



Penrith and Eden Refugee Network

Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy

October 2025 Date for review: October 2026

This policy has been drafted in line with best practice as defined by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Definitions

Child safeguarding is defined as:

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

Child protection is defined as the action that must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Purpose and aims of our child safeguarding policy

Penrith and Eden Refugee Network (PERN) believes that the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person is paramount, and no child should ever experience abuse of any kind.

Children who have a disability or come from a different ethnic or cultural group can easily become victims of discrimination and prejudice. Any discrimination is harmful to a child and may mean that they don't obtain the service they need to keep them safe.

PERN will ensure that all children are protected and safeguarded from harm and potential abuse. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to work in partnership with external agencies such as Local Authority Social Services and Education Departments, Police and National Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to share information and raise concerns about an individual child in order to keep them safe from harm. We are committed to practice in a way that protects and promotes the welfare of children and young people in our care.

In this policy a child or young person is classified as a person who is under 18.

The purpose of the PERN Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy is:

- to protect children and young people who receive PERN's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and Trustees, freelancers, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of PERN (collectively referred to as workers).

Legal framework

PERN's policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England and Wales. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/child protection](http://nspcc.org.uk/child-protection). Some of the legislation referred to includes:

- Children's Act 2004
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- and relevant government guidance on safeguarding children, including guidance on tackling extremism and radicalisation.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to 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.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

At PERN:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, their families and carers, has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- Staff and volunteers whilst working with children will always consider what is in the best interests of the child.
- We take an 'it can happen here' approach where safeguarding is concerned.

- We make sure that victims of harm or those reporting it will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. A victim will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

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

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people and a deputy
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately
- identifying children who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm
- using our safeguarding and child protection 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
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing both good practice and concerns
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice every three years.

Designated Leads

Nominated child protection lead: Ali Ross, Trustee

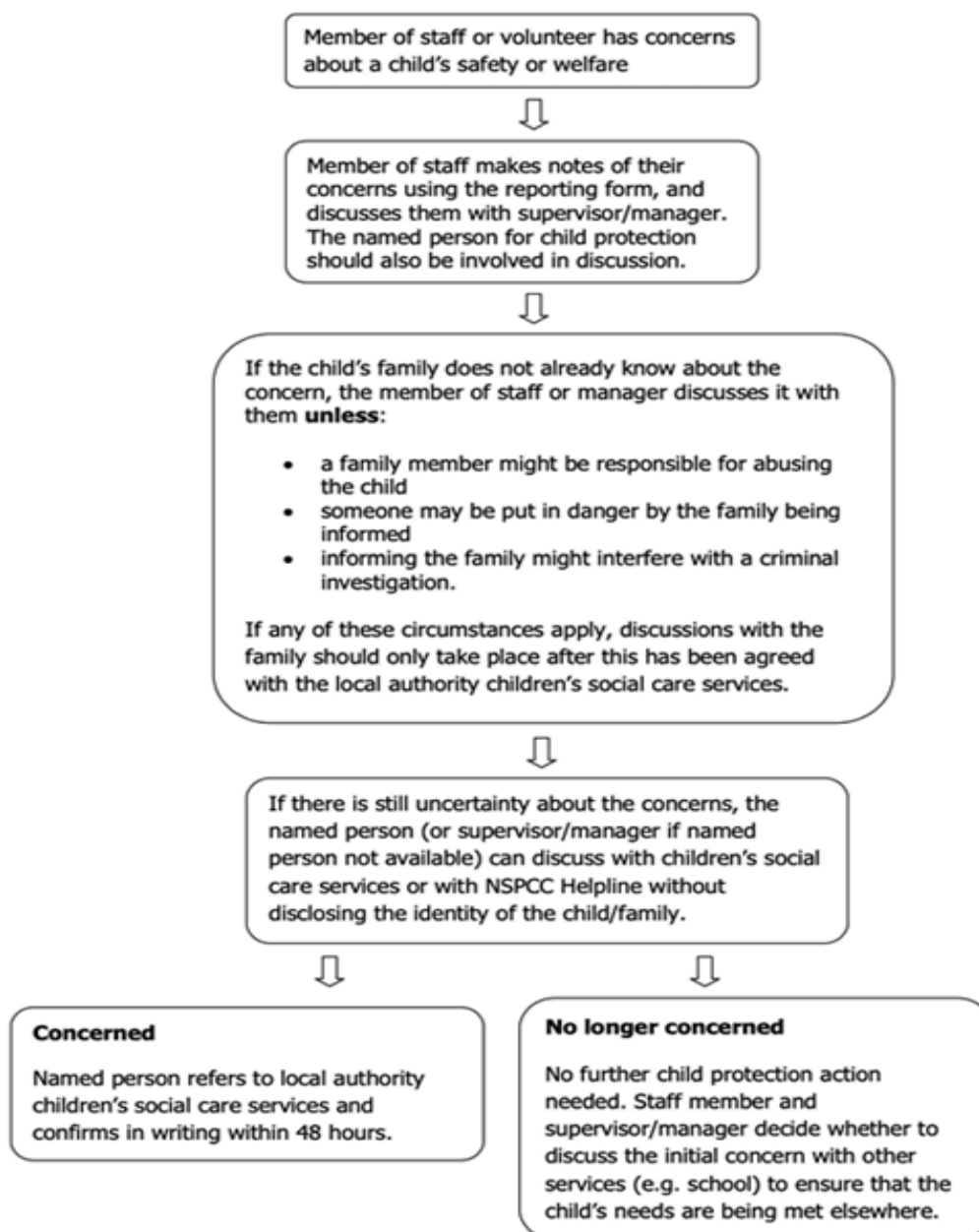
Email: ali@parhelia.org.uk Phone: 07769 554715

