



## **GS5 Green Synergy Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

### **Purpose of the Policy**

Green Synergy is committed to ensuring that the organisation's policy framework is inclusive, responsive, robust and accountable. The organisation believes that sound policies in the defining the safeguarding and child protection policies and standards by which the charity will operate and abide by. This will significantly benefit the overall efficiency of the governance of Green Synergy and promote the best interests of its employees, volunteers, Trustees, members and voluntary officers.

### **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

This policy defines Green Synergy safeguarding policy framework. The policy forms part of Green Synergy external service delivery principles and the charity's internal governance management and arrangements and is in accordance with the Charities Commission England and Wales.

In the event of a Safeguarding Issue, please contact:

Green Synergy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Ali Talbot: Chief Executive – 07769 342251

Deputy DSO: Abbie Phillips, Projects & Delivery Manager – 07770410880

If you ever have any questions, concerns or issues to raise about Safeguarding or Child Protection please do not hesitate to call.

### **Using community gardening to support people to socialise, learn and thrive**

Green Synergy. 49 Roman Pavement, Lincoln, Lincolnshire. LN2 5RD. Tel: 01522 533077

Charity Number: 1153883 Company Number: 8399741

Email: [info@greensynergy.org.uk](mailto:info@greensynergy.org.uk) Web: [www.greensynergy.org.uk](http://www.greensynergy.org.uk)

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## **SECTION ONE: Our Safeguarding Policy and Statement**

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, freelance staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Green Synergy.

The purpose of this policy:

- To *protect children and young people and vulnerable adults* who receive Green Synergy services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Green Synergy believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

### **Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults namely:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989
- General Data Protection Act 1998 & 2018.
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Equalities Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2013
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Care Act (2014)

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- The Mental Capacity Act (2014)
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners (2015)
- Prevent strategy HM Government
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government 2018.
- No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse – updated 2015.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (2018)

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Safe recruitment, induction, training, supervision and support
- Role of the designated safeguarding Officer and other staff
- Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers
- Code of Conduct participants
- On programme management
- Dealing with disclosure and concerns about a child or young person or vulnerable adult
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Recording and information sharing
- Confidentiality
- Social media and internet safety
- Modern Slavery
- Coercive Control
- Child Sexual Exploitation guidelines
- Anti-bullying

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- Complaints and Resolution Policy
- Whistleblowing
- Health and Safety
- Lone working policy and Procedure
- Quality Assurance

**We recognise that:**

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people and vulnerable adults and a deputy and a lead board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, one-to-one discussions
- Undertaking to review our Safeguarding policy, processes and good practises at least annually. Review will also be undertaken if there is substantial change to the charity's operations, any

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legislation changes or following any safeguarding major incident that would require review of our policy and or procedures.

- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

### **Contact details**

#### **Green Synergy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

Mrs Ali Talbot. Chief Executive - Green Synergy

[ali@greensynergy.org.uk](mailto:ali@greensynergy.org.uk)

Tel: 07769342251

#### **Deputy DSO Safeguarding Lead**

Abbie Phillips, Projects & Delivery Manager

[abbie@greensynergy.org.uk](mailto:abbie@greensynergy.org.uk)

Tel: 07881 308285

#### **Board Leads for Safeguarding**

Interim Chair – Caty Collier

#### **External sources of help and support**

Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre (**CEOP**) [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

**NSPCC** - Safeguarding and Child Protection Helpline (24 hours) 0808 800 5000 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

E-mail: **Childline** - 0800 1111

**The Mix:** 0808 808 4994 [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

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Signed:

Date: 12/09/2025

Sharon Page - Chair of Board of Trustees, Green Synergy

## **SECTION TWO: Our Safer Recruitment Procedures**

Green Synergy takes its recruitment commitments seriously and ensures it follows equal opportunities policies with all candidates. We use the NSPCC safer recruitment procedures self-audit tool on an annual basis to ensure we comply with best practice.

All staff and volunteers whether or not they are entrusted directly with the care of children and young people are subject to the following pre-employment checks:

- Application Form (with history of education, job history, experiences of work with children and provides an opportunity to explain gaps in employment record).
- Interview (by both management and young people's panels)
- A full investigation of applicant's employment history
- Two references are taken up (one to be the current or most recent employer.)
- Photographic Proof of identification (i.e. passport or driver's licence)
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

Employment with Green Synergy is subject to two satisfactory written references being taken up and an enhanced DBS check. New staff are **unable** to work unsupervised with children or young people directly or take responsibility for young people until an enhanced DBS check has been returned clear and Safeguarding and Child Protection training has been conducted. Trustees will also be subject to two references and a DBS Check.

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## **Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers.**

All staff and volunteers are given a copy of this policy as part of this induction training. During their induction all staff and volunteers will receive in-house training on how Green Synergy safeguards children and young people and vulnerable adults, how to recognise abuse, how to deal with disclosures and reporting procedures.

It is mandatory that all staff receive in-house health and safety training and first aid training. All new staff and long-term volunteers should receive in-house training during their induction period. Short term volunteers will need to take part in online NSPCC training or other appropriate training.

Line Managers, named People and Designated Officers will attend additional Safeguarding and Child Protection training. This training will be refreshed every 2 years. They will have annual refresher training at a basic level. Designated Officers must complete 12 hours safeguarding training over two years between DSO Safeguarding training. Safeguarding Leads must have achieved Level 3 and have worked in a similar role for at least three years. Deputy Safeguarding Leads must have achieved Level 3.

All staff are asked to sign a training record which states that they have understood all of the issues above and have received the appropriate training.

All staff and volunteers receive on-going supervision and further training needs are identified.

Partnership workers are given a copy of this policy and where applicable in-house training on our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. As stated later in this policy, this policy forms part of all service level agreements that we agree to.

## **Induction and Training for Trustees**

All Trustees will be given a copy of this policy as part of their induction training. During their induction Trustees will receive in-house training on how Green Synergy safeguards and protects children and young people, safer recruitment, how to recognise abuse, how to deal with disclosures and appropriate reporting procedures.

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All Board Safeguarding Lead Trustees will need to undertake online NSPCC training or equivalent training to ensure they are aware of how staff and volunteers can use Green Synergy guidelines to respond to concerns about a child's welfare and safeguard themselves at the same time. It will also help them to be aware of the responsibilities for safeguarding they hold as Trustees.

## **Specific Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities for Staff**

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### **Delivery Staff's Role (Project Officers/Assistants)**

To directly support young people and flag up concerns:

- To work within Green Synergy Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.
- To be aware of Safeguarding and Child Protection issues, taking all appropriate steps to safeguard any young people in your care
- To **always** highlight/ pass on concerns about a child or young person (no matter how small) to an appropriate person (your line manager or the designated Officer(s) for Safeguarding and Child Protection)
- To support young people by signposting them to further support services or by taking part in forming a team around the child if necessary or child protection proceedings.
- To be an active yet reflective safeguarding practitioner by attend safeguarding trainings, take an active part in safeguarding discussions, asking questions where unsure and feeding into the development of safeguarding practice across the organisation

**Line Manager's Role (Project Managers, Garden's Manager)** – to support staff in the delivery of their role and be a good conduit of information:

- To work within Green Synergy Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.
- To have a heightened awareness of Safeguarding and Child Protection issues, taking all appropriate steps to safeguard any young people in your care.
- To encourage your team to keep safeguarding high on their agenda and ensure that they work within Green Synergy Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidelines.

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- To support and work with your team identify and appropriately pass on safeguarding/ child protection concerns to the designated officers(s): to be a good conduit of **all** safeguarding information between the delivery staff and the designated officer(s) in order to flag up issues earlier rather than later.
- To always consult with the designated officer(s) **before** advising delivery staff
- To support staff to signpost young people to appropriate support services or by taking part in forming a team around the child, if necessary during CAF or child protection proceedings.
- To be an active yet reflective safeguarding practitioner by attend safeguarding trainings, take an active part in safeguarding discussions, asking questions when unsure and feeding into the development of safeguarding practiced within across the organisation
- **NB.** In an emergency situation where a child was at immediate risk of harm and where a designated Officer(s) or external named person could not be consulted it would fall to this role to make a decision and act.

**Organisational Designated Officer's Role** – to oversee Safeguarding and Child Protection across the organisation including making referrals:

- To work within Green Synergy Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
- To have heightened awareness of Safeguarding and Child Protection issues, taking all appropriate steps to safeguard any young people in your care and across the organisation
- To encourage all staff, volunteers and trustees to keep safeguarding high on their agenda and ensure that they work within Green Synergy Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidelines through regular training and supervision
- To support and work with staff and volunteers to identify and appropriately pass Safeguarding/ Child Protection concerns on to you
- To support and guide named persons and line managers to act appropriately when faced with an child protection issue
- To always consult with other appropriate people both within and outside of the organisation where possible **before** taking any action

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- To take final responsibility for making decisions about making referrals to social services or authorities and make the referral as and when appropriate
- To inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) of any adult at Green Synergy including a paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual agency or self-employed worker who has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children
- To report to the LADO any assessment/allegation involving a professional's personal/family life which could suggest they may be a risk to children with whom they are working.
- To keep Safeguarding and referral records up to date and keep in close contact with the designated Officer(s) so that they are aware of your activities.
- To support staff to signpost young people to appropriate support services or by taking part in forming a team around the child, if necessary, during CAF or child protection proceedings
- To lead the review of our Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and practices on an annual basis.
- To audit Safeguarding practices where appropriate.
- To hold passwords to young people's information.
- To handle Disclosure Barring check (DBS or Access NI) submissions for the organisation.
- To keep informed of the latest Safeguarding legislation, policy and practice – disseminating this information where appropriate.
- To be an active yet reflective Safeguarding practitioner by attending and leading Safeguarding trainings, leading Safeguarding discussions/ debriefings with appropriate children and young people of staff, being pro-active in own learning about child protection issues and leading the development of Safeguarding practices within across the organisation in line with our current Safeguarding strategy.
- To sign off and keep records of staff, volunteer and trustee safeguarding records and ensure timely refresher training.

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## **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer's Role**

- To undertake all of roles and responsibilities in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Undertake the Designated Safeguarding Officer role for delivery programmes.
- To attend trainings in line with the DSO role description.
- To support the review and audit of safeguarding policy and procedures

## **Trustees Role**

- Green Synergy Trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, the charity is not harmed in any way through contact with it.
- They have a legal duty to act prudently and this means that they must take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that this does not happen.
- Trustees are expected to find out what the relevant law is, how it applies to their organisation, and to comply with it where appropriate.
- They should also adopt best practice with children and young people as far as possible and ensure that the appropriate safeguards are in place.
- One Trustee will be designated as the Safeguarding lead for the organisation to support the DSO with Safeguarding policy and strategy.

## **Modern Slavery - Our policy and approach**

Green Synergy has a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and we are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in our charity and use our best endeavour that modern slavery is not taking place in any of the organisations we may partner with or do business with. We are committed to ensuring there is transparency in our own organisation consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We expect the same high standards from all our partners specifically prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children.

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Our staff training programmes and delivery are reviewed and updated to ensure that relevant staff are made aware of the risk factors, implications of the Act and implementation of the policy in their areas of responsibility. In particular, the following areas will include anti-slavery and human trafficking elements in their delivery:

- recruitment and selection
- equality and diversity
- procurement and supply chain management
- safeguarding.

### **GS35 Green Synergy Trans Inclusion Policy and Guide**

Green Synergy has developed a Trans Inclusion guide to address a lack of centralised information and a lack of awareness among the Green Synergy team members about how they can be allies to transgender and non-binary people who are in the same spaces as them. This is by no means an in-depth policy at this stage to transgender issues but is simply a concise summary of basic information, policy and practises to support team members and young people. Green Synergy is undertaking a Equality and diversity audit throughout our organisation and policies to ensure best practises to support inclusion, equity and diversity.

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## SECTION THREE: Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Overview

### Definition of Child

The policy and procedures apply to all children and young people up to the age of 18 years, including unborn babies. Within the document the terms "children" or "child" refer to all children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

The fact that a child has become sixteen years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is in the armed forces, in hospital, or in prison or a young offender's institution, does not change their status or their entitlement to services or their protection under the Children Act 1989.

**The protection and welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults must take priority over all other concerns in all situations. Green Synergy staff and volunteers respect and value the young people in their care and always aim to look after them as a careful parent would in similar circumstances.**

The charity strives to meet this commitment to children and young people in the following ways:

**AWARENESS:** All adults working with Green Synergy are required to sign up to the charity's Safeguarding and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff receive Safeguarding and Child Protection training and are expected to follow both the Staff Code of Conduct in the Staff Handbook and Safeguarding and Child Protection guidelines in the Green Synergy Programme Manual.

**PREVENTION:** Green Synergy Safeguarding and Child Protection guidelines aim to help staff, trustees and volunteers recognise and reduce risks to children and young people in their care. All staff, trustees and volunteers undergo an enhanced DBS check.

**RESPONDING:** Staff and volunteers are encouraged to write down all suspicions of neglect and abuse, however minor, and report them to their project manager. If necessary, a statutory Safeguarding and Child Protection agency will be informed of our concerns. Any allegations against staff will be dealt with immediately, according to the disciplinary procedure contained in the Staff Handbook.

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**SUPPORTING:** Green Synergy staff will support and help children and young people who are suspected victims of neglect or abuse. The children and young people's feelings will be carefully considered at every stage of the reporting process.

The Green Synergy Senior Management Team review the Safeguarding and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at least annually to ensure it complies with the latest legislative changes and working practices and after any serious safeguarding issue or major legislative change.

