



**Cumbria Family Support Ltd
SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURE
ADOPTED DECEMBER 2021**

Cumbria Family Support Ltd,
The Office,
Mardale Road,
Penrith,
CA11 9EH

Tel: 01768 593102
www.cumbriafamilysupport.org.uk

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1: **Policy Statement**

Cumbria Family Support (CFS) has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The organisation has a commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures, sharing of information and ensuring that Safeguarding concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in a way, which supports the needs of children. This policy is reviewed annually.

2: **Introduction & Purpose**

The aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare, safety, health and guidance by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The child or young person's welfare is of paramount importance.

We want every child to fulfil their potential, regardless of their background, disability or circumstances

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Trustees, secondees or those on placements. Where the term "Staff" is used in this document it refers to all these groups,

Cumbria Family Support fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support children and young people known to the organisation.

There are 3 main elements to our Safeguarding Policy:

- **Prevention** – for example, positive atmosphere, accessible, approachable and trained staff
- **Protection** – by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.
- **Support** – To staff, children and young people who may have been abused.

This Safeguarding Policy provides clear direction to staff and others about expected practice in dealing with safeguarding issues. It is focused upon Children and Young people.

3: **Underpinning Principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children's Act 2004)
- Cumbria Family Support will operate within the guidelines and principals of [Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) (CSCP)
- Any safeguarding concern that is believed to meet the Threshold for a referral to Social Work services will be done in consultation to [Designated Safeguarding Officer](#) (DSO)
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their [DSO](#) over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further action agreed
- Staff should always work in accordance with CFS' Equality & Diversity Policy

- All staff should know the name of their [Designated Safeguarding Officer](#) for child protection, be familiar with local [Safeguarding arrangements](#) and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.
- Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved in the organisation however we do recognise that there are particular set of experience and skills needed around safeguarding issues and therefore we have a trustee nominated as a safeguarding lead from the Trustee group to whom safeguarding issues are referred in the first instance.

4: Adult Safeguarding

Any Safeguarding concerns relating to Adults need to be discussed with CFS' [DSO](#). Said discussions will take into account [Cumbria Safeguarding Adult Board's Guidance and contact the relevant Adult Social Care Office](#).

5: Partnership working

Cumbria Family Support does not operate in isolation. The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families, and local authorities have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion.

[Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership \(CSCP\)](#) has statutory responsibility for children and young people's safety and is independently Chaired. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by three named statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and NHS clinical commissioning groups). The three partners assumed the responsibilities that previously sat with the LSCB. In Cumbria these partners are Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Constabulary, NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group.

CFS will contribute to an inter-agency approach to Safeguarding by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies which will embrace the use of the [Early Help Framework](#) in order to improve outcomes for children and their families.

In support of the above, we will provide information to other professionals, submitting reports to, and attending, case conferences when required as part of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. We will use the [tools recommended by the CSCP](#) to measure risk and assess need. These include the Risk and Resilience matrix, Graded care profile, scaling tool and scaling tool for CSE. The [CSCP escalation procedure](#) is to be used when appropriate.

6: Our Commitment

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help all children and young people, and especially those at risk of, or suffering from abuse. Cumbria Family Support will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children and young people feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. We will ensure that children and young people know that there are adults they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents/carers and colleagues from other agencies.
- Develop a culture and ethos that supports children and young people to achieve outcomes which are key to wellbeing and in childhood and later life.
- Work with parents and carers to build an understanding of Cumbria Family Support's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure.
- Be vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby all staff report such cases to the [Designated Safeguarding Officer](#) and be aware of [local procedures](#) so that information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals.
- Monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping, *in a secure place*, and in line with CFS' [Information Security Policy](#) clear records of their progress
- Work in accordance with "[Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy and Procedure](#)"
- Work with a strengths based approach, utilising the [Signs of Safety](#) methodology
- Use the service delivery opportunities to raise children and young people's awareness and build confidence so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Make children and young people aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can help keep themselves safe
- Provide clear policy statements for parents and carers, staff, volunteers, Trustees and children and young people on this and positive behaviour policies.
- Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal, cyber and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that children and young people are aware of Cumbria Family Support's position on this issue and who they can contact for support. We will follow the [CSCP's E-Safety Policy and Procedure](#).
- Take particular care that children and young people with learning disabilities who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communicative skills.
- Continue to ensure Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at Trustee meetings where any safeguarding issues are brought to the attention of Trustees.