Deputy child protection lead: Sarah Wilson

Email: sarahw@pern.org.uk Phone: 07950 106559

Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

Responding to abuse – Flowchart



There is a form for reporting incidents of any concern available in the Volunteer Area of the PERN website, or by request from hello@pern.org.uk.

Roles

All staff, freelancers and volunteers have a responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and to report lapses in these standards by others. Volunteers and staff should report concerns or reasonable suspicion of abuse to their supervisor or activity leader who will follow-up the matter with the Director of PERN, Sarah Wilson. In all serious cases involving safeguarding issues, Sarah Wilson must be contacted as soon as possible, even if the incident takes place when she is not present.

If Sarah Wilson is part of the cause of your concern, then you should report the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ali Ross or any Trustee. Any safeguarding concerns that are raised should be documented as soon as possible afterwards and recorded on the on-line Safeguarding Incident Report log.

PERN Trustees will monitor the implementation of the policy. The Director of PERN is responsible for follow-up and reporting of safeguarding issues, including where appropriate to the Local Authority Children's Safeguarding Hub. Serious concerns involving the conduct of a member of staff, volunteer or contractor must be referred immediately to the PERN Director. All safeguarding records will be kept in a secure location by the PERN Director.

All PERN freelancers, staff and trustees will be given a copy of this Appendix 1 - detail on child safeguarding and protection and must confirm they have read and understood it. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy will complete training in safeguarding to level 2. Other freelancers and staff will complete training as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

PERN works to ensure everyone in PERN is aware of safeguarding. All PERN volunteers are given a copy of the PERN Safeguarding Statement (see Appendix) and offered the opportunity to ask questions. Volunteer and staff induction events include discussion on safeguarding.

Disclosures

Disclosure is the process by which children and young people start to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can take place over a long period of time; it is a journey, not one act or action.

Procedure for talking to a child who is making a disclosure:

- Listen carefully to what is said. Be aware of your body language and facial expression. Stay calm.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is possible that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Let the child tell the whole story and continue at their own pace.
- Don't try to investigate or quiz the child. Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer as this can harm evidence. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware that the person who first encounters a

case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the police and professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

- Reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Ask the child what they would like to happen as a result of what they have said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them (or the child who is the subject of the disclosure) safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it. At PERN this will be the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- If you think it will be appropriate, give the child the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111 or the website address: <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>
- Immediately after the disclosure, record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated. Pass this on to the Safeguarding Lead who will contact the relevant agency.

Keeping a record of your concerns

Volunteers or freelancers/staff who receive a disclosure must make notes. The Director of PERN may issue the Form below to help gather a full record so there is good information for follow-up and any reporting to the Local Authority Safeguarding Hub.