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers**

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Staff conduct during their off-duty hours is generally not the business of Green Synergy. Staff must not subordinate your duty to their private interests nor put themselves in a position where duty and private interests' conflict with or jeopardise Green Synergy reputation or that of its projects or act in a way which compromises your ability or credibility to do your job or work with children. However, as will have been detailed during training, staff must adhere to the staff and young people Code of Conduct for the programme at all times. The details that follow are not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive, and the Code should be seen as the context within which you are expected to discharge your duties and the behavioural standards expected of you. At all times you must be aware that you are acting as an ambassador of Green Synergy and that any failure in meeting the standards expected of you could damage the reputation of Green Synergy. This code of conduct is reviewed annually.

### **Creating Safe & Positive Relationships**

Staff Members must:

- Avoid situations where they are alone with a young person. Where a private meeting with a lone young person needs to happen, hold it in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If that is not possible (or the young person wants a greater degree of privacy, perhaps where a disclosure might be made) then the Staff Member should inform another Staff Member of their whereabouts and who they are with. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as

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a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second Staff Member.

- Not take young people off site alone, (without notifying another staff member and only to a public place), to their home or that of another staff member
- Report concerns about a young person's welfare to the person designated on programme for escalating concerns.

### **Being a Great Leader**

Staff Members must:

- Maintain professional boundaries that are characterised by:
  - an understanding of the responsibilities of the staff Member's role and the purpose of a staff Member's professional relationship with young people
  - an appreciation of the difference between being a Staff Member and a participant.
- Remain positive about the role they are in and about the aims and ethos of the Green Synergy programme
- Avoid using inappropriate language when within earshot of young people
- Never scapegoat or ridicule a young person
- Never drink alcohol or use other illegal substances during phases 1 or 2 and never be under the influence of alcohol or other substances, when working with young people on phase 3
- Respect the insights of young people as to how the programme can continue to improve
- Take an active approach to ensuring young people's welfare as well as health and safety
- Avoid disclosure of personal information to young people (address, phone number, social media handle etc)
- Avoid smoking in front of young people

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- Never 'friend' or engage with young people through personal social media accounts or through texts, shared phone numbers or phone calls, personal emails or any other form of communication (such as private personal conversations)

### **Creating Safe & Positive Environments**

Staff and volunteers must:

- Use language that is appropriate, respectful, and inclusive at all times.
- Avoid using slang terms, negative or exclusionary language. Discriminatory language e.g. homophobic or racist language on programme is not acceptable.
- Treat all young people and staff/ colleagues with respect and dignity
- Avoid travelling alone with young people in their cars. Where this is not possible, a manager should be informed and the young person should sit in the back seat
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from young people (e.g. not sharing tents, shower facilities)
- Avoid invading the privacy of young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing.
- Never take part in intimate or inappropriate touching with young people.
- Never take part in bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism and respond swiftly to any such behaviour that you witness or are made aware of.
- Avoid favouritism - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Never physically punish a young person
- Never conduct inappropriate relationships with young people (such as sexual relationships) and avoid flirtatious behaviour.
- Never share sleeping accommodation with an individual young person
- Never take pictures of young people on personal devices and post them on social media. Storing any images on devices provided by a provider should be in line with that provider's policy

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## Working as a Team

Throughout contact with young people on the programme, staff and volunteers must:

- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them as far as reasonably practicable including developing their own **Code of Conduct**.
- Challenge inappropriate, sexualised or discriminatory language.
- Follow the policies and procedures set out by their provider.

Not following the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary procedure or even prosecution where a law has been broken. We want you to have a great time on programme and this code of conduct has been put together to help you and the young people you will be leading to stay safe and have the best possible experience.

\*A staff member is any individual directly or indirectly employed or engaged by Green Synergy or its partners. A staff member may be a volunteer, agency worker, worker, employee, freelancer or self-employed individual (including consultants) who is engaged directly/indirectly by Green Synergy.

## Specific Risk Guidelines

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### Being alone with a young person

It is unrealistic to suggest that staff should never be alone with children and young people and other young people. However, as child abuse usually takes place in private, you should be aware that the possibility of allegations is greater in situations where a member of staff is alone with a young person.

When you need to be alone with a young person, the meeting should take place in the vicinity of other staff. If you feel it necessary to go somewhere quiet and private, tell a colleague the purpose and nature of the meeting.

On overnight trips away from our office bases, try to avoid using bedrooms for meetings. Never use a bedroom for a one-to-one meeting.

You should be cautious about giving lifts to a young person on their own. If there is a specific need to do so, inform another member of staff in advance and, if possible, obtain parental permission.

You should not work with young people at your home and you must not offer emergency accommodation to a homeless young person.

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## **Physical contact with a young person**

Normal physical contact between staff and children and young people is perfectly acceptable, but the following factors should be considered:

- you should be aware of the young person's age, gender and culture when deciding whether it is appropriate to have physical contact.
- in touching a young person, you should be aware of the possibility of invading their privacy, and should respect their wishes and feelings.
- you should feel able to provide appropriate physical comfort to a young person in distress, but consideration should be given to the wisdom of being alone with them.
- as a general rule, physical comfort is not acceptable if the young person does not want it.

## **Position of Trust**

Since the 2003 Sexual Offence Act, it is a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a young person even if they are over the age of 16. Green Synergy staff and volunteers may be close in age to the young people that they are working with, such as an 18 or 19 years old working with a 16 or 17 years old.

However, young staff and volunteers must be aware that their closeness in age does not exempt them from the Position of Trust.

## **Physical Restraint**

Staff working at premises which are hosted by an organisation other than Green Synergy should be familiar with the delivery partner's Safeguarding policy on restraint. An understanding of Green Synergy Safeguarding policy will form part of the service level agreement that must be agreed in advance to ensure safeguarding guidelines are in line with Green Synergy policies.

Every effort should be made by Green Synergy to discourage aggression and promote a peaceful environment in which disputes can be resolved through talking and debate rather than force.

While working with children and young people, you have a responsibility to prevent disagreements developing into states of heightened aggression. You should be alert to incidents that could lead to violent

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conflict and act swiftly to defuse potential confrontation. This may involve stepping in to calm children and young people who are arguing, or coaxing a to a quieter area until he or she has regained self-control.

There may be occasions, however, when you judge that a degree of force is required to avoid immediate danger of physical injury to a young person, yourself or someone else. Please be aware that physical restraint must only be used in these circumstances and as a last resort, when all other attempts to defuse violent behaviour have failed.

Before using restraint:

- you must warn the young person that it will be used if he or she does not stop; failure to do so could strengthen any subsequent action against you.
- make every effort to ensure another member of staff are present to act as an assistant or witness.
- do not adopt a confrontational approach, but address the situation in a calm, firm manner that does not generate fear or anger. Encourage the young person into a quieter part of the building to talk their conflict through.
- do not belittle the young person in front of his/her peers.
- if you are the focus of the young person's emotion, it may be more appropriate for another adult to take charge of the situation.

When intervening physically:

- use only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury.
- use force only for the minimum period necessary to allow the young person to regain self-control.
- talk to the young person constantly and reassuringly.
- keep your own temper under control.

You are not to use restraint if, in doing so, you are likely to put yourself at greater risk of injury than would be justified by your duty of care to that children and young people. However, you must also bear in mind that a failure to protect a young person in your care could be considered negligent.

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Any physical restraint used must not be more than that which is both reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances. These are the standards that would be applied by a court deciding whether the use of force in a particular case might have constituted assault or battery.

While it is difficult to define what a court might deem to be acceptable use of force, the following would probably be considered to be reasonable and appropriate:

- a hold tactic in which a young person is restrained without injury until he or she has calmed down.
- holding an arm or leg to prevent striking or kicking.
- using just enough force, without causing injury, to remove a weapon or a dangerous object from a young person's grasp.
- physically preventing a young person from exposing him/herself to danger by leaving the premises.

After using restraint, record the incident as soon as possible. Make sure the following information is included:

- date, time and location of the incident.
- circumstances and significant factors which led to the incident.
- duration and nature of any restraint used.
- names of children and young people and staff and witnesses involved.
- description of any injuries sustained and subsequent medical attention.
- description of any action taken after the incident.

Discuss the incident with your venue host or Head of Programmes and Operations as soon as possible. In extreme situations the police should be informed.

### **Children working with children**

Staff should encourage children and young people to be mindful of the age diversity within Green Synergy and of the language and behaviour and material they use in the venue. Older children and young people should be encouraged to show responsibility towards younger children inside and outside the venue;

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children and young people generally should be encouraged to be supportive of each other, particularly when dealing with difficult issues.

### **Specific Risks:**

#### **Bullying and Cyber-bullying and on-line grooming and radicalisation**

Bullying is a serious safeguarding matter and should be dealt with quickly. Individual projects and venues should agree on their own bullying policy which should be on display in the delivery venue. Many schools now name different types of bullying that they don't tolerate which they have said dramatically reduces incidences rather than just having a generic bullying policy.

If you witness or you are told about bullying within Green Synergy, you must report the matter to your line manager or the designated Officer(s) as soon as possible and make a written record.

In dealing with incidents involving bullying, it is advisable to follow the pacifying approach advocated in the previous entry on physical restraint. It is essential that any Green Synergy child or young person who is the victim of bullying, whether by other children and young people or an outsider, is given support and reassurance by staff<sup>1</sup>.

It is also worth bearing in mind that bullies have often themselves been victims of bullying and harassment themselves, so take time to speak to them too. Cyber bullying has become more and more prevalent because the rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school or youth venue.

Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. Some of these activities such as forwarding an indecent image are illegal. A list of categories considered to be cyberbullying are listed in the guide to staying safe online Appendix 5.

There have been well-publicised cases of on-line grooming and staff should ensure that young people are aware of the dangers of revealing personal information online and through social networks through specific

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sessions and workshops as part of our programming. There are more and more opportunities for predators to lure young people, particularly the vulnerable, into abusive relationships, sexual exploitation and other activity such as extremist action through radicalisation.

## **Young People and Gang Activity<sup>2</sup>**

Young people who become involved in gangs and commit violent crime as a result of this involvement have significant needs themselves. They should be held responsible for their actions and harmful behaviour but practitioners also have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of these young people and to prevent further harm both to themselves and to other

potential victims. The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a perpetrator or both – in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household.

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

**Definition of a gang:** Groups of children often gather together in public places to socialise, and peer association is an essential feature of most children's transition to adulthood. Groups of children can be disorderly and/or anti-social without engaging in criminal activity. Defining a gang is difficult, however it can be broadly described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

Definitions may need to be highly specific to particular areas or neighbourhoods if they are to be useful. Furthermore, professionals should not seek to apply this or any other definition of a gang too rigorously; if a child or others think s/he is involved with or affected by 'a gang', then a professional should act accordingly.

If you have concerns that a child may be at risk of harm as a consequence of gang activity (either through their participation in activity or as a victim) should follow our standard guidance / the guidance set out in

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<sup>2</sup> Guidance taken from 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' 2010

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Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) and What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2006). In such cases, Green Synergy designated person will contact the local authority children's social care or the police in the area where the child is ordinarily resident. If, however, there are immediate concerns for a child's welfare, Green Synergy designated person will contact the local authority's children's social care services or local police for the area in which the child is currently located.

### **Children working with volunteers**

Volunteers who will be working with children must undergo a thorough recruitment process and criminal record check before they can begin to work with children and young people. It is desirable for volunteers to have a first-aid qualification.

### **Working with the Media**

It is your duty to ensure that media organisations that work with children and young people or publish their work are advised of Green Synergy guidelines on the treatment of young people and their presentation in the media. Green Synergy staff are expected to challenge the publication of details that could enable an outsider to identify and locate any child involved in a story. If you are unsure on this, please speak to a senior editorial person or one of the designated people.

There are times when Green Synergy work with other media organisations and set up schemes and opportunities for young people to participate. These schemes only use people that have been DBS checked and vetted appropriately. Often these mentor schemes provide good contacts for young people in the media industry. The organisation will ensure that so long as mentors are adequately vetted and notice is sent out to parents or guardians to let them know that their young people may gain contacts from working with us their details with permissions will be provided.

### **Data Protection, Information Storing and Sharing**

In terms of data protection, we have a duty as an organisation to ensure we keep high standards in the handling of personal information and protect an individual's right to privacy – especially as we work with children and young people which is considered to be especially sensitive information. The purpose of our

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Data Protection policy is to ensure the confidentiality lawful and correct treatment of personal data. It is also necessary to process information so that staff can be recruited, projects organised and legal obligations to funding bodies and government complied with. To comply with the law, information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully. To do this Green Synergy must comply with the Data Protection Principles set out in the **Data Protection Act 1998** and, any subsequent amendments and the **General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR)**. It fully endorses and adheres to the principles of data protection.

#### **Data shall:**

- Be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless certain conditions are met.
- Be obtained for a specified and lawful process and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose.
- Be adequate, relevant and not excessive for those purposes.
- Be accurate and kept up-to-date.
- Not be kept longer than is necessary for that purpose.
- Be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights.
- Be kept safe from unauthorised access, accidental loss or destruction.
- Not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has equivalent levels of protection for personal data.

In line with GDPR, Green Synergy are also committed to upholding the additional rights for individuals to:

1. *Be informed* – through a privacy notice or similar of how their data will be held, on what basis and for how long.
2. *Access* – the right to view your data
3. *Rectification* – the right to change data that is incorrect or outdated
4. *Erasure* – the right to have your data erased
5. *Restrict Processing* – to change how your data is processed or managed
6. *Data Portability* – to move your data or potentially download it

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7. *Object* – to object to how your data is used

For this reason, we have strict criteria on computer and email security, the use of passwords<sup>3</sup> and so on.

