

Joanna North Adoption Ltd
Safeguarding Policy updated February 2026.

Safeguarding Children, Adults, Vulnerable Adults and Young People, Historical Abuse Policy and Protection of Vulnerable Adults. (including Whistle Blowing Procedures and Lone Working Procedures) In accordance with South West Child Protection Procedures

This policy is to safeguard Children, Adults, Vulnerable Adults and young people from any form of abuse. If at any point a young person, child or vulnerable adult perceives that they are being abused, or if during work anybody in my organisation is concerned that abuse may have occurred at any time or there is a risk of abuse occurring, staff have a duty of care to report this. In all cases a child or vulnerable adult making a disclosure should be treated sensitively and in confidence until the matter is managed by the appropriate safeguarding officer for the organization and referred on to relevant safeguarding services.

Within our Office we have copies of '**What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused**' and '**Working together to Safeguard Children.**' (2023) This policy links in with those major sources of information and advice from the Government. This is mandatory reading for everyone who joins our organisation.

Our Practice is informed by the following:

Care Act 2014 (Chapter 14)
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
Mental Capacity Act 2005.
Children Act 1989 (revised 2004).
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.
And in accordance with South West Child Protection Procedures.

Safeguarding Lead.

Joanna North is the Safeguarding lead within this organisation and responsible for

safeguarding in the organisation. Her training as Safeguarding lead was updated January 2026.

Training:

Everyone within the organisation will be trained in safeguarding of children before they start work with us. Everyone will be DBS checked by us. It is mandatory that staff read the document 'What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused.' Training will be updated regularly. Everyone within the organisation has access to consultation relating to Safeguarding whenever they wish for this. All children have equal rights to this safeguarding policy.

Safe Recruitment:

Our registered manager is trained in Safe Recruitment. The following checks are undertaken in order to ensure safe recruitment:

- A copy of your driving Licence (original to be seen by me). Identity.
- A copy of your passport (original to be seen by me or other photographic i.d. if you do not have a passport). Second Identity document or Birth Certificate if neither of the above.
- Copies of two utility bills addressed to you personally at your home (i.e. bank statement, water, gas, phone.). Must not be older than three months in date.
- Your updated C.V. with work history.
- Your confirmation that you have received an Associate's Agreement so that you understand expectations and Minimum Standards for Adoption Support Agencies including What To Do if You Think a Child is Being Abused.
- Your DBS check (we will update this for you). Within 3 years.
- Your Professional Indemnity Insurance Certificate.
- Your Professional Body Certification. (i.e. Bacp, ukcp, BPS.).
- Two referees. Please give e mail addresses and phone numbers so that I can e mail direct and telephone numbers so that they can then be checked. Referees will be called directly to check validity.

- Details of your work history including breaks.

It is vital that all of our clients as well as our organisation understand the meaning of child abuse. With this in mind we provide the following information that guides our work.

What is Child Abuse?

Main forms of abuse are:

- Physical abuse – where a young person is physically hurt, injured or killed – actions towards a young person could be shaking, squeezing, burning and biting. In addition giving a young person poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs/alcohol, attempted suffocation / drowning and excessive force during restraint Potential Signs are;
 - Where the explanations are not consistent with injury or the child's age and stage of development
 - Where there is no explanation at all, or the explanation offered changes
 - Where there has been unreasonable delay in seeking medical advice
 - Where the child has bruises or other injuries of different ages at the same time
 - Where the explanation for injuries appears adequate, but is frequent enough to indicate lack of supervision
 - Where movement appears impaired or causes pain.
- Sexual abuse – where a young person is sexually abused by adults or other young people who use them to meet their own sexual needs i.e. prostitution, this could include sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, exposure to pornographic material i.e. videos, internet. Potential signs are;

Physical;

- Where movement appears impaired or causes pain.

Medical;

- Recurrent unexplained abdominal pain
- Wetting or soiling

- Recurrent urinary symptoms
- Sexually transmitted infections

Behavioural;

- Overt sexualised behaviour
 - Compulsive masturbation
 - Sexually explicit acting out/drawing
 - Withdrawn, overly compliant
 - Depression and suicidal behaviour
 - Self harm
 - Absconding
 - Drug and alcohol abuse
 - Refusal to participate in normal routines
 - Sudden increase in sexual awareness.
- Emotional abuse – where continual lack of love and affection, threats, verbal attacks, taunting and shouting and constant criticism.

All of the above could be carried out by parents / other relations / adults/ professionals, carers or other young people.