Safeguarding Reporting Key People and Contact Details

Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Emergency Duty Team 0300 373 2724

Cumberland Safeguarding Hub 0333 240 1727

<https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/earlyhelp.asp>

Single Contact Point <https://scformcmb.cumbria.gov.uk>

Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding Hub 0300 373 2724

Children of Resettled Ukrainian Families Council Resettlement Managers

Children of people seeking asylum SERCO Partnership Manager

NSPCC <https://nspcc.org.uk> You can remain anonymous and report a concern here.

Whistleblowing

We acknowledge that a member of staff, contractor or volunteer may witness an incident, action or event involving another PERN worker that gives them cause for concern. We are committed to the safety and security of all children and young people and, equally, we are committed to the safety and security of all PERN workers. Therefore, given the risks and sensitivities associated with reporting such concerns:

- All workers are required to share any concerns regarding any practices that compromise the safety of children with the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible.
- Any worker that discloses a concern will be assured confidentiality as far as practically possible without jeopardising investigations by us or external authorities.
- Any worker expressing a concern for their safety following a disclosure will be given all necessary support to enable them to continue in their role safely.

Safeguarding Incident Report Form ****CONFIDENTIAL****

Your Full Name:

Your Role:

Date form filled in:

Event/Activity if relevant:

Full Name of child:

Age of child (if known):

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details:
Brief description of what has prompted the concerns. Include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents:
Any physical, behavioural or indirect signs?
Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?
Have you spoken to the parent(s)/carer(s)? If so, what was said?
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details:
Have you consulted anybody else? Give details:
To whom was it reported and date of reporting?
Are there further actions you would like to be taken?

Signed:

Name and position:

Date and time:

Signed:

Name and position:

Date and time:

Definitions of abuse

Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or young person under the age of 18. Child abuse can take various forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child or young person.

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).

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.

Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is deliberate violence causing injury or illness occurring regularly during childhood. It is not accidental – children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them.

Shaking or hitting babies can cause non-accidental head injuries (NAHI).

Sometimes parents or carers will make up or cause the symptoms of illness in their child, perhaps by giving them medicine they don't need and making the child unwell – this is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).

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, cutting or sunna. 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.

NEGLECT

Neglect involves persistently failing to meet a child's basic needs such as physical, psychological or emotional needs. A child who is neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a child's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene and education are met
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm, or they may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. This doesn't have to be physical contact, and it can happen online. It may include:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- showing children pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material
- involving children in watching other people's sexual activity or inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are 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.

Children and young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour harm themselves and others. Harmful sexual behaviour includes using sexually explicit words and phrases, inappropriate touching, using sexual violence or threats, and having sex with other children or adults.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to his/her development. It may include:

- persistently denying the child love and affection
- regularly making the child feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means
- deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress a child
- being so overprotective towards the child that he/she is unable to develop or lead a normal life
- exploiting or corrupting a child, e.g. by involving him/her in illegal behaviour

- conveying to a child the message that he/she is worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or his/her only value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

BULLYING

Bullying and cyberbullying 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.

CHILD TRAFFICKING

Child trafficking is child abuse. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. They are often subject to multiple forms of exploitation.

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 pick pocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs, 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 or exploitation.

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female and could be of any age.

Anti Radicalisation and Extremism

Spotting signs of radicalisation

Everyone is different and it is not possible to use a check-list to tell if a person is being radicalised. The following might be signs

- Accessing extremist content online.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Dressing or using symbols associated with extremist or terrorist organisations.

Extremism

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Extremism becomes terrorism when there is a belief in using violence to further the cause.

Reporting

If you know the person concerned well, try talking to them about what you've noticed if you feel comfortable doing so. Be aware this conversation may not be welcome and the person may become angry or defensive. If your concerns persist, please raise them with your activity leader who will notify the Director of PERN.

The Director of PERN or their nominated person will ask for further information about the concerns and make a decision which could be: that there are no grounds for further action, to monitor the situation, to seek further guidance from experts, or to contact Prevent and refer the matter. Prevent is a national programme that aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

PERN does not have a statutory duty to refer (unless the concern is about a child under 18 in which case the PERN Child Safeguarding procedure should be followed) but the earlier that advice is sought, the sooner it may be possible to stop someone becoming a danger to themselves or others.