7: Particular Responsibilities for Cumbria Family Support

Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Chief Officer, Deb Royston is the Designated Officer for Safeguarding in CFS. In her absence, and where it is not possible to contact her, Sarah Craig¹ will take on this role. Any member of staff who may have concerns should seek advice from the Chief Officer immediately.

Referrals to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

Any Safeguarding concerns that may result in a referral to the Safeguarding Hub will be dealt with in line with the [Raising a Safeguarding Concern Procedure](#) detailed in the CFS Procedures and, for ease of reference, detailed in Appendix one below.

The DSO will act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the organisation when deciding whether to make a referral which may include decisions about liaising with relevant agencies before any referral is made. Staff will liaise with their line manager over any issues and ongoing investigations.

Safer Recruitment

Safe recruitment practice means scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and any academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job, and a face to face interview as well as the appropriate level of check with the Vetting and Barring (DBS). Each newly appointed staff member and volunteer will also be asked to register with the DBS update service [DBS Update Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

It is the policy of CFS to recruit staff in line with the expectations detailed in CSCP's "[Guidance for Safe Recruitment, Selection and Retention for Staff and Volunteers](#)". Our procedures, process and related forms and paperwork including the application form have all been designed to support the safe recruitment of staff supporting vulnerable adults and children

All new employees will have a verbal check with one of their referees to verify the written reference already received. A record of that discussion will be recorded on the personnel file of appointed staff (or recruitment file where the appointment does not progress).

[Appendix 2](#) Details how we deal with Convictions and Cautions, and, the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

In addition to new staff and volunteer appointments, a DBS online check on existing employees will be carried every year as part of the employee appraisal process.

Safeguarding Concerns about staff

CFS will follow the CSCP's [policy and procedure](#) about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are followed correctly at all times.

Training & Support

CFS will ensure that:

¹ Both Designated Safeguarding Officer and deputy can be contacted via the main office; 01765 593102 / admin@cumbriafamilysupport.org.uk

- All staff will undertake training in order to recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral to Children's Services Social Work services.
- Have a working knowledge of how CSCP operates the conduct of a Child Protection Case Conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- The above will be undertaken in line with CSCP's ["Which Training is Right for me?" framework](#)
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the Safeguarding policy especially new or part time staff.
- Ensure all staff have induction training covering Safeguarding and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise.
- Be able to keep detailed accurate secure written records of concerns and resultant action.
- All staff will be expected to sign up to the CSCP Newsletter, and ensure they read and act on the contents therein
- Learning from Safeguarding incidents within CFS will be undertaken as required in the organisation.
- Ongoing Safeguarding matters will be disclosed only to those staff who need to know

Raising Awareness

CFS will ensure that the Safeguarding policy is updated and reviewed at least every three years and will be approved by the Trustee group before publishing. We will ensure that service users have access to and understand the purpose of the Safeguarding policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later.

Whistle-blowing

Whistle-blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. CFS has a [Whistle-blowing policy](#) which must be referred to and followed in such circumstances.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Professional Confidentiality

All staff need to follow the organisation's ["Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy and Procedure"](#). In summary:

- Parents, Trustees and every adult, should understand the need for confidentiality through access to this policy.
- Staff (including volunteers) must never guarantee/promise confidentiality to a child and explain that safeguarding an individual's welfare supersedes the commitment to confidentiality.
- Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with young people, particularly in the context of Safeguarding.
- Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others, including Children's Services staff, must always however, have regard to both common and statute law.

- If an allegation is made by a child or a young person the member of staff will need to sensitively explain that the information may need to be shared with others. We will communicate with the child / young person in a manner that is appropriate to their age and preference. This is especially important for disabled children and children whose preferred language is not English and/or those with additional learning or communication needs.

Records and Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice CFS is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies. See [Appendix One](#) in relation to recording Safeguarding Concerns

Supporting Children and Young People at Risk

CFS recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

Therefore CFS will ensure

- Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies that support the children and young people and their families.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in the child's interests to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in safeguarding situations.
- Be particularly aware of the fact that statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children and young people, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A "no touch" approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with children and young people this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

This means that adults should:

- Be aware that even well intended physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.
- Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent.
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact can be open to scrutiny.
- Never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be discussed with the [DSO](#) and be recorded as soon as possible in the family file.