This means at Green Synergy that we should:

- a. Only hold information on young people that has a specific purpose such as because they are children and young people, a volunteer, a graduate or because they have agreed to be on our interviewee list.
- b. Only hold information for as long as necessary. How long is necessary will depend on the type of funding that has supported that young person's participation.
- c. We should have consent for any information we hold and the young people/ parent guardian should be aware of why and how we hold it.
- d. All information should be held securely which means if we hold paper files, they need to be kept at your office in a secure **lockable** cabinet. Young people's information should not be left lying around or stored at home. If you make copies of a children and young people information – for example when going on a trip, this information should then be destroyed again at the end of the trip.

If your children and young people information is kept electronically the spreadsheet or database should be pass-worded. The password should be given out only on a need-to-know basis and a central copy of the password held by one of the designated people.

If information about young people is stored on your desktop computer, make sure that you lock your computer when you leave your desk by pressing the windows key and the letter 'L'. You will need your password to get back in.

If information about young people is stored on your laptop, make sure that your laptop has a start up/ login password *and* that your spreadsheet/ database is passworded

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- e. We **DO NOT** ever give out information about the children and young people we work with except in certain safeguarding situations. If you are in a situation where you feel it would be appropriate to share information about a young person with a partner organisation, please go to the designated Officer for guidance first<sup>4</sup>.
- f. If you are referring to a child or young person and using sensitive information in email etc. please use initials.
- g. Access to young people's information will be given on a need-to-know basis.
- h. NEVER share your password to a database or to your settings with another person – regardless of whether they are a colleague or not.

### **Using the Internet**

Using the internet is an inevitable part of the story process at Green Synergy therefore individual venues and projects should agree their own computer code with children and young people, which should be on display in the venue or delivery venue.

Before using the internet or social media with young people they should be informed about the dangers of putting their information on the internet, using chat rooms and social networking sites so that they can enjoy using the internet safely<sup>5</sup>.

As a general guide, computer screens should not be hidden, children and young people should not be allowed to access material of a violent or sexual nature, or chatrooms (unless it is part of approved story research).

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See appendices for how to stay safe online, social media guidance and example computer code of conduct

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## Using Social Networking

All points covered under this section are also cited in our GS7 Data Protection Policy and our GS49 Social Media Policy.

### When using social networking to interact with young people you should:

- conduct yourself with the same level of professionalism that you do in your day-to-day interaction with young people.
- be mindful of the fact that you are interacting with young people in a very informal environment.
- pay particular attention to how you interact/ joke with young people on the internet. When you are not face to face and people can't see your expression/ hear you intonation things are easily misread
- take a shared responsibility for monitoring comment. Highlight anything inappropriate to your administrator.
- always take responsibility for ensuring that children are protected and safe – don't assume that someone else has raised a concern. Speak to the designated officer yourself.
- take responsibility for your own learning on Safeguarding and Child Protection, especially in terms of how you should interact with young people on the internet. If you have questions... ask.
- be mindful of and sensitive to variations in age, ethnicity, social background, religion and gender among the young people you interact with. Particularly if signposting them to a story or content.
- ensure that the designated Officer(s) is kept informed of concerns you may have about a young person you are working with including bullying.
- ensure that they use the Internet in an acceptable way especially when it comes to communication with young people and the reputation of Green Synergy both during work time and outside of it.
- only use a work profile when interacting with young people on social media. If a young person finds your personal profile on social media do not confirm as a friend even after their or your engagement with Green Synergy has ended.

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- when using your 'work' profile, bear in mind that you are representing the organisation. Please use the same judgment in writing your postings that you would in writing any formal letter. Post only content that you would be comfortable having the organisation, young people, your colleagues, Green Synergy audience, and the general public read, hear, or see.
- show good judgment when "friending" someone within a social network.
- take a shared responsibility to monitor Green Synergy site/social networking pages regularly and promptly remove any inappropriate content.
- consult with children and young people about issues that affect them.
- ensure that any social networking pages you set up signpost young people to CEOP or the NSPCC.

### **In general, you should avoid:**

- Opening closed off email conversations with an individual.
- Using the internet alone to deal with a young person who you realize is distressed or in need of further support/ comfort.
- Exchanging personal information with young people

### **Sensitive issues in story work or sessions**

Green Synergy staff have a duty to be sensitive to the age range and cultural diversity of young people in their care and to recognise the emotional impact that some issues may have on children and young people. If children and young people feel uncomfortable during story work, they have a right to leave the story and receive support and advice from staff. Details of information and counselling services for young people should be on display in all venues.

### **Use of Images and Media Consent**

We ask young people for their written consent to use their images or any visual or voice media that the young people may appear in or be recorded during a programme. We make clear the terms and conditions that they are giving their consent including access to our privacy policy and why we are asking for their consent and that their consent can be withdrawn at any time. We also ask for parent/guardian/carer

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consent in certain cases for example for your people under 13 and for those in care or with additional needs. Please see a copy of the **PROGRAMME DELIVERY Media Consent form** at the end of this document.

Procedures for working inside and outside of the venue

Teams working inside the Venue

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When young people become part of Green Synergy children and young people programmes, it is essential that we gain contact, emergency contact and medical information from parents/ guardians so that we are able to assess the risk of a young person taking part in Green Synergy activities effectively and be able to act in an emergency.

Parental/guardian consent should always be gained in writing **before** YP take part in activities with Green Synergy. Written consent is essential to cover the organisation in case something happens whilst the young people are in our care. We cannot prove that verbal consent was sought or given<sup>6</sup>. Specific information given to parents should include:

- The nature of the work done/ activities at the Green Synergy Venue and opening times.
- Full address of and contact numbers for staff.
- A copy of the Statement of Intent (see pages 4 & 5)

This is so that parents/guardians are clear about what their child is taking part in<sup>7</sup>.

2 Members of staff should always be working in the venue when it is open, or one fully trained member of staff and a responsible adult volunteer (young people who are taking part in volunteering programmes do not count in this case).

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<sup>6</sup> Blanket consent forms can be used for a certain period of delivery i.e. for projects which will operate within bureau working hours and a certain radius of the bureau. For all other trips additional written consent should be sought from the parent or guardian.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix for sample information letter and parent/ guardian consent letter

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**N.B** New members of staff/volunteers should not be able to work unsupervised with young people or assume any responsibility for young people until satisfactory references and DBS checks are returned.

A risk assessment of the facility should take place annually or when big changes have been made, such as a venue change or large intake of young people. Special note needs to be made of any young person with specific medical, physical or emotional needs to ensure that we provide an accessible and safe environment for them to come to and are knowledgeable enough to respond in an emergency. All staff should be involved in this activity and should be aware of what to do in an emergency.

All venues should keep an incident book or file to record safeguarding incidents that take place. This should be kept in secure locked place as within the data protection guidelines.

### Teams Working outside the Venue

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A member of staff or an adult volunteer should always accompany teams working outside their venue. Parental/guardian consent should always be gained in writing **before** YP take part in activities with Green Synergy. Specific information given to parents should include:

- The nature of the assignment/activity.
- Dates and times of departure and return.
- Destination with full address (where possible) and contact numbers.
- List of staff taking part.
- Method of travel and full itinerary.
- Staff contact and emergency mobile number and number of named contact at the venue – (this should be your line manager for delivery staff or one of the designated Officers for project managers).

This is so that parents/guardians are clear about what their child is taking part in<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See appendix for sample information letter and parent/ guardian consent letter

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A risk assessment should also **always** be carried out **before** a trip is commenced to ensure that a safe environment has been provided for all involved in the trip or project. This should confirm that all project premises, play equipment, play areas, transport arrangements and vehicles are safe and suitable. Where we cannot guarantee the environment such as when taking public transport, all factors should be considered in order to mitigate risk.

A key worker for the trip must be identified prior to the trip and this person should take responsibility for drawing up:

- a risk assessment and trip form with:
  - an emergency contact number for the parents of each team member
  - a note of relevant medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes
  - contact details of the designated Officer(s) and the emergency number.
  - a mobile phone number that staff can be contacted on whilst out on the trip

A copy of the risk assessment and these trip details should be shared with any co-workers who are taking part on the trip and left with your line manager or one of the designated people with contact numbers for the team.

## Teams working in Outreach

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For teams working in outreach, all of the above guidelines apply. In addition, outreach workers need to be highly alert to Safeguarding and Child Protection issues as there are many more outside/ unknown variables that can come into play when working in this way.

Before commencing work with a partner organisation, a safe environment for the children and young people to gather in needs to be identified.

A Service Level agreement needs to be drawn up<sup>9</sup>. This is to include:

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<sup>9</sup> For SLA template see appendices

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- An agreement on whose Safeguarding policy is to be followed and about reporting procedures on Safeguarding and Child Protection issues including what should happen if an allegation against a member of our staff or their staff is made. Names of designated persons for both organisations should be recorded in the document along with their contact details.
- It is usual practice that in this situation that the partner organisation will have responsibility for reporting any concerns or disclosures to social services unless you suspect one of their children and young people of staff in which case Green Synergy would be responsible for any reporting or follow up action. However, if you ever raise concerns with the partner organisation these must also be passed on to your project/ venue designated person(s) in case there is need for follow up action on our part.
- The provision of a support worker (where possible/ preferably DBS checked) for session times. If they are unable to provide a support worker
- Clear roles and responsibilities of each organisation and staff children and young people in terms his/her client group.
- Parents/ Guardians should be made fully aware of the activities that their children will be taking part in and consent should be sought for these activities.
- In addition, a risk assessment of the facilities and any work you plan to do in the area should be carried out.

## Detached Youth Work

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If you are undertaking detached youth work, you need to pay particular attention to the fact that you will be interacting with young people in their own space and in environments which pose a higher risk than outreach or venue. A detached youth work risk assessment template has been created and should be reviewed/ updated before taking part in any activity.

Detached youth working should always be done in pairs. Before undertaking any detached youth work it is important that you:

- Research the area thoroughly
- Identify high risk areas

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- Identify the best places to engage Y/P
- Have contact number for support worker or local youth workers
- Find out the names, contacts, times & routes of police / community support officers
- Have emergency contact number for police, PCSO's and local taxi companies
- Have spoken through your planned activities with your line manager and have emergency contact numbers for your line manager ready to take out with you
- Have informed your manager where you are going, what time you are leaving and when you are due to return.
- Have appropriate ID with you
- Have information to give out to Y/P
- Have discussed models of working and discussed strategies to deal with conflict / incidents with your co-worker

### **Children and young people's travel to and from projects**

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It is the responsibility of children and young people and their parents to organise travel to and from venues/ projects. However, when on Green Synergy business (especially if activities take place after normal opening hours), staff have a duty to make sure children and young people are able to get home safely and without anxiety. This may involve encouraging children and young people under 16 to check in with their parents before leaving an assignment; accompanying them to a bus stop or railway station; or, if times of collection are difficult to predict – for example at the end of an interview away from the venue – sending them home by licensed (DBS'd where possible) taxi.

### **Code of Conduct Participants, other project participants, parents**

Young people taking part in Green Synergy programmes develop their own code of conduct for each project or programme they take part in together with the staff responsible for them. There are five ground rules that must be present in the code: no alcohol or illegal drugs, no violence or bullying, no sexual activity while on the programme under the care of our staff. All participants and other participants involved in our programmes are expected to treat each other with respect regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

Please see an example Participant Code of Conduct at Appendix Four.

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## SECTION FOUR: Definitions and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

Children may be abused by a parent, a sibling or other relative, a carer (i.e., a legal guardian or staff children and young people in a residential home), an acquaintance or stranger who may be an adult or young person. The abuse may be the result of a deliberate act or a failure on the part of a parent or carer to provide proper care, or both.

Child abuse can take many forms:

**Physical abuse** – where children’s bodies are hurt by ill treatment, failure to protect them, inadequate care or neglect of their basic needs. This can range from induced illness syndrome, over-chastisement, shaking, punching or throwing a child across the room or striking them with a belt or other object.

**Neglect** – this is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. This may include a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, protection from physical and emotional harm or danger, adequate supervision, access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Sexual Abuse** – where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity. This includes inappropriate touching and obscene photographs, as well as attempted or actual intercourse. Sexual abuse is an additive and developing process that usually involves careful planning and manipulation.

**Emotional Abuse** – where children are persistently or severely emotionally neglected or rejected, for example, by not being given enough love and attention, by not being taken seriously, or being intimidated by threats or taunts.

**Domestic Abuse** – Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships. Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn’t just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse.

Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers. Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people

### Coercive or Controlling Behaviour

Coercive control describes a range or pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member.

Examples of coercive control might include:

- Controlling or observing victim’s daily activities, including: being made to account for their time; restricting access to money; restricting their movements (including being locked in the property).
- Isolating the victim from family/friends; intercepting messages or phone calls.
- Constant criticism of victim’s role as a partner/spouse/parent.
- Threats of suicide/homicide/familicide.

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- Preventing the victim from taking medication/accessing care (especially relevant for victims with disabilities).
- Using children to control their partner, e.g. threats to take the children.
- Extreme dominance; a sense of 'entitlement' to partner/partner's services, obedience etc. no matter what.
- Extreme jealousy ("If I can't have you, no one can"), giving the victim cause to believe they will action this.
- Damage to property, including to pets.
- Threats to expose sensitive information (e.g. sexual activity) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet.
- Involvement of wider family members/community; crimes in the name of 'honour'.
- Manipulation of information given to professionals

### **Coercive control: key principles to support a child / young person**

1. Be aware of the young person's levels of fear and the impact that this behaviour is having on them and others including family, social life. It is appropriate to be mindful of the fact that the young person may have difficulty articulating the abuse and what they are afraid of.
2. Referrals to specialist support services should be made at the earliest opportunity.
3. The patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour may identify a crime or provide useful information that can be used in court, e.g. demonstrating aggravating factors for sentencing. The young person should be supported by the appropriate professional to keep a diary of events, maintain any messages/gifts that are sent to them, take screenshots of messages on social media etc., and report these to the police.
4. Individuals and staff must ensure that they are not unwittingly colluding with the perpetrator, further isolating the young person. Perpetrators of coercive control would not easily cease their abusive behaviour, often seeking to manipulate and control professionals or make allegations against the young person.
5. Perpetrators may be creative in finding loopholes in protective orders or conditions. It is important to understand if there are any pre-emptive bail conditions, restraining/non-molestation orders in place. Professionals providing support to the young person may offer advice on the use of exclusion zones and ensure that all types of coercive and controlling behaviours are addressed – including social media.
6. Children are often used as a way to continue controlling individuals, particularly post separation through child contact. Staff should be aware of the tactics used by perpetrators and the impact of these on the children to ensure appropriate support is put in place for them.