- Neglect – this is when parents/carers fail to meet the basic and essential needs of a young person to have food, clothing, warmth, and medical care. Leaving a young person alone and unsupervised. Potential signs are;
 - Lack of physical development
 - Stealing, gorging or storing of food
 - Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
 - Poor hygiene
 - Lack of appropriate supervision
 - Failure to seek medical advice, and record that it has been offered and refused (if applicable)
 - Poor academic performance and poor school attendance

Other Areas to Be Aware of: It needs to be born in mind that abuse could also include Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Day Slavery, Domestic Violence towards men or women and children, Female Genital Mutilation and corruption of children or vulnerable adults into crime or terrorism. Abuse and exploitation can take place through social media and through sexting. Vulnerable people are also vulnerable to financial abuse or having their property taken over.

All areas of abuse are a continual responsibility of all staff to be vigilant on observing the potential signs or ensuring the avoidance of possible abuse. Although the guidelines may indicate abuse there is no exact science to determine whether the above signs are the result of this. Therefore, it is our duty of care to be observant and discuss concerns with the appropriate person within Joanna North Adoption Ltd who is Dr. Joanna North.

What do we do?

If a young person tells you something has happened:

Staff must make it clear to the young person, child or vulnerable adult that any disclosure made may have to be discussed with a third party only because we must keep young people safe but reassure them that only people who need to know will be informed in order to keep them safe. You cannot keep secrets of this nature for a child and you should explain why this is.

Always remember it is good practice to refrain from being drawn into secretive and collusive relationships with a young person.

- Do allow the young person to do the talking
- Do listen, take the young person seriously
- Do remain calm and caring
- Do allow child to finish
- Do inform the young person what action is going to be taken
- Do record conversation as soon as possible afterwards, (make note that the conversation has taken place in the young person's daily diary and make a full report ensuring we use the young person's own spoken words.
- Do share concerns with the Director and the young person's social worker, see schedule 5 Events and Notifications
- Don't postpone or delay the opportunity to listen
- Don't ask leading questions
- Don't allow your own feelings (such as anger, pity or shock) to surface
- Don't make false promises (i.e.: that you will keep the secret)
- Don't interpret what you have been told, just record it.

What happens next?

If a young person makes a disclosure as above, you suspect a young person is being abused, or you perceive that abuse may occur.

You should;

- Discuss your concerns immediately with your company Safeguarding Officer who is Joanna North. If Joanna North herself has concerns she will raise them with a relevant supervisor to her organisation.
- If the above is not appropriate contact the young person's social worker.
- In both cases you need to present the facts that have been disclosed or your reasons for concern, both verbally and within a written report.
- If in both cases your Safeguarding Officer or Social worker choose not to pursue this any further, request that they put this in writing stating their reasons.
- If you are not happy with the outcome you can contact your Local Safeguarding Children Officer (LADO) and /or OFSTED. If you have concerns about the behaviour of people in a senior position in your organisation i.e. Director of your organization or your safeguarding officer you should do the same. The details of your local LADO are placed on file within the organisation. Parents and service users should be aware that they can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer if at any time they have concerns.

You should be aware that your Management should react to all reports quickly and appropriately, ensuring effective prompt action is taken.

- Inform social worker of the facts, by e mailing a full report to them within 24 hours, at this point it should be discussed as to whether the placing authority wish to invoke a strategy meeting. Social services should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it, so if you have not heard back within 3 working days, contact social services again.
- All reports/correspondence from Joanna North Adoption and other professionals are to be kept on file within the office in a secure cabinet, the keys for this will be limited to two, one of which will be held by the Director, the other will be kept by the Administrator.

In case an investigation is necessary the young person should be provided with:

- Support
- Continual information regarding the investigation and its outcome (this should be explained in an age/understanding appropriate way)
- Privacy at all times
- Access and awareness to independent advice
- Alternative accommodation if required

In the case where a staff member is suspected of abuse he/she will be suspended without prejudice on full pay while the matter is being investigated. Staff will be expected to co-operate with safeguarding enquiries as part of their work contract and as part of our code of conduct.

It is of paramount importance, as an individual that if you perceive young person's welfare is at risk, however insignificant this may appear, you have a duty of care to act on it. If this doesn't happen you could incur disciplinary procedures.

Whistle Blowing Policy – We invite your feedback if you have any concerns relating to Safeguarding within the Organisation. If you feel your concerns are not taken seriously we would expect you to report them to relevant authorities such as LADO as below. We expect you to raise concerns about colleagues and management. Our organisational policy is that whistle blowers should be supported.

Lone Working and Professional Boundaries - We advise practitioners to risk assess any situation in which they work alone with children and young people. It is always best to see children with their parents/carers in close proximity or to make sure that doors to work rooms are open and that children or young people or vulnerable adults can call parents or gain access to adults whenever needed. Practitioners should never befriend children, adults or vulnerable adults outside of clinical sessions.