There may be occasions when a distressed child or young person needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a child from injuring themselves or others. Staff should have regard for the health and safety of themselves and others.

This means that staff should:

- Always seek to defuse situations.
- Always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary.
- Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.
- In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported to the [DSO](#).

Communication directly with children and young people in the absence of parent(s) / carer(s)

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with children and young people for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise professional judgement in making a response to decline this and maintain a professional relationship.

Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile number, home or e-mail address to children and young people unless the need to do so is agreed with the Chief Officer.

Direct contact with children away from their parents/carers should not be undertaken unless with specific agreement with the parents/Carers. This should be detailed in the family support plan. If said communication is via text messaging or other forms of electronic communication this should only be on CFS equipment/accounts. Any use of social media must again be expressly agreed by parent/carer, and should (unless there are exceptional and recorded reasons) be via parent/carer accounts. If any social media is used it must be in line with age restrictions for the child/young person. Guidance can be found on the [NSPCC website](#) and will be supplemented by the expectation that all staff undertake the [NSPCC online safety training](#).

Staff should report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise them, CFS or their own professional standing. This should be discussed with the Chief Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Sexual Contact

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviours. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not.

This means that staff should avoid any actions or form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. ["Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018"](#) (pg 103) defines sexual abuse and acts that would constitute such abuse.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour as "grooming" where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention/favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a grooming process which is an offence.

One to One situations

Staff working in one to one situation with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. Managers, supervisors and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and children and young people are met.

Meetings with children and young people away from their parent(s)/carer(s) are not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent/carers as part of the family support plan.

Staff should

- Avoid meeting with children and young people in remote secluded environments
- Ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations where possible
- Always report any situation where a child or young person becomes distressed or angry towards a colleague.
- Consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved.

Transporting Children

In certain very occasional situations there may be a need to transport children and young people. Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that they adhere to CFS' Driving Policy.

Staff should:

- Plan and agree arrangements with parent(s) / carer(s) in advance; record these in the family support plan if it is to be a regular occurrence.
- Observe CFS' Driving risk assessment. If it is felt there are additional risks than included in the standard risk assessment, confer with their manager and complete an updated risk assessment specific to the situation
- Ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible.

- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child or young person is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer.
- Ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety.

First Aid and Administration of Medication

All CFS service delivery offices must have trained first aiders/appointed person. Staff may volunteer to undertake this task but it is not a contractual requirement. Staff should receive appropriate training before administering first aid. When administering first aid, wherever possible, staff should ensure that another adult is present, or aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered. Parents/ Carers are responsible for their child's first aid in the home environment.