If there is immediate danger dial 999.

Further Advice and Follow-up

You can report suspicious activity to the police on 0800 789 321.

ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) Early Support Line 0800 0113764 www.actearly.uk

Modern Slavery

What is it?

Modern slavery takes many forms and is almost always motivated by profit. It includes sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude and exploitation into criminal activity such as county lines drug support and cannabis cultivation. It also encompasses 'trafficking', the arrangement of someone's travel with a view to their exploitation.

Spotting Signs of Modern Slavery

You may be a victim or may be in contact with a victim of modern slavery without realising it. The following signs should trigger further inquiries and support.

- Being unkempt, uneasy or malnourished.
- Not being sure of their address.
- Not having a debit or credit card or access to money.
- Untreated injuries.
- Someone else speaking for them.
- Being picked up and dropped off in unusual ways.

If you feel you are a victim of modern slavery talk to someone trusted about what is happening to you. If you encounter someone who is a potential victim encourage them to talk about it and take actions to protect themselves.

Reporting

Anyone who has concerns about, encounters or is a potential victim of modern slavery should raise this with their activity leader who will notify the Director of PERN.

The Director of PERN, or nominated person, will seek advice and if appropriate refer the matter to a First Responder who is trained to identify victims of modern slavery. First Responders are trained to gather more information from the victim and explain what happens next. The case may be passed to the police as the person may be a victim of crime. The victim has no obligation to cooperate with the police.

The usual First Responders for PERN are the Salvation Army via their national 24/7 helpline 08000 80803733. The Police and Migrant Help are also First Responders.

Anyone can report modern slavery to the modern slavery confidential helpline 0800 0121 700 or online at [https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report, which is](https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report,whichis) run by the UK charity Unseen.

Support for victims of modern slavery is co-ordinated through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which is the process set up by the UK Government to identify and support victims of trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. Only designated First Responders can make such referrals.

When there is immediate danger to the victim, inform the police by calling 999.

Asylum Seekers and Modern Slavery

Many asylum seekers arrive in the UK with the assistance of people smugglers. If an asylum seeker paid a people smuggler and is now free from their control this is not matter for the NRM. However, if a person is still under the control of another once in the UK, or was a victim of modern slavery prior to arriving in the UK and their money and actions are still under such control, they are potential victims of modern slavery and should contact a First Responder.

Further Information on Modern Slavery

www.unseenuk.org

www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales

Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention

Abuse might be brought to your attention by:

- a child making a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child making a direct disclosure about another child
- a child offering information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff or volunteer being concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent, carer, volunteer or a staff member towards them
- a parent or carer making a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent, carer or family member offering information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

Code of Conduct

All PERN workers, including the director and the board of trustees, paid staff, contractors and volunteers, must adhere to the following code of conduct:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity, and understand their right to personal privacy.
- Behave appropriately and use appropriate language at all times.
- Avoid favouritism and treat everyone fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Be available to listen to the concerns of children and young people and refer them to other sources of help where appropriate.
- Encourage children and young people to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviours they do not like.
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues and recognise that caution is required when discussing such issues.
- Never consume alcohol while caring for children and young people at work.
- Always act within professional boundaries; ensure all contact with children and young people is essential to the project / event / activity / you are working on.
- Any PERN activity where children or young people under 18 are without their parent or carer requires the prior written authorisation of the Director of PERN or a Trustee to ensure suitable plans and safeguards are in place.

Useful Resources

NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

0808 800 5000

Child Line:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>

0800 1111

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

Working Together To Safeguard Children:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Information Sharing and Safeguarding:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1062969/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Child Protection System in England:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/england>

Recognising and responding to abuse:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse#heading-top>

Managing allegations made against a child:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/managing-allegations-made-against-a-child>

Preventing and responding to Bullying:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying>

Protecting children from online abuse:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse>

Safer Recruitment:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment>

APPENDIX

PERN Safeguarding Statement

Available Here: [PERN Safeguarding Statement](#)