**Online Abuse** – Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as from strangers. Online abuse may be part of abuse that is taking place in the real world (for example bullying or grooming). Or it may be that the abuse only happens online (for example persuading children to take part in sexual activity online).

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Children can feel like there is no escape from online abuse – abusers can contact them at any time of the day or night, the abuse can come into safe places like their bedrooms, and images and videos can be stored and shared with other people.

**Child Sexual Exploitation** – Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

**Female Genital Mutilation** – Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

**Bullying and cyber-bullying** – Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night. See Anti-bullying policy in appendices

**Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery** – Child trafficking and modern slavery are child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

Children are trafficked for:

- child sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft.

Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

**Grooming** – Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking.

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Children and young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know – for example a family member, friend or professional.

Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age.

Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed or that what has happened is abuse.

**Harmful Sexual Behaviour** – Harmful sexual behaviour includes:

- using sexually explicit words and phrases
- inappropriate touching
- using sexual violence or threats
- full penetrative sex with other children or adults.

Children and young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour harm themselves and others.

Children are abused by people who have greater power, authority or knowledge than them and often by people who are in a position of trust. Children often don't tell anyone they are being abused because:

- They are told to keep it secret.
- They have been bribed not to tell.
- They are afraid of being blamed and punished.
- They may be afraid of what will happen to the abuser.
- They may be afraid of a threat of violence from the abuser.

It is essential that staff members have a good understanding of the nature of child abuse in all its forms so that you can recognise it. At Green Synergy every member of staff undergoes Safeguarding Training. This does not mean you are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred, but you do have a responsibility to alert the designated Officer(s) to behaviour by children or workers which suggests there may be something wrong.

## **Recognising Signs of Abuse**

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You may become aware of the occurrence of abuse because:

- a child tells you;
- someone else may tell you that a child has told them or that they strongly believe a child is or has been abused;
- a child may show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation;
- a child's behaviour may indicate to you that it is likely that he or she is being abused;
- something in the way a children and young people of staff or other adult or young person relates to a child alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way;

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- your awareness of, or suspicion about, abuse may come about as a result of something disclosed to you by a third party (parent, friend, co-worker) who suspects or has been told of the abuse.

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Just be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead Officer, Manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and/or referral to the SSD
- The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic violence

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## Indicators of Abuse

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### Physical Abuse:

The Following are often regarded as Indicators of Concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents / carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Physical Indicators include:

- injuries inconsistent with the explanation given, or unexplained bruises/welts/lacerations/abrasions, especially but not exclusively:
  - on face, lips, mouth, eyes
  - on torso, back, thighs
  - Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
  - clustering forming regular patterns
  - Grasp marks on small children
  - Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
  - Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
  - Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
  - reflecting shape of article used, e.g.: belt, buckle, electrical flex, fingernails
  - on several different surface areas

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- regularly appearing after absence, weekend or holiday
- bite marks or fingernail marks. Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.
- Unexplained burns
  - cigar or cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms or back
  - "immersion" burns, where hands, feet or body have been forcibly immersed in very hot water
  - patterns, like an electrical burner or iron
  - rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso.
- Unexplained Fractures
  - to skull, nose, facial structure
  - in various stages of healing
  - multiple or spiral fractures
  - A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Behavioural indicators include:

- flinching when approached or touched
- wary of adult contact
- difficult to comfort
- apprehension when other young people cry
- crying/irritability
- fear of parent
- afraid to go home
- reported injury caused by parents
- behavioural extremes – aggressiveness, withdrawal, impulsiveness
- apathy
- depression

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- poor peer relationships
- panic in response to pain

Neglect:

It is rare that an isolated incident will lead to agencies becoming involved with a neglectful family. Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

Physical indicators include:

- constant hunger
- poor hygiene
- inappropriate dress
- consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities for long periods
- unattended physical problems or medical needs
- abandonment
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Behavioural indicators include:

- begging
- stealing food
- consistent fatigue, listlessness
- poor relationship with care-giver.
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school

Neglect is now recognised to be the most commonly used category for children and young people becoming the subject of a child protection plan in England – accounting for 45 % of child protection plans

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year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. However, it receives less attention from agencies than other forms of maltreatment, especially in adolescents aged 10-15. Although most of these 'hard to help' young people have a long history of involvement from social services and other agencies often little or no help was being offered at the time of 'serious incident' because agencies seemed to have run out of help strategies.

### **Sexual Abuse:**

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child / family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural.

Physical Indicators include:

- difficulty in walking, sitting down
- pain or itching in genital area
- bruising, bleeding, injury to external genitalia, vaginal and/or anal areas
- vaginal discharge
- bed-wetting
- excessive crying
- sickness.

Behavioural indicators include:

- inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for the person's age (explicit behaviour, play or conversation);
- promiscuity
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners

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- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for – e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)
- sudden changes in behaviour
- running away from home
- wary of adults
- feeling different from other children or adolescents
- unusual avoidance of touch
- reporting of assault
- substance abuse (e.g.: glue sniffing)
- emotional withdrawal through lack of trust in adults
- over-compliance with requests of others
- eating disorders
- sleep disturbances
- poor peer relationships
- possessing money or gifts that cannot be adequately accounted for
- wetting or soiling
- frequent non-attendance at school
- avoidance of advice to get medical help.

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

Physical indicators include:

- failure to thrive
- delays in physical development or progress.

Behavioural indicators include:

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- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a 'loner' – difficulty relating to others
- sucking, biting, rocking
- sleep disorders, inhibition of play
- compliant, passive, aggressive, demanding
- inappropriately adult or infant

**Grooming** – If a child is being groomed they may:

- be very secretive, including about what they are doing online
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- go to unusual places to meet friends
- have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- have access to drugs and alcohol.

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but you may notice unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age.

### Identifying abuse in a disabled child

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A disabled child is as vulnerable to physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect as any other child, though the level of risk may be raised by:

- A need for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care from what may be a number of carers

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- Carers and staff lacking the ability to communicate adequately with the child
- A lack of continuity in care leading to an increased risk that behavioural changes may go unnoticed
- Physical dependency with consequent reduction in ability to be able to resist abuse
- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated
- Lack of access to 'keep safe' strategies available to others
- Communication or learning difficulties preventing disclosure
- Parents'/carers' own needs and ways of coping may conflict with the needs of the child

In addition to the universal indicators of abuse / neglect listed the following abusive behaviours must be considered:

- Force feeding
- Unjustified or excessive physical restraint
- Rough handling
- Extreme behaviour modification including the deprivation of liquid, medication, food or clothing
- Misuse of medication, sedation, heavy tranquillisation
- Invasive procedures against the child's will
- Deliberate failure to follow medically recommended regimes
- Misapplication of programmes or regimes
- Ill-fitting equipment e.g. callipers, sleep board which may cause injury or pain, inappropriate splinting

Be aware that:

- where a child is unable to tell someone of her/his abuse s/he may convey anxiety or distress in some other way, e.g. behaviour or symptoms and carers and staff must be alert to this.
- some sex offenders may target disabled children in the belief that they are less likely to be detected.

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If Green Synergy staff are required to work with disabled children or any particularly vulnerable group they will receive the appropriate level of training to support the implementation of this policy.

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## SECTION FIVE: Reporting Concerns, Allegations and Disclosures of Abuse

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### Raising concerns about abuse or neglect

Green Synergy staff will take the following steps to deal with suspicions and allegations of abuse or neglect. Wherever possible, this procedure will be implemented within the same working day.

### Confidentiality

Any signs of abuse to, or self-harm by, a child or young person must be treated with the highest degree of sensitivity and confidentiality.

However, if a child or young person discloses personal information to you, you **must** advise them that you cannot keep secrets, but may have to report what they tell you for their own welfare. Assure them you will only pass information on to the people who need to be aware of it.

You should immediately document their concerns and pass this on to the designated Officer(s).

*It is NOT the role of an individual member of staff to make a referral.*

### Dealing with Disclosures

In the event of a potential disclosure, it is advisable to take the following steps:

- listen and be calm.
- clarify the concerns
- Offer re-assurance about how s/he will be kept safe and
- Explain what action will be taken: tell the children and young people that you will have to report their disclosure to your line manager and the designated Officer(s), and advise them of what may happen next;

The child/ young person must not be pressed for information, led or cross-examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality. Such well-intentioned actions could prejudice police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse.

In practice this means that you can clarify information and in fact it is important to do this using questions such as:

- what happened
- who did this to you
- where were you when this happened
- when did this happen
- Who have you told
- does anyone else know?

These are relatively safe questions to ask in order to ascertain the facts, however a question that suggests the answer or contains the information the questioner is looking for example: That man touched you, didn't he? Are very leading and should be totally avoided.

### Where possible:

try to ensure there is another responsible member of staff present;

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## Immediately:

- Report the matter to the designated Officer(s) or your line manager if they are not available as soon as possible. Ensure the children/young person is receiving comfort if needed
- Make a written record of the disclosure and any subsequent conversations with your line manager or the designated officer. (See below for guidelines and appendices "Record of allegations, suspicions or disclosures of abuse"). Submit this to the designated Officer(s) where the record will be kept in a locked place.
- The programme delivery DSO will judge which level of reporting it relates to in relation to Pharos programme delivery reporting.

Do not:

- take the matter into your own hands. It will be followed up by a trained professional.
- try to conduct your own investigation. This needs to be done by the proper authorities
- offer to put the children and young people up at your own home, no matter how desperate their circumstances appear.

## Reporting procedure for Staff

If you have reason to think that a child or young person in your care is a child in need, self-harming or is the victim of abuse, or if a child or young person discloses such information to you, it is essential to report the matter as soon as possible to your line manager and the designated Officer(s).

Your discussion with the designated Officer(s) should concentrate on:

- Accurate retention of details disclosed
- Information giving – be objective and factual (and where you don't know, say so!)

It is **NOT** your job to make judgements on whether a referral should be made but to give a clear account of what you know so that the designated Officer can do this.

All suspicions and observations must be recorded in an incident book or file (see appendix 'Record of allegations, suspicions or disclosures of abuse'). When documenting concerns ensure that you:

- Give the time, date, location and names of witnesses.
- Give full details of the disclosure or of your concerns including the risk to the child/young person. Note their behaviour, mood and any comments they made about their own welfare;
- Give specific detail rather than using fancy/overarching terms that can be interpreted differently by different people.
- State what you see not what you perceive to be the case.
- Be specific about periods of time
- Highlight the level of severity

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- State what follow-up action you will take

**All** concerns should be discussed with a senior member of staff and where it is felt follow-up action could be necessary this is then taken further with the appropriate people.

The designated Officer should always be your first port of call, especially if a disclosure has been made to you or you have been made aware of abuse. As it is the designated Officer's role to make decisions and act on Child Protection matters arising, this is the most direct route to establishing the right support to the child or young person concerned.

Often however, especially when the case is not seen to be urgent your line manager may be the first person you raise the issue with. This is also an acceptable route to take, but they should **always** refer any Safeguarding or Child Protection matter on to the designated Officer(s) for consideration before any matters are explored/ taken further.

If thought necessary, the incident will be reported to a statutory Safeguarding and Child Protection agency by the designated Officer(s). This may be Social Services, the NSPCC or the Police Safeguarding and Child Protection Team.

The responsibility to make enquiries and investigate allegations with families and schools etc. lies with SSD<sup>10</sup> and CPU<sup>11</sup>, along with other relevant agencies **not** with Green Synergy staff. If the child is suffering from a serious injury, medical attention must be sought immediately from A & E, and SSD and the duty consultant paediatrician must be informed.

### Reporting procedure for staff in outreach

Reporting concerns in outreach or when working with a partner can be slightly different. Firstly, refer to arrangements made in your SLA. If Green Synergy is taking the lead on referrals follow the procedures laid out above.

If however the responsibility for referrals lies with the partner organisation firstly notify the partner organisations appropriate person (either the youth worker provided or the appointed person directly) of the concern/ disclosure arising and then immediately notify Green Synergy programme delivery DSO too. This is to ensure that we are aware of any involvement our staff have in Safeguarding/ Child Protection

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<sup>10</sup> SSD to refer to the functional division within social services departments variously described as children's, children & families or community services

<sup>11</sup> Child protection Unit

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actions in case there is need for further follow up with the partner or with the member of staff. When reporting to Green Synergy again follow the procedures above

The only exception to this rule is if you have concerns relating to a member of staff from the centre. In this instance you would report this straight to the Green Synergy designated officer and they would deal with the case directly.

## **Abuse of a child by another child**

Allegations or concerns regarding the abuse of a children and young people by another young person need to be responded to with sensitivity, although they should be dealt with through the reporting process described above. Many young abusers have been abused themselves, so any subsequent process – including any police investigation – must consider the needs and circumstances of both ‘abuser’ and ‘abused’.