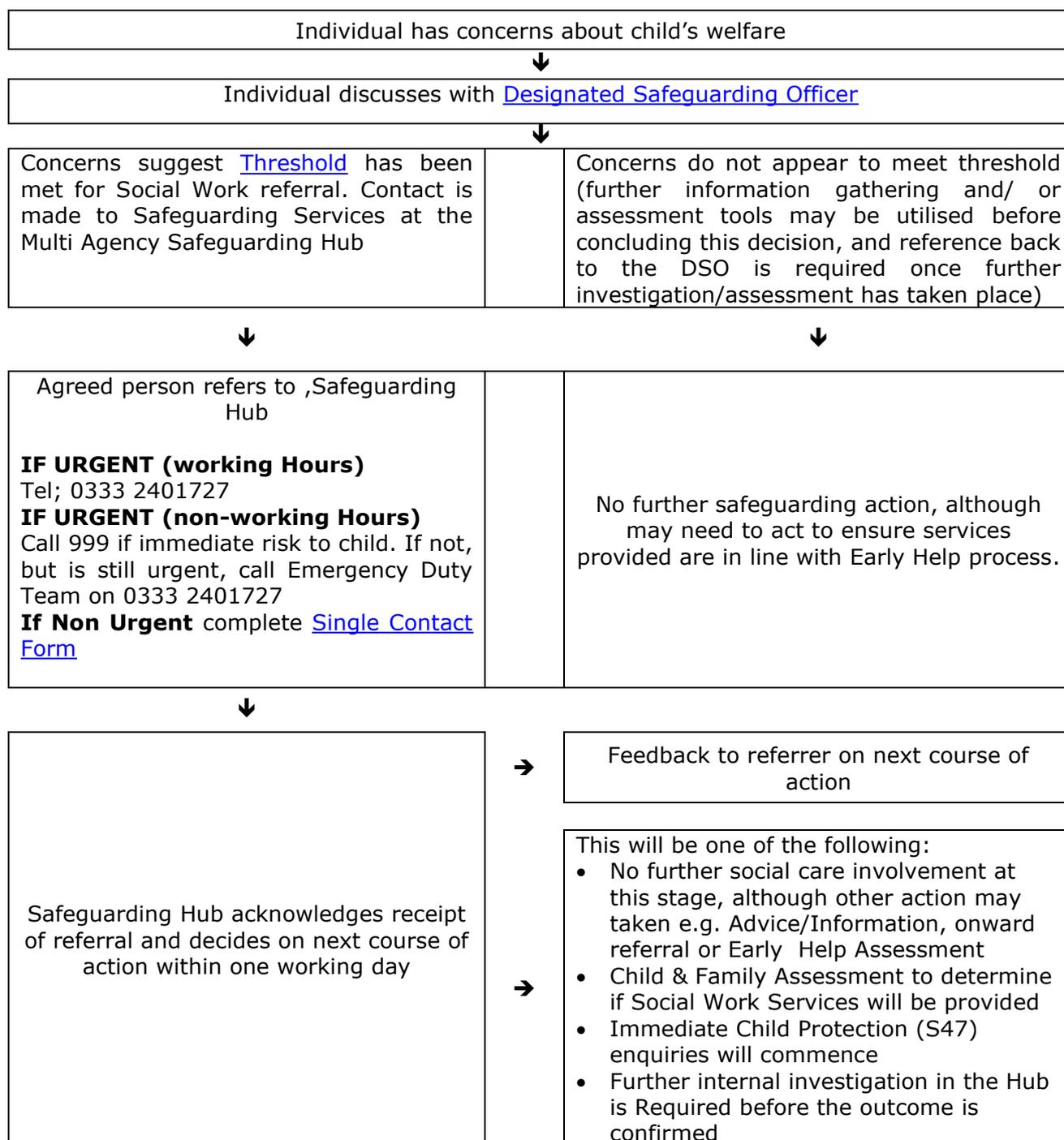
Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). CFS do not provide services where the above would normally need staff intervention. If however a child has a difficulty such as during a planned activity away from the parent/carers, children and young people should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Procedures to follow when raising Safeguarding Concerns

The process below will enable you to make a decision if a referral is the appropriate procedure.

Records must be made in the child’s file in relation to raising Safeguarding concerns, in the Contact Sheet, with Management Discussion, at the beginning of the entry



Convictions and Cautions, and, the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

- Under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, applicants for employment which is concerned with the provision of personal support and which would enable the applicant to have access to people receiving this support in their normal duties will be required to disclose spent convictions.
- Under the provisions of the Protection of Children Regulations any person selected for appointment to a post giving substantial access to people under the age of 16, or above that age if the person suffers from a mental or physical disability will need to complete an Enhanced Disclosure.
- CFS complies fully with the Vetting and Barring Code of Practice. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- CFS will request a Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
- When the need for a disclosure is a requirement of employment it will be detailed as part of the Recruitment Advert and notified on the Application Form.
- Where a disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, CFS encourage all applicants to provide details of their criminal record in their application form. This information will be treated as confidential and will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- At interview or in a separate discussion if requested, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that may be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position could lead to a withdrawal of the offer.
- Prior to an offer of appointment, the Appointing Manager should be satisfied that the selected candidate would not be debarred from holding the post by reason of conviction of an offence as outlined in the 'Protection of Vulnerable Adults/Children' regulations.
- CFS will ensure that all those involved in the decision making aspect of the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information and the relevant legislation.
- CFS undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure certificate with the subject of that disclosure in person before withdrawing any conditional offer of employment.
- Employees who are convicted of, or cautioned for, an offence whilst in CFS employment are required to inform their manager in writing detailing the offence and outcome. The manager in conjunction with the Chief Officer, or Chair of Trustees will then consider the implications for employment and take appropriate action.
- Failure to disclose a spent conviction when required to may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.
- A person who has disclosed a spent conviction and is offered employment will be afforded equal opportunities. However, should an employee's job content or duties change the spent conviction will be reconsidered in the context of the new job role.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar someone from employment with CFS. This will depend on the nature of the position, the circumstances and background of the offence.