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within three working days of the initial referral or within the timeframe specified for the Local Authority contacted, a follow up call should be made to ascertain progress with the matter. Should the Head of Student Services not agree with the outcome of the referral, the concern will be discussed with a manager in the Children's and Social Care team.

8.3 If it is not possible to contact the relevant agency out of office hours, the referral must be made to the Police.

8.4 The Head of Student Services will notify the Principal or the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality of the referral, if appropriate depending upon the nature of the concern.

9. Allegations or suspicions about Members of Staff or Volunteers

9.1 Staff and volunteers have a duty of care towards students. This means they have a responsibility to take action whenever there is a concern of possible mistreatment or abuse to a child

9.2 A failure to report concerns may be seen as agreeing with the abuse, or as being negligent which in some cases may lead to disciplinary or other action.

9.3 Any allegation or suspicion or actual abuse of a child by a member of staff or volunteer must be reported to the Head of Student Services immediately, Ext. 4611 mobile 07736364425. If it has not been possible to contact the Head of Student Services, the matter must be reported to the Head of People and Organisation Development immediately.

9.4 On being notified of any such a matter the Head of Student Services shall:

- notify the Head of People and Organisation Development and the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality;
- take such steps as s/he considers necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child/young person who might be at risk;
- follow the College procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers, volunteers and other staff;
- where appropriate, share information with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

9.5 If the designated member of staff is the subject of the allegation or complaint the matter must be reported to the Head of People and Organisation Development.

9.6 The Principal will be informed of allegations against members of staff, and there will be as little opportunity as possible for the alleged abuser to be made aware of the concerns.

9.7 If a complaint has been made against the Principal, the person dealing with this complaint should be of sufficient seniority to deal with it. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Principal or a member of the governing body, a member of the governing body, usually the Chair will liaise directly with the Local Authority and/or partner agencies.

9.8 Where staff have concerns that their child safeguarding concerns are not being addressed correctly within the organisation or by other agencies these concerns can be raised with the Head of Student Services who operates as Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer. If there are circumstances where the member of staff believes that the DLSO is not addressing these concerns correctly the Head of People and Organisational Development will respond to these concerns.

10. Sharing information and confidentiality

The guidance below is based on the Information Sharing guidance by Safeguarding in Gateshead LSCB. Further detail is available at

<https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9185/LSCB-Policies-procedures-and-guidance#info%20sharing>

10.1 Information sharing, key points:

The general principle is that information will only be shared with the consent of the subject of the information.

Sharing confidential information without consent will normally be justified in the public interest in the circumstances shown in section 10.2, Confidentiality and Consent.

The Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

- i. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights laws are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately;
- ii. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so;
- iii. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible;
- iv. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgment on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared;
- v. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions;

- vi. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (Practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information);
- vii. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

10.2 Confidentiality and Consent:

Wherever possible, you should seek consent or be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family, where appropriate) from the outset as to why, what, how and with whom, their information will be shared. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on and they have a genuine choice about this. Consent in relation to personal information does not need to be explicit - it can be implied where to do so would be reasonable, i.e. a referral to a provider or another service. More stringent rules apply to sensitive personal information, when, if consent is necessary then it should be explicit. But even without consent, or explicit consent, it is still possible to share personal information if it is necessary in order to carry out your role, or to protect the vital interests of the individual where, for example, consent cannot be given. Also, if it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so, i.e. where there are concerns that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, you would not need to seek consent. A record of what has been shared should be kept.

It is also possible that an overriding public interest would justify disclosure of the information (or that sharing is required by a court order, other legal obligation or statutory exemption). To overcome the common law duty of confidence, the public interest threshold is not necessarily difficult to meet - particularly in emergency situations. Confidential health information carries a higher threshold, but it should still be possible to proceed where the circumstances are serious enough. As is the case for all personal information processing, initial thought needs to be given as to whether the objective can be achieved by limiting the amount of information shared - does all of the personal information need to be shared to achieve the objective?