## **SECTION SIX: Making a Referral**

### **Referrals Procedure**

#### **Organisation’s / Designated Officer’s responsibility for investigating concerns**

It is the responsibility of the designated Officer(s) (see list) to follow-up suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse and self-harm from within Green Synergy and to make a judgement on whether there is a case for referring a young person to social services or not. The process of decision making will always be carried done in conjunction the appropriate member of staff and if necessary, in consultation with external agencies.

In addition, Green Synergy should have an external contact (either a trustee or a representative of the host organisation) who can assume the same role in the designated Officer(s) absence, or if an allegation concerns the designated Officer(s)<sup>12</sup>. In extreme circumstances when a child is at immediate risk of significant harm and when neither designated Officer or the external person is available to consult with, it would fall to the line manager to assume the designated Officers role and make a judgement call on the most appropriate action to take.

It is essential that all designated Officer(s)s are familiar with reporting procedures and follow-up actions for allegations, suspicions and observations of abuse. Where there is concern that a child/young person is experiencing or may already have experienced abuse or neglect or is likely to suffer significant harm in the future, Green Synergy has a legal duty as a statutory Safeguarding and Child Protection agency to make a

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referral to social services. The timing of such referrals must reflect the level of perceived risk but should usually be within 1 working day of the recognition of risk.

### **Assessing Levels of Risk**

Often workers will have small concerns about a young person that may or may not indicate abuse. It is imperative that workers are encouraged to talk to the designated Officer about these issues so that they are not making judgements for themselves about the level of risk of the situation and to the young person. It will be the designated Officer's role to ensure that both they and the worker are looking objectively at the situation to make a well-considered judgement on whether the concern is something to act on or not. Potential tools to aid this are the assessment framework and questions below. Also, reference can and should be made to the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' and LCCP guidelines.

**Programme Delivery Specific Incident and Safeguarding Reporting Procedures: All incidents and safeguarding concerns have to be reported in line with Green Synergy own disclosure and reporting procedures. There are additional processes to note for Pharos reporting.**

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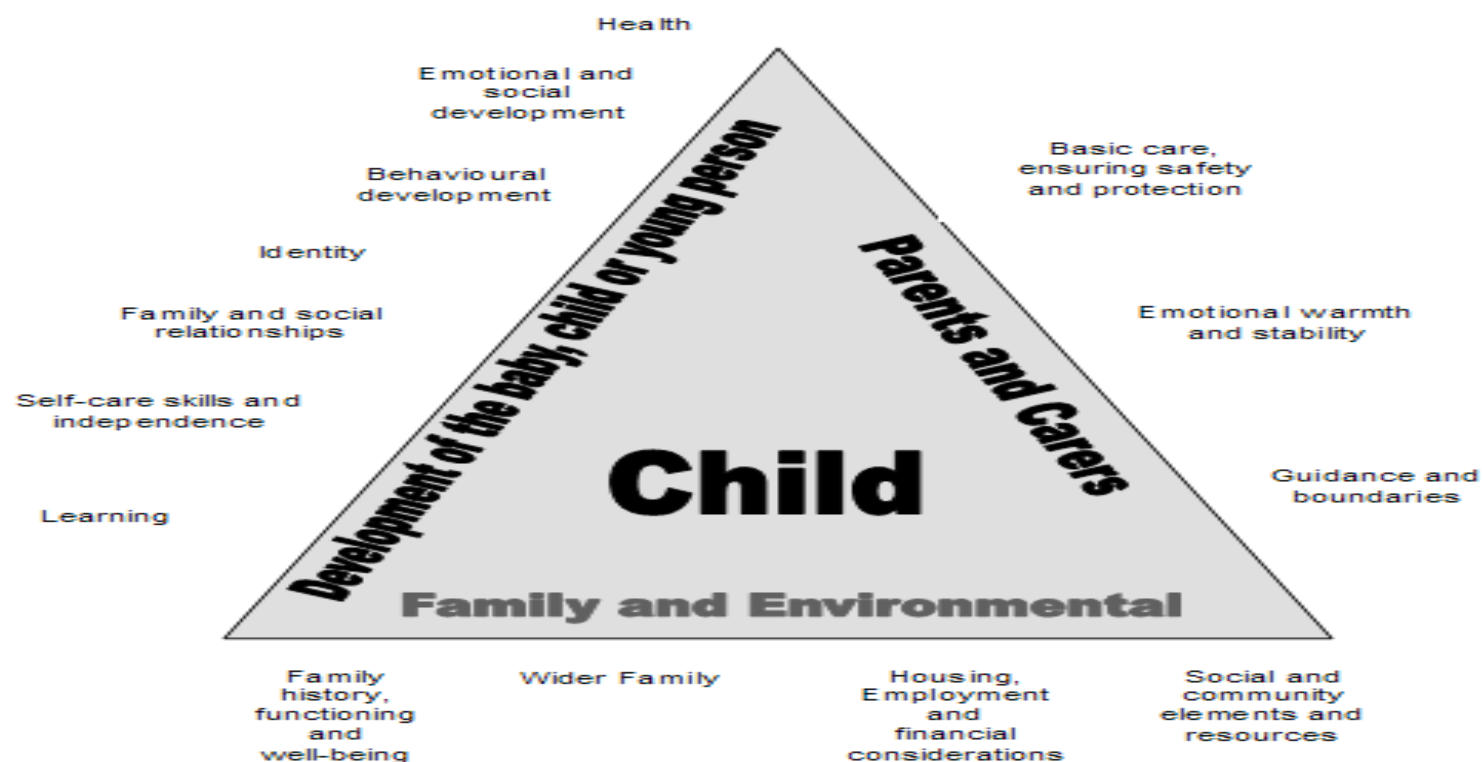
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## Safeguarding Assessment Framework

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This framework can be used to think through how much you know about the situation of a young person, other indicators and the support they already get to give you a fuller picture of the child's needs and capacity.



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## Making a Referral

### Checking Objectivity:

When supporting a member of staff who is raising concerns about a child or young person the designated Officer will be asking themselves:

- Are they being objective and recording what they see/ facts as opposed to assumptions
- Is their recording accurate?
- Are they stereotyping or fearful of being seen to stereotype?
- Do they have their focus on child or the parent? Or is there over-identification with the child or parent? Are assumptions being made about the parents because they seem articulate, affluent etc.?
- Is there over-optimism?
- Has there been an increase in dependency on the part of the family or child or worker?
- Are the staff following procedure or are they making assumptions/ decisions themselves? Do they think they know best?

If the answer to any of those questions is it is the designated Officer's responsibility to question them further and finding out further details about the case.

Designated people should also check themselves – are they?

- Being objective and recording what they see/ facts as opposed to assumptions
- Keeping accurate records of discussions and outcomes
- Making decisions based all the evidence to hand
- Discussing issues with those who work directly with the young person concerned
- Getting external support and advice and where necessary
- Stereotyping or fearful of being seen to stereotype?
- Ensuring that you keep a focus on the child?
- Over-identifying with the child or parent?

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- Making assumptions about the parents because they seem articulate, affluent etc
- Being overly optimistic?
- allowing 'drift' (allowing support for the child to slip), is there a support plan in place for this child?
- Doing a continuous needs analysis of the young person? Are you analysing each piece of information?
- Are you in contact with the family/the young person? Do you have their consent to speak to school/ social workers?
- Speaking to the school or other services involved. Is there a CAF in place already?

### **Making the Referral**

In urgent situations, out of office hours, the referral should be made to the Emergency Duty /Out of Hours Team (EDT and OOH respectively – details in appendices) and Pharos (if appropriate). Where available, the following information should be provided with the referral (but absence of information must not delay referral):

- Full names, date of birth and gender of children
- Family address
- Identity of those with parental responsibility
- Names and date of birth of all household children and young people
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of children and parents/carers
- Any need for an interpreter, signer or other communication aid
- Any special needs of children
- Any significant/important recent or historical events/incidents in child or family's life
- Cause for concern including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location
- Child's current location and emotional and physical condition
- Referrer's relationship and knowledge of child and parents/carers
- Known current or previous involvement of other agencies/professionals
- Information regarding parental knowledge of, and agreement to, the referral

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The referrer should confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours, using an interagency referral form.

Social services should acknowledge referrals within one working day of receipt. If this does not occur within 3 working days, the referrer should contact social services again.

The referrer should keep a written record of (use form in appendices):

- Discussions with child
- Discussions with parent
- Discussions with managers
- Information provided to SSD
- Decisions taken (clearly timed, dated and signed)

#### **If the decision is made not to refer:**

Sometimes it is not immediately obvious or appropriate to make a referral and a period of further observation/ information sharing with other agencies may be decided upon. If that is the case, there may still be a reason to look at further support for the young person. If this is the case, please see the Common Assessment Framework Guidelines (page 52 onwards). Sometimes no other action is necessary. Whatever the decision, all discussions and decisions should be written up and filed securely.

#### **Incident Book/ File**

Each venue/ project should have an incident book or file, used for keeping a record of any allegations, suspicions or disclosures of abuse and follow-up actions. This should be looked after by the designated Officer(s) and kept in a secure locked place.

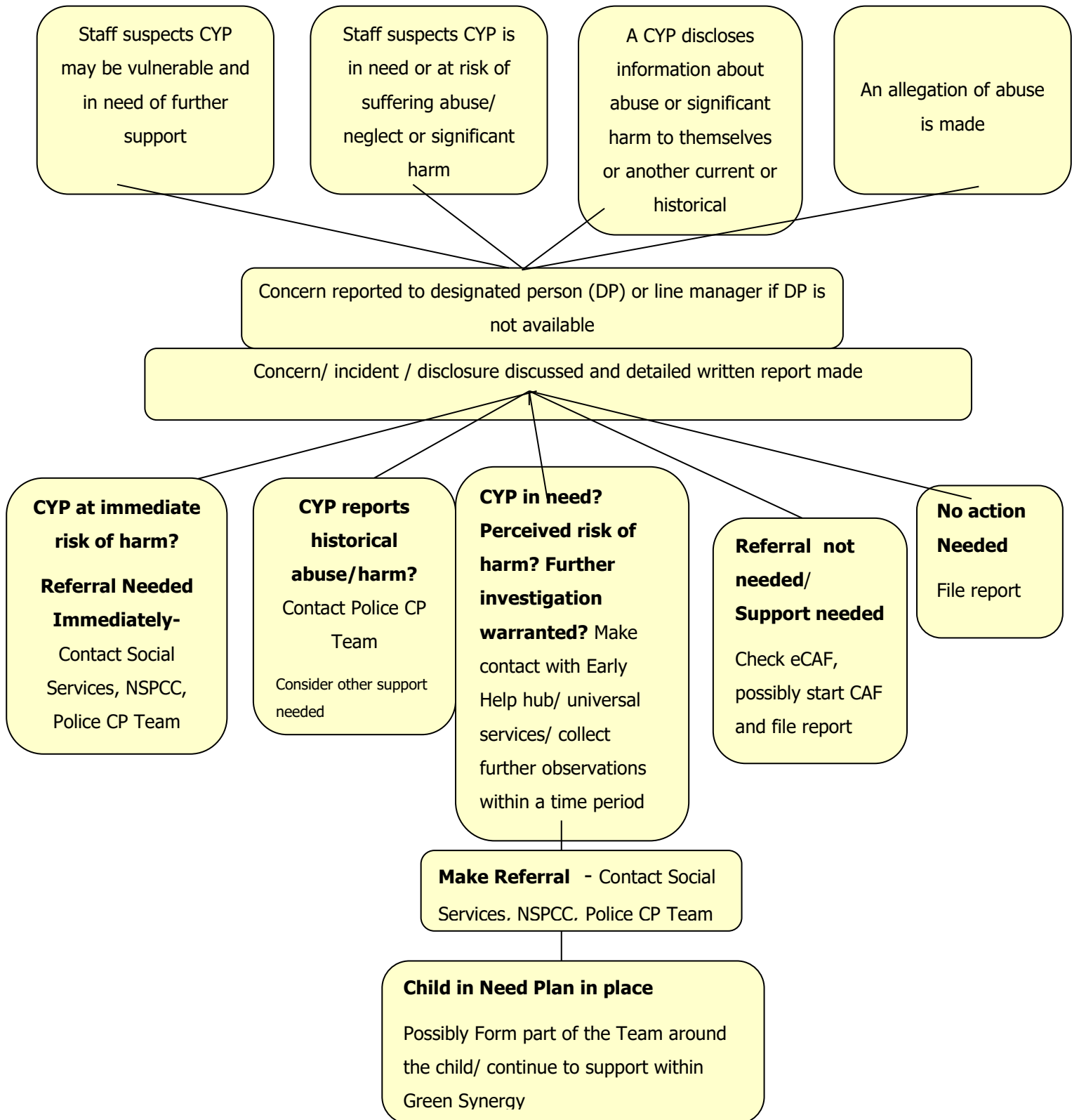
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**Procedural Flow Chart for Referrals:**



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## What happens next?

For details of what happens next please refer to the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' and LCCP guidelines.

Details can also be found in this guidance if you are ever called to take part in a CAF Team Around the Child or a Child Protection conference/ intervention. If this does arise, please speak to directly to the designated Officers for advice and guidance. See appendices

## Managing Allegations against Staff

Despite all efforts to recruit safely there may be an occasion when an allegation of abuse is made against a staff member.

These procedures should be applied when there is an allegation or concern that any person who works with children, in connection with their employment or voluntary activity, has:

- 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children.

These bullet points reflect the statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015.

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect). These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (see ss16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003);
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature e.g.

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inappropriate text / e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising etc;

- Possession of indecent photographs / pseudo-photographs of children.