11. Case Records

11.1 The college shall retain a case record of:

- records produced by the person with first-hand knowledge of the concern or incident. Where it is not possible for this to be produced by the person with the first-hand knowledge, it must be clear from the record who provided the information being recorded;
- an electronic record will be stored on the safeguarding system;
- Information provided to Children's Social Care Team or other relevant external agency inc. the Local Authority Designated Officer; and actions taken, showing who has taken the action and the reason(s) for which it has been made.

The electronic Incident/Concern/Suspicion form, otherwise known as the Safeguarding referral form: <http://devlive/SafeguardingMVC/Home/CreateCase> can be used for recording information.

11.2 All case records must be organised to safeguard the contents and protect the confidentiality of the individuals concerned. Records will be stored electronically. Any handwritten records must be legible and will be scanned to create an electronic record.

11.3 Records should be made contemporaneously or as soon as possible after the event and updated accordingly. Updates should be signed with date and time of update recorded.

11.4 Information contained in records should be relevant, accurate, sufficient to meet legislative requirements and every effort taken to ensure factual accuracy. Clear distinction should be made between facts, opinions, assessments, judgements and decisions. They must also distinguish between first-hand information and information provided from third parties.

11.5 The Head of Student Services has overall responsibility for ensuring records are maintained properly.

11.6 All records should be kept securely, including electronic records and transfer of information to others and external agencies. Paper records should be stored in lockable storage, in an office that only staff have access to and scanned to create an electronic copy as soon as possible. Records should not be left unattended.

11.7 Records documenting the provision of welfare/advice services will be kept for a period of the current year + 6 years. In all cases consideration must be given to information held, the reason for its retention and the risk and need associated with both its disposal and retention. Further details of retention schedules for Further Education are available from JISC InfoNet Good Practice & Innovation_
http://bcs.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/fe/subclass_details.asp?fldSubClassID=395

12. Support for Staff.

Counselling support is available to members of staff to whom allegations of abuse have been made. Please contact Human Resources for such support or speak with your Line Manager.

13. Related publicised guidance:

- Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures published by Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership are available at <https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9185/LSCB-Policies-procedures-and-guidance#info%20sharing>
- To ensure that accurate and up to date information is always used the procedures should be viewed electronically rather than a hard copy printed off for future use
- Working together to Safeguard Children – updated December 2020
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff – March 2012
- What is a forced Marriage – January 2013
- Preventing and tackling bullying advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies – July 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – updated September 2021

04. Related Documents

STM-POL-001 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

STM-PRO-009 Student Harassment/Bullying Procedure

STM GDE 012 Bullying(students) Staff Guidance Notes

HR-PRO -017 Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Procedure

HRE GDE 015 Using Volunteers Guidance Notes

GC-PRO-001 Public Interest Disclosure Procedure – a procedure for raising concern at work

HAS-POL-001 Health and Safety Policy

Appendix 1

Internal Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer

Darren Heathcote – Head of Student Services

Email: darren.heathcote@gateshead.ac.uk

Tel: 0191 490 4611

College Mobile: 07736364425

Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Chris Toon - Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality

Email: chris.toon@gateshead.ac.uk

Tel: 0191 490 2211

College Mobile: 07785 624846

Student Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator

Helen Keene

Email: helen.keene@gateshead.ac.uk

Tel: 0191 490 2339

College Mobile: 07545 422818

If none of the above can be contacted, please contact a Reception point or the Leadership Team's Personal Assistant Services ext. 2202/2201 who will advise on other contacts.

Local Contacts in Child Protection (Gateshead) Please refer to the guidance that is available at <http://gatesheadlscb.proceduresonline.com/> if necessary for updated information.

Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team

Civic Centre

Regent Street

Gateshead

NE8 1HH

Tel: 0191 433 2653 (office hours: Monday – Friday 8.30am-5pm)

Out of hours social care support

Tel: 0191 477 0844 (out of hours, at night, at weekends and bank holidays)

Gateshead Local Authority Designated Officer

Tel: 0191 433 8021