All references to 'members of staff' should be interpreted as meaning all paid or unpaid staff and volunteers.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. In such cases, it is important to find out whether the person against whom the allegation is made is still working with children and if so, to inform the person's current employer or voluntary organisation or refer their family for assessment.

### **Persons to be notified**

The Green Synergy DSL must inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (formerly LADO) within one working day when an allegation is made and prior to any further investigation taking place.

The Designated Officer will advise the employer – Green Synergy whether or not informing the parents of the child/ren involved will impede the disciplinary or investigative processes. Acting on this advice, if it is agreed that the information can be fully or partially shared, the employer should inform the parent/s. In some circumstances, however, the parent/s may need to be told straight away (e.g. if a child is injured and requires medical treatment).

The parent/s and the child, if sufficiently mature, should be helped to understand the processes involved and be kept informed about the progress of the case and of the outcome where there is no criminal prosecution. This will include the outcome of any disciplinary process, but not the deliberations of, or the information used in, a hearing.

Green Synergy should seek advice from the Designated Officer, the police and / or LA children's social care about how much information should be disclosed to the accused person.

Subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, Green Synergy should, as soon as possible, inform the accused person about the nature of the allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the

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possible outcome (e.g. disciplinary action, and dismissal or referral to the DBS or regulatory body).

The accused member of staff should:

- Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved.
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process.
- If suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace.

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person (where this would not place the child at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

The police should not provide identifying information to the press or media, unless and until a person is charged, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. an appeal to trace a suspect). In such cases, the reasons should be documented and partner agencies consulted beforehand.

Parents and carers should also be made aware of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against the member of staff whilst investigation.

## **Support**

The welfare of the child is paramount. Green Synergy, together with LA children's social care and / or police, where they are involved, should consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate. Liaison between the agencies should take place in order to ensure that the child's needs are addressed.

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As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the accused member of staff should be advised to contact their union or professional association. Human resources should be consulted at the earliest opportunity in order that appropriate support can be provided via the organisation's occupational health or employee welfare arrangements.

### **Suspension**

Suspension is a neutral act and it should not be automatic. It should be considered in any case where:

- There is cause to suspect a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm; or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

The possible risk of harm to children should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child/ren involved and any other children in the accused member of staff's home, work or community life.

If a strategy meeting / discussion is to be held or if LA children's social care or the police are to make enquiries, the Local Authority Designated Officer should canvass their views on suspension and inform Green Synergy. Only the employer, however, has the power to suspend an accused employee and they cannot be required to do so by local authority or police.

If a suspended person is to return to work, Green Synergy should consider what help and support might be appropriate (e.g. a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor), and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the workplace.

### **Resignations and 'compromise agreements'**

Every effort should be made to reach a conclusion in all cases even if:

- The individual refuses to cooperate, having been given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations.
- It may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete.

Compromise agreements' must not be used (i.e. where a member of staff agrees to resign provided that disciplinary action is not taken and that a future reference is agreed).

### **Organised and historical abuse**

Historical allegations should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. It will be important to ascertain if the person is currently working with children and if that is the case, to consider whether the current employer should be informed. See Historical Abuse Procedure.

### **Whistleblowing**

All staff should be made aware of the organisation's whistle-blowing policy and feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

If a member of staff believes that a reported allegation or concern is not being dealt with appropriately by their organisation, they should report the matter to the Designated Officer.

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## Timescales

It is in everyone's interest for cases to be dealt with expeditiously, fairly and thoroughly and for unnecessary delays to be avoided. The target timescales provided in the flowchart at the end of this chapter are realistic in most cases, but some cases will take longer because of their specific nature or complexity.

- Initial response to an allegation or concern

The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.

They should not:

- Investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification.
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Promise confidentiality but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

They should:

- Make a written record of the information (where possible in the child / adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said.
- Sign and date the written record.
- Immediately report the matter to the designated Officer, or the deputy in their absence or where the designated senior manager is the subject of the allegation report to the deputy or other appropriate senior manager.

## Initial Action by the Designated Safeguarding Officer

When informed of a concern or allegation, the DSO should not investigate the matter or interview the member of staff, child concerned or potential witnesses.

They should:

- Obtain written details of the concern / allegation, signed and dated by the person receiving (not the child / adult making the allegation)
- Approve and date the written details
- Record any information about times, dates and location of incident/s and names of any potential witnesses
- Record discussions about the child and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.
- The designated Officer should refer the allegation to the Designated Officer (LADO) and their team and discuss the decision in relation to the agreed threshold criteria in the management of allegations against staff or volunteers who work with children within one working day.
- Referrals should not be delayed in order to gather information and a failure to report an allegation or concern in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

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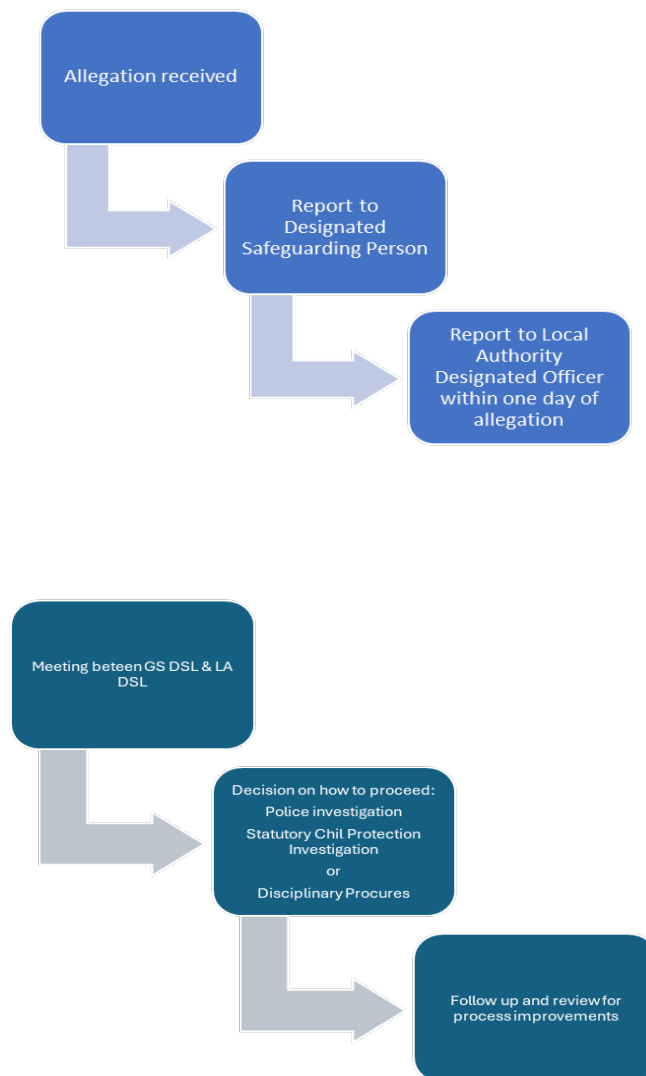
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## Initial considerations for Green Synergy Designated Safeguarding Officer and Local Authority Designated Officer

There are up to three strands in the initial consideration of an allegation:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence.
- LA Children’s social care enquiries and/or assessment about whether a child is in need of protection or services.
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in relation to possible performance/conduct issues.

### Procedural Flow Chart for Managing Allegations Against Staff



### Using community gardening to support people to socialise, learn and thrive

## Making a Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

### What is a referral?

A referral is information about a person. It tells us of concerns that an individual may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm.

The referral duty doesn't apply to family or personal arrangements, parents or members of the public. If a parent or member of the public has a safeguarding concern, they should contact the police, social services or the person's employer. These agencies can then investigate the allegation and if appropriate make a referral to the DBS. When a person has been referred, DBS consider if they need to be added to a barred list(s). The DSO may wish to consult the [referral flowchart](#) to help decide whether to make a referral.

Who can make a referral?

Under legislation, the following can make referrals to the DBS:

- local authorities
- education authority in Northern Ireland
- health and social care bodies in Northern Ireland
- keepers of register in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- supervisory authorities in England, Wales or Northern Ireland

The power to refer happens when an organisation is not acting as a regulated activity provider. This will usually be when the organisation is undertaking their safeguarding role.

The power to refer can be used when an organisation thinks a person has either:

- harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult
- has satisfied the harm test; or
- has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and
- the person they're referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity and
- the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list

### Who has a legal duty to refer?

Regulated activity providers (employers or volunteer managers of people working in regulated activity in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and personnel suppliers have a legal duty to refer to DBS where conditions are met. This applies even when a referral has also been made to a local authority safeguarding team or professional regulator.

A personnel supplier may be an employment agency, employment business or an educational institution and are described as:

- an employment agency that makes arrangements to either find a work-seeker employment with a hirer or to supply him to a hirer to employ

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- an employment business that engages a work-seeker and supplies him to a hirer to work under a hirer's control
- an educational institution if it makes arrangements to supply a student following a course at the institution to a regulated activity provider such as a school.

### **Legal duty to refer: the two conditions that must be met**

If the organisation is a regulated activity provider or fall within the category of personnel supplier, the organisation must make a referral when both of the following conditions have been met:

#### **Condition 1**

- you withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults. Or you move the person to another area of work that isn't regulated activity.
- This includes situations when you would have taken the above action, but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left. For example, a teacher resigns when an allegation of harm to a student is first made.

#### **Condition 2**

You think the person has carried out 1 of the following:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and / or vulnerable adults. e.g. there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable still exists or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence

Relevant conduct in relation to children

A child is a person under 18 years of age. Relevant conduct is:

- endangers a child or is likely to endanger a child
- if repeated against or in relation to a child would endanger the child or be likely to endanger the child
- involves sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material)
- involves sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings (including possession of such images)
- is of a sexual nature involving a child

A person's conduct endangers a child if they:

- harm a child
- cause a child to be harmed
- put a child at risk of harm
- attempt to harm a child
- incite another to harm a child

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Email: [info@greensynergy.org.uk](mailto:info@greensynergy.org.uk) Web: [www.greensynergy.org.uk](http://www.greensynergy.org.uk)

Look at a list of [examples of harm to children](#)

### How to make a referral to DBS

DBS accept referrals made using their online referral form or by post (paper).

Either way the organisation will be asked to provide prescribed information. This is information that must be legally provided, if there is duty to refer or if the organisation falls within those persons/bodies who are legally required to provide information on request. The legal duty to provide prescribed information may apply whether you've made a referral to the DBS or not.

It's important that you provide DBS with as much relevant information as you can. DBS rely on the quality of information provided to them. You're not expected to provide information that you don't have access to. As part of the process to decide if an individual should be placed on a barred list, any information in your referral may be used by us and could be disclosed to the referred person or other parties.

### Online referral form and registering for an online services account

DBS recommend making a referral to DBS using their [online referral form](#). To do this you'll need to register for a DBS online services account, will enable us to engage and communicate with you more securely.

## Appendices

### Appendix One: Contact details for Designated Safeguarding Persons and external safeguarding/child protection agencies

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#### Within Green Synergy:

Name of organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	Mrs Ali Talbot
Contact Number DSO	07769 342251 – Work
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer and Programme Delivery DSO	Mrs Tiwonge Simkonda
Contact number for Deputy DSO and Programme Delivery DSO	07881 308285

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<b>Name of statutory Safeguarding and Child Protection Agency</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
NSPCC	Safeguarding and Child Protection Helpline (24 hours) 0808 800 5000  E-mail: <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>
Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership	<a href="https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/lscp">https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/lscp</a>  If you have a concern about a child contact: If you believe that a child or adult may be a victim of neglect, abuse or cruelty call:  Children's safeguarding - 01522 782111 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) Adults safeguarding - 01522 782155 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or 01522 782333 (outside office hours)

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## Appendix Two – Information for Children and Young People

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### All children and young people have the right to be happy, healthy and safe.

Staff are here to help and support children and young people who access Green Synergy services to

- Be listened to
- Accepted
- Protected

#### This means:

- *You can talk to us if you, or anyone you know, is being hurt, upset, bullied, frightened or abused in any way. We will work with you to try and stop it happening again.*
- *We will always inform you of what could happen.* In some cases, we may have a legal duty to involve other people, such as a health visitor, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) or the police. If we have to take action on your behalf we will let you know what is happening and help you to understand what will happen next.
- *We will provide information about other places where you can get help, e.g. Childline.*

**(This statement was agreed by children and young people of Green Synergy)**

**If you would prefer to speak to someone outside of Green Synergy these numbers are free to call:**

- **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** – 0808 800 500
- **Childline** – 0800 1111

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## Where you can go for help

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**If you are worried in any way about your own safety, or the safety of a child or young person you know, PLEASE speak to a member of staff.** They will do everything they can to work out the best way to keep you, or them, safe and stop it happening again. If, for some reason, you don't want to speak to anyone here, **TELL SOMEONE**, because only then or can abuse, bullying or other frightening things be stopped.

### Other people who can help you are:

- **Childline:** 0800 1111 (free and confidential 24 hours a day)
- **A teacher**
- **Youth Workers** or **helpers** at a club/project you know and can trust
- **NSPCC Safeguarding and Child Protection Helpline** is a free 24-hour service, 7 days a week which provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk from abuse. **0808 800 5000.**

**Textphone** – for people who are deaf or hard of hearing: 0800 056 0566

**Email:** [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

- **NSPCC Asian Safeguarding and Child Protection Helpline 11am – 7pm, Mon-Fri**

Asian/English	0800 096 7719
Bengali	0800 096 7714
Gujarati	0800 096 7715
Hindi	0800 096 7716
Punjabi	0800 096 7717
Urdu	0800 096 7718

- **A teacher**
- **The Samaritans** Telephone: 08457 90 90 90
- **Any other adult** you know and trust

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## Appendix Three – Staying Safe Online Information for children and young people

### Staying Safe Online

**Be careful:** Once your information and pictures are on the internet you can't get it back



#### Always:

- Check your privacy settings – make sure that only people that you invite to be your friends can see information about you
- Know who you are talking to online – people are not always who they claim to be

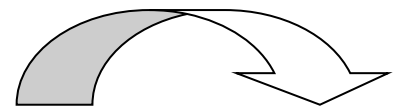
#### Never:

- Allow someone to be your friend online if you don't know who they are
- Put your address online
- Put your personal details online

**What to do if something dodgy happens** while you are online or if you are being hassled/bullied, or if someone you know is:

Don't keep it to yourself – tell someone!

- Go to <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> to report someone
- Look for this 'report abuse' symbol on Facebook and YouTube. Click it to report anything dodgy
- Call Child line on **0800 1111** for advice



The following categories are considered as cyberbullying:

- Sending threatening or discomfoting text message to a mobile phone

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- Making silent, hoax or abusive call to mobile phones
- Making and sharing embarrassing images or videos via mobile phone or website
- Broadcasting unsuitable web cam footage that is threatening or manipulative
- Leaving hurtful messages on social networking sites or sending the same message to that person's peer group
- 'Outing' people by publishing or disseminating confidential information online
- Stealing an online identity in order to cause trouble in that person's name
- Deliberately excluding people from online games or groups
- Setting up hate sites or hate groups against an individual
- Sending menacing or upsetting responses in chat rooms, online games, or messenger 'real time' conversations
- Voting for someone in an insulting online poll
- Sending someone 'sexts' that try to pressure them into sexual acts

**Some of these behaviours or activities are illegal. A person involved could be investigated by the police and prosecuted**

If you want to learn more: Speak to a member of Green Synergy staff or go online to [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) or <http://www.digizen.org> or <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

#### **Appendix Four – Example Code of Conduct for Green Synergy Young People**

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- I agree to accept full responsibility for representing Green Synergy and its children and young people in all venues. I will work closely with my teammates and with my adult advisors
- I agree to fully commit to projects and stories, which includes attending all sessions on time and contacting staff in person if I am late or can't attend a session
- I agree to carry out all the necessary preparation for stories and projects. This includes research and full participation in briefing sessions
- I agree to take part in debriefs after trips, interviews and events
- I agree that as a reporter or editor on an assignment I will be polite and respectful to those whom I

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interview, my teammates, staff and to others with whom I come in contact with

- I agree not to drink alcohol or take illegal drugs while taking part in Green Synergy activities
- I agree to behave in an appropriate, considerate and responsible way as set out in the Code of Conduct agreed between children and young people and staff.

### **Code of Conduct**

Have your say in how the venue is run

Work as a team

Commit to projects undertaken and attend all sessions

Give notice if unable to make sessions

Make others feel welcome

Be respectful

Look after Green Synergy equipment

Don't steal

Be constructive when criticising

Turn up on time

No discriminatory language

Share chips and ideas

Be nice

Keep the venue tidy

Recycle

Have fun

No Smoking

No Alcohol or Drugs

Developed by young people

*Each team or programme team of young people  
develops their own code of conduct and ground rules which they sign up to*

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## Appendix Five: Record of concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse

### a. Record of Concerns (Safeguarding/Vulnerable Child)

*Please fill in as much information as you can. Please be specific in your statements. Please state what you see rather than what you perceive to be the case.*

Time/date/location concern raised	
Name of recorder	
Name of young person	
Age	
Other relevant information (inc. primary language spoken, religion, special needs etc)	
What is the nature of your concern?	
Cause for concern: What have you noticed/ witnessed/ heard? (Please give dates and times of specific incidents.)	
Are there any physical/behavioural signs connected to the concern? (Please give dates and times of specific incidents.)	
Names of additional witnesses to incidents (if any)	
Has the young person concerned been spoken to?	
What was said? (Please note details of their mood and behaviour and any comments they made about their own welfare).	
What, if anything do you know about their family life/ personal life? Do you have any worries about parents/carers/ peers (such as family violence, drug or	

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alcohol abuse)?	
Report passed on to	
Recorder's job title	
Recorder's signature	
Record of Actions Taken and Date	

**b. Record of Suspicions, Allegations or Disclosures of Abuse or Neglect**

*For staff to fill in when a disclosure or allegation has been made. Please fill in as much information as you can. Please be specific in your statements. Please state what you see rather than what you perceive to be the case.*

Time/date/location	
Name of recorder	
Name of young person	
Age	
Other relevant information (inc. primary language spoken, religion, special needs etc)	
What is the nature of your concern? What has prompted the allegation/ suspicion/ disclosure?	
Dates and times of specific incidents (please give details).	
Are there any physical/behavioural signs connected to the concern?	
Has the young person been injured? If so, when and by whom? Was medical help sought?	

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Names of witnesses to allegation/disclosure	
Is the allegation/disclosure first-hand information?	
If reported by some-one else, who was it?	
Has the young person concerned been spoken to?	
What was said? (Please note details of their mood and behaviour and any comments they made about their own welfare).	
What, if anything do you know about their family life/ personal life? Do you have any worries about parents/carers/ peers (such as family violence, drug or alcohol abuse)?	
Has the alleged abuser been named? Who is it?	
Report discussed with/passed on to	
Recorder's job title	
Recorder's signature	
Record of Actions Taken and Date	

### **c. Record of Concern/ Disclosure Follow Up**

*For the Designated Officer to fill out after conversation with reporting staff*

Date Report / Referral Received	
Time/date of discussion with staff	
Name of designated Officer	
Name of young person and staff concerned (inc. details of their	

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relationship)	
Any additional information not already recorded in staffs report	
Has a pre-CAF been carried out? (where appropriate)	
Has contact point been contacted? (Where appropriate)	
Has the parent been contacted/ spoken to about your concerns? What was their response?	
Is this young person at risk?	
Action Taken or Recommendations for follow up (include timescale and dates)	
Follow up with Team Member	

## Appendix Six: Anti-Bullying Policy

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Green Synergy will:

- recognise our duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm
- promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures and social media and online policy and procedures
- seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned
- require all members of staff to be given information about, and sign up to, this policy
- take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying
- encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying
- ensure that staff are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

Each participant, staff and volunteer will:

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- respect every child's need for, and rights to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- respect the feelings and views of others
- recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued
- show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it
- ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see
- report incidents of bullying they see – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

## Bullying

- all forms of bullying will be addressed
- everybody in Green Synergy has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying
- bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour
- bullying can include: - physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc. – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals – posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism – sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour – unwanted physical contact
- children with a disability, from ethnic minorities, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and are more likely to be targeted.

## Appendix Seven: GS46 Complaints and Resolutions Policy and Procedures

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### Green Synergy Complaints Policy and Procedures

#### Statement of Intent

Green Synergy is committed to providing a quality service and to achieving the highest standards of conduct. We aim to improve our service by listening and responding to the views of those who use or support it.

In particular, we recognise the importance of children and young people or, their parents and carers, being able to comment on the service we provide and we encourage and welcome all views whether positive or negative.

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Such comments and complaints are valuable to us when we plan our service and help us to improve and better meet the needs of those who use our service.

Green Synergy views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at Green Synergy knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of Terms**

A comment is:

Any statement that informs Green Synergy of something you think we are doing right.

A complaint is: Any expression of dissatisfaction with Green Synergy, whether justified or not.

Comments and complaints may be verbal, written, taped or in electronic form and can come from either an individual or a group who use or is affected by the one of the services provided by Green Synergy.

### **Principles**

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Our comments and complaints procedure aims to ensure that:

- We are able to identify and respond to the needs of the people that use our services.
- There is a mechanism through which issues raised can be treated quickly, effectively and confidentially.

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- Making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- Any clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response is treated as a complaint.
- Both comments and complaints are treated seriously whether they are made in person, by telephone, by letter, by fax, or by e-mail.
- Both comments and complaints are dealt with promptly, politely and, where appropriate, informally (for example, by telephone).
- We respond in the right way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, by providing information on any action taken etc, or ensuring that the comment is passed onto the appropriate person or department for their benefit.
- Where necessary other Green Synergy policies and procedures are invoked e.g. Staff disciplinary, Child Protection.
- We learn from both comments and complaints and use them when planning and to improve our service.

## **Complaints Procedure**

### How to make a complaint

- Complaints can be made to any Green Synergy staff with whom the person has contact with.
- Alternatively, the person making the complaint can contact the Green Synergy Chief Executive if they prefer.
- When dealing with complaints, staff will make every effort to resolve the complaint at source and if resolved will record the complaint in the specific incident book for analysis.
- When this is not the case the staff member dealing with the issue will record the complaint and forward it to their line manager/administrator who will ensure it will be dealt with appropriately and if necessary, in line with other Green Synergy procedures e.g. disciplinary.

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## **Time frame for dealing with a complaint**

On receiving a complaint Green Synergy will:

- Acknowledge all written and electronic complaints within 14 working days unless the complaint is anonymous leaving the organisation with no way to contact the complainant.
- Undertake to respond to the complaint within 28 working days from it being made. If it is not possible to give a full reply within this time – for instance, because a detailed investigation is required – we will give an interim response, saying what is being done to deal with the complaint, when a full reply should be expected and from whom.
- There will then be a 4-week period in which to indicate dissatisfaction with either the result or the process
- If, following a second response, the person who made the complaint is still not satisfied, the complaint can be referred to the Chair of the Trustees.

## **Responding to a complaint**

- Some complaints will not require a detailed reply and the person making the complaint can be informed verbally.
- In the cases where a written response is required it will be written clearly and without jargon.
- All points and issues raised in the complaint will be addressed.
- The reply will include details of who to contact next if the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily and this will normally be an appropriate senior manager. The deadline for doing so will also be clearly stated. If Green Synergy does not hear from the complainant in this period, it will assume that the result is satisfactory.
- **Complaints involving partner organisations**
- Green Synergy often works in partnership with other organisations to deliver its services, which may mean that a complaint involves both Green Synergy and one or more partner organisations. In such cases, Green Synergy will agree with the other organisation(s) who should take the lead in

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coordinating and resolving the complaint. The person making the complaint will be informed of this process and of any impact it has on the timeframe or process for dealing with the complaint.

- In some cases, the responsibility for dealing with the complaint will fall in the duty of the other organisation and Green Synergy will formally transfer the complaint to them. Green Synergy will inform the person making the complaint of this and of a contact person at that organisation.

### **Access to the Policy**

All young people and their parents or carers will receive a link to the policy on our website

They will also be informed of how to access a full version should they wish. All partner organisations and funders will be made aware of the policy through initial information and service level agreements.

Information on the procedure will be made available in all Green Synergy locations

Green Synergy operates a system for collating all comments and complaints on a regular basis and undertakes to analyse them twice a year so they can inform the organisational review and planning process

### **Why comments and complaints are useful**

Comments and complaints are useful to Green Synergy because they help us monitor, evaluate and review our service supporting us to improve. Any comments and complaints should be sent to

[info@greensynergy.org.uk](mailto:info@greensynergy.org.uk)

This policy will be reviewed annually.

## **Appendix Eight: GS26 Green Synergy Whistleblowing Policy**

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### **Introduction**

Green Synergy is committed to delivering the highest quality of services in all aspects of its work and to openness, integrity and full accountability with regards to its practice and standards of delivery. In line with this, Green Synergy is committed to the highest standards of conduct and provides detailed quality standards, procedures and guidelines to ensure that these standards are observed.

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However, Green Synergy is also aware that malpractice and wrongdoing could occur and that there is a need for a mechanism that enables staff (paid and unpaid), contractors, partners and other members of the organisation to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner.

This policy is intended to be a clear and unequivocal statement that whenever any malpractice or wrongdoing by the organisation, its employees, volunteers or contractors is identified or reported it will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and that the alleged malpractice or wrongdoing will be rectified as necessary. Green Synergy will also investigate means of ensuring that such malpractice or wrongdoing can be prevented for the future.

Green Synergy expects as a basic requirement of every contract of employment, that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employers' affairs. However, it also recognises that employees are often the first people who realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the organisation but may feel uncomfortable about expressing their concerns. This may be for a number of reasons; fear of being identified as disloyal to a colleague or the organisation, fear they may be victimised, concern their suspicion will not be taken seriously or because they would rather not get involved. This policy intends to support individuals in this situation so that where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation they are able to disclose it internally without fear of reprisal. The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into effect in 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.

Green Synergy has endorsed the provisions set out below so as to ensure that no members of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to supplement not replace other organisational policies. Its purpose is to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question business decisions taken by the organisation nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures.

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Instead it may be, that once the whistle has been blown, action under other policies and procedures maybe invoked e.g. disciplinary procedures.

It should also be noted that having a 'whistleblowing' policy and relevant procedures in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use them rather than air their complaints outside the organisation.

## Scope of Policy

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This policy is based on the overriding principle that the needs of the service users must come first. It is designed to enable Green Synergy employees and others involved in delivering the Green Synergy programme to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or wrongdoing. Examples of these concerns include:

- Situations or bad practice detrimental to the welfare and safekeeping of children and young people
- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or Statutes
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour by any employees, volunteers or other parties acting on behalf of the organisation
- Attempts to conceal any of these

## Safeguards

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### i. Protection

This policy is designed to offer protection to Green Synergy employees and associates who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

- In good faith

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- In the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below). It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case of malicious or wild allegations, could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

Green Synergy understands that the decision to blow the whistle can be a difficult one and will support concerned employees who raise a concern in good faith and will protect them from reprisals or victimisation. Individuals who try to discourage others from coming forward, to suppress information or who criticises or victimises another for expressing a concern will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

## **ii. Confidentiality**

Green Synergy will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

## **iii. Anonymous Allegations**

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the organisation.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

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#### **iv. Untrue Allegations**

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

#### **Procedures for Making a Disclosure**

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When a complaint is raised by a member of staff it would be normal for their first reference to be their direct line manager. However, in some cases the line manager may not be the appropriate person. In such cases the issue can be raised with another Senior Manager.

The complainant has the right to bypass the line management structure and take their complaint direct to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair of Trustees has the right to refer the complaint back to management if he/she feels that the management without any conflict of interest can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

Should none of the above routes be suitable or acceptable to the complainant, then the complainant may the following individual who has been designated and trained as independent points of contact under this procedure. They can advise the complainant on the implications of the legislation and the possible internal and external avenues of complaint open to them:

**Alan Robson, Chair of Green Synergy Trustees**

#### **Acting on a Disclosure**

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On receipt of a complaint of malpractice, the member of staff informed must make a record of the complaint and must pass this information as soon as is reasonably possible, to the appropriate designated investigating officer as follows:

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- Complaints of malpractice will be investigated by the appropriate Project Manager unless the complaint is against the Project Manager or is in any way related to their actions. In such cases, the complaint should be passed to the Green Synergy Chief Executive for referral.
- In the case of a complaint, which is any way connected with but not against the Project Manager, the Green Synergy Chief Executive will nominate a Senior Manager to act as the alternative investigating officer.
- Complaints against the Green Synergy Chief Executive should be passed to the Chair of the Trustees who will nominate an appropriate investigating officer.

If there is evidence of criminal activity, then the investigating officer should inform the police. Green Synergy will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

## **Investigating Procedure**

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The investigating officer should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained.
- The investigating officer should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- The investigating officer should consider the involvement of the Company auditors and the Police at this stage and should consult with the Chair of the Trustees / Chief Executive.
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance where appropriate, of other individuals / bodies.
- A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement. The report will be passed to the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees as appropriate.

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- The Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate organisational procedures.
- The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome. This will need to be subject to the constraints of our duty of confidentiality to other staff or associates or other legal constraints.
- If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes will be passed to the Company Auditors to enable a review of the procedures.
- An annual report dealing with the application of the whistleblowing policy in the previous year will be made by the Green Synergy Chief Executive to the Trustee Board and where necessary make recommendations to improve the efficiency of the policy and organisational practice.

## Timescales

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Due to the varied nature of these sorts of complaints, which may involve internal investigators and / or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible, and within 28 days of receiving the complaint. The time taken to complete the investigation will depend on the nature of the concern and its complexity. It is also important that the speed of the investigation does not affect the quality and depth of the investigations.

The investigating officer should acknowledge in writing, receipt of the concern, how the organisation proposes to deal with the issue and the likely timescale for doing so, within fourteen days of the concern being referred. If a decision is made to not investigate, the reasons will be given. The investigating officer will also report back to the complainant the outcome of the investigation and on the action that is proposed. If the investigation is a prolonged one, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded.

All responses to the complainant should be in writing and sent to their home address.

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If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the investigating officer, they have the right to raise it in confidence with the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees, or one of the designated Officers described above.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the organisation recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators), or, where justified, elsewhere.

## **Appendix Nine: GS37 Health and Safety Policy**

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### **Green Synergy has a separate Health and Safety Policy.**

GS32 Green Synergy Health & Safety Policy which should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy.

## **Appendix Ten: Quality Assurance**

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### **Green Synergy Quality Framework**

Our framework for quality assurance in youth work is made up of a number of inter-locking strands of activities which apply to all of our work. The main features are:

- clear, agreed criteria for describing quality
- internal quality assurance processes which include planned youth work sessions, recording of outcomes and evaluation tools for young people
- an annual self-assessment report
- an annual development plan

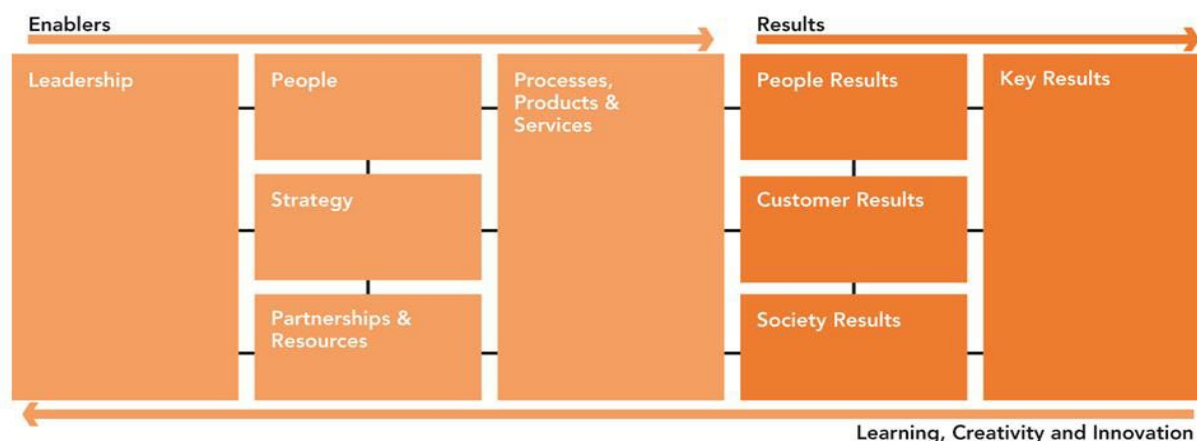
### **Green Synergy complies with the European Framework – the EFQM Excellence model**

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**This helps us to:**

- Understand our key strengths and potential gaps in relation to our stated vision and mission
- Effectively communicate ideas within and outside the organisation
- Integrate existing and planned initiatives, removing duplication and identifying gaps
- Provide a basic structure for the organisation’s management system

Criteria	Sub-Criterion	Evidence
<b>Leadership</b>	a. Leaders develop the mission, vision & values and are role models of a culture of excellence b. Leaders are personally involved in ensuring the organisation’s management system is developed, implemented & continuously improved c. Leaders are involved with customers, partners & representatives of society d. Leaders motivate, support and recognise the organisation’s people	Annual AGM, Annual team meetings, Strategic review. Equity and Diversity Policy  Senior Management Team meetings, Trustee Board Meetings, Bi-Annual review, Business Plan, Strategic Plan  Attend Conferences, networking events, PR, Trustees, Young People Advisory Board  Middle manager meetings, Annual Staff Retreat, Equity and Diversity Policy,
<b>Policy Strategy</b>	a. Policy & strategy are based on the present & future needs & expectations of stakeholders	Bi-annual review of policy, procedures, contract / financial evaluations

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	<p>b. Policy &amp; strategy are based on information from performance measurement, research, learning &amp; creativity related activities</p> <p>c. Policy &amp; strategy are developed, reviewed &amp; updated</p> <p>d. Policy &amp; strategy are deployed through a framework of key processes</p> <p>e. Policy &amp; strategy are communicated &amp; implemented</p>	<p>Bi-annual review, staff retreat, conference, YP advisory board, steering groups, Bi-annual reviews, staff retreat.</p> <p>Bi-annual review, Development Plan, Business Plan</p> <p>Training, team meetings, work plans, staff retreat, conference.</p> <p>Supervision, Appraisals, team meetings, social media</p>
<b>People</b>	<p>a. People resources are planned, managed &amp; improved</p> <p>b. People's knowledge &amp; competencies are identified, developed &amp; sustained</p> <p>c. People are involved &amp; empowered</p> <p>d. People &amp; the organisation's members have a dialogue</p> <p>e. People are rewarded, recognised &amp; cared for</p>	<p>Manager meetings, HR procedures and records, CRB checks.</p> <p>Training analysis, CDP charts, supervision, appraisal</p> <p>Team meetings, staff meetings, delivery scrums, conferences,</p> <p>Team meetings, Bi-annual review</p> <p>Supervision, appraisal, training, salary review</p>
<b>Partnership and Resources</b>	<p>a External partnerships are managed &amp; Resources</p> <p>b Finances are managed</p> <p>c Buildings, equipment &amp; materials are managed</p> <p>d Technology is managed</p>	<p>Partnerships and Contracts manager</p> <p>Annual Audited Accounts, finance protocols</p> <p>Health &amp; Safety Policy, financial protocols</p> <p>IT policy, Senior Managers</p>

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	e Information & knowledge are managed	Programme and Contract Evaluations
<b>Process</b>	<p>a. Processes are systematically designed &amp; managed</p> <p>b. Processes are improved, as needed, using innovation in order to fully satisfy &amp; generate increasing value for customers &amp; other stakeholders</p> <p>c. Products &amp; services are designed &amp; developed based on customer needs &amp; expectations</p> <p>d. Products &amp; services are produced, delivered &amp; serviced</p> <p>e. Customer relationships are managed &amp; enhanced</p>	<p>Bi-annual review, SMT meetings, team meetings,</p> <p>Staff, YP and Partner evaluations.</p> <p>Complaints procedures. Bi-annual review,</p> <p>Staff, YP and Partners evaluations. Bi-annual review,</p> <p>Session plans, programme development</p> <p>Partners and young people evaluations. Safeguarding Policy.</p>
<b>Impact on Young People</b>	<p>a. Perception measures</p> <p>b. Performance indicators</p>	Base line questionnaires, action plans, exit questionnaires, leadership programme.
<b>Impact on Partners</b>	<p>a. Perception measures</p> <p>b. Performance indicators</p>	Verbal communications, partners evaluations, contract evaluations
<b>Impact on society</b>	<p>a. Perception measures</p> <p>b. Performance indicators</p>	Tender documents, fundraising bids, monitoring and recording performance against local and government priorities
<b>Key performance Measures</b>	<p>a. Key performance outcomes (LAG)</p> <p>b. Key performance indicators (lead)</p>	Salesforce database system, contract reviews, SMT meetings, Bi-annual review, milestones of business and

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## Appendix Eleven: Social Media Guidance

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### **When using Facebook/ Twitter or any social networking to interact with young people you should ALWAYS:**

- conduct yourself with the same level of professionalism that you do in your day to day interaction with young people.
- be mindful of the fact that you are interacting with young people in a very informal environment.
- pay particular attention to how you interact/ joke with young people on the internet. When you are not face to face and people can't see your expression/ hear your intonation things are easily misread
- take a shared responsibility for monitoring comment. Highlight anything inappropriate to your administrator.
- always take responsibility for ensuring that children are protected and safe – don't assume that someone else has raised a concern. Speak to the designated Officer yourself.
- take responsibility for your own learning on Safeguarding and Child Protection, especially in terms of how you should interact with young people on the internet. If you have questions... ask.
- be mindful of and sensitive to variations in age, ethnicity, social background, religion and gender among the young people you interact with. Particularly if signposting them to a story or content.
- ensure that the designated Officer(s) is kept informed of concerns you may have about a young person you are working with including bullying
- ensure that they use the internet in an acceptable way especially when it comes to communication with young people and the reputation of Green Synergy both during work time and outside of it.
- when using your 'work' profile bear in mind that you are representing the organisation. So use the same judgment in writing your postings that you would in writing any formal letter. Post only

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content that you would be comfortable having the organisation, young people, your colleagues, Green Synergy audience, and the general public read, hear, or see.

- show good judgment when “friending” someone within a social network.
- take a shared responsibility to monitor Green Synergy site/social networking pages regularly and promptly remove any inappropriate content.
- consult with members about issues that affect them.
- ensure that any social networking pages you set up signpost young people to CEOP or the NSPCC

### **In general, you should avoid:**

- spending significant amounts of time interacting online with an individual member
- opening closed off email conversations with an individual
- using the internet alone to deal with a young person who you realize is distressed or in need of further support / comfort;
- dealing individually with anything safeguarding wise.
- exchanging personal information with young people

### **You should NEVER:**

- engage in sexually provocative games online with young people or make suggestive comments, even in fun;
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- allow members who use language that discriminates go unchallenged.
- use strong or offensive language when working with members and clients.
- Sign into social networking sites using another member of staff’s profile
- at any time create or transmit defamatory material that may tarnish or damage Green Synergy’ reputation.
- make or post indecent remarks, proposals, or materials on the Internet including social networking sites that may bring Green Synergy into disrepute.

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- use the Internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users
- make contact with young people you work with at Green Synergy through personal email, messaging or social networking media or accept contact from young people through personal channels.

**Related Policies:**

- Green Synergy Equity and Diversity Policy
- Green Synergy Data Breach Policy
- Green Synergy Sickiness and Absence Policy
- Green Synergy Hours of Work and Leave Policy
- Green Synergy Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy
- Green Synergy Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Green Synergy Whistleblowing Policy
- Green Synergy Professional Development and Training Policy
- Green Synergy Appraisal and Performance Policy
- Green Synergy Code of Conduct – Team Members
- Green Synergy Data Protection Policy
- Green Synergy Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Green Synergy Payment of Salary Policy
- Green Synergy Resignation and Notice Period Policy
- Green Synergy Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Green Synergy Smoking Policy
- Green Synergy Code of Conduct for Volunteers

**Document Control**

<b>Policy Details</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	GS5 Green Synergy Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy		
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Approval</b>
Version 1.3	February 2017	CEO	Board
Version 1.4	June 2019	CEO	Board
Version 1.5	June 2020	CEO - MH	Board
Version 1.6	16.09.2022	CEO - AT	Trustee Basecamp Approval System
Version 1.7	21.06.2023	CEO - AT	Trustee Basecamp Approval System
Version 1.8	24.06.2024	CEO	Basecamp Trustee Approval Process

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Version 1.9	17.09.2024	CEO	Trustee Google Drive Governance Portal
Version 1.10	12.09.2025	CEO	Trustee Google Drive Governance Portal

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