IF IN DOUBT TALK WITH YOUR MANAGER OR THE DIRECTOR/SAFEGUARDING OFFICER. NOTHING IS TOO INSIGNIFICANT WHEN CONSIDERING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN THIS ORGANISATION.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy

Our Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme will act to enforce safety for those who are vulnerable, and to ensure that professionals who can harm vulnerable adults cannot associate through the work that we undertake.

Our Adult Abuse Policy is based upon information acquired from the Department of Health's POVA or Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme produced in July 2004, and as set out in the Care Standards Act of 2000.

Our intention is that vulnerable adults get the respect and care that they deserve throughout the work with the Adoption Support Agency. As providers of a Service that does include work with vulnerable adults we are stakeholders in the work to ensure that all our Service Users are protected from potential abuse.

We guard against Abuse of Vulnerable Adults by the following:

1. Our professionals undergo DBS checks before being allowed to work with us (Police Act 1997) or are asked to produce existing checks that are in date. Anyone with a DBS check that highlights any disclosure will not be included in our work.
2. We undertake pre-employment checks on our Associates.
3. We undertake the optional POVA First check on our DBS forms.
4. If we receive any complaints relating to abuse of our Service Users by one of our professionals they will be suspended from that work immediately pending enquiries.
Every effort will be made to establish the validity of such complaints and to establish 'elements of substance'. Where there is substantial evidence of harm a recommendation will be made to the POVA list.

We adhere to the doctrines of 'No Secrets' guidance published by the Department of Health and Home Office November 2000.

We adhere to the guidance published by the National Assembly for Wales and the Home Office in July 2000 'In Safe Hands'.

Under circumstances of Misconduct or harm caused by any of our professionals we would abide by the Secretary of State's proposal that a referral should be made for inclusion on the POVA list i.e. 'where there is any action or inaction on the part of an individual who has harmed a vulnerable adult or placed a vulnerable adult at risk of harm.

We understand that as a minimum for inclusion on the POVA list the Secretary of State will require the following documents and information:

- Full name of individual

- Date of Birth
- National Insurance Number
- Last known address
- Confirmation that the individual was in a care position at the time of the misconduct
- Details of allegation of misconduct
- Detailed explanation of the misconduct
- Details of any investigation including statements
- Details of action taken
- Information on police involvement
- Details of proposed further action
- Any other information considered relevant.

Referrals should be sent to:

Independent Safeguarding Authority
PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA

We understand that individuals can seek removal from the POVA list under three circumstances:

By power of the Secretary of State
Appeal to a Care Standards Tribunal
Application for Review of inclusion on the POVA list

Historical Abuse Policy – see below.

Historical Abuse Policy

From our work with clients we are aware that a special situation arises when a child, young person, young adult or parent may have experienced some abuse in their past that begins to affect their thinking and life and behaviour. We want you to know that we are very experienced at working with people who have in their life history experiences of sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect. During a process of therapeutic care these memories can easily arise and come to the surface. Children may even have realisations from the past that you had not thought were there and this can be disturbing and upsetting. We would like children to feel that they can raise any of these experiences freely and easily with us as we will want to support and help them to think clearly about how any historical or past abuse may have affected their life.

It is often the case that once difficult or traumatic scenarios from the past have been reflected on and talked about that any stress or anxiety in relation to the matter will reduce and the trauma will cease to be so debilitating. We have expertise in helping with trauma in relation to past abuse and we will deal with all of this work in confidence and with sensitivity.

In relation to children and young people we are very aware that past trauma and historical abuse will deeply affect their behaviour and we aim to work together to assist with easing the stress and trauma that may be affecting their thinking and disturbing their behaviour. Again we have expertise and much experience in these matters.

Please be assured that we are here to support staff too in all matters that may arise for you while you are working with us and we hope you will feel free to talk with us if you are troubled by helping children with any of these matters by raising them in your supervision and reflective practice.

Historical abuse will have to be reported to relevant authorities as a safeguarding measure but this will be done tactfully and with sensitivity. This will include the child's social worker and or (with their advice) the police. All abuse cases will ultimately be reported to Ofsted. It has to be born in mind that historically an abuser may still be a risk to children and for this reason historical abuse has to be considered as significant as current abuse.

All concerns about historical abuse should be reported to the relevant

authorities – i.e. police, children’s social worker or Ofsted, Lado or Safeguarding Hub.

Children will have to be informed of this action in a tactful manner that helps them to feel safe.

Contact details can be found on this file for your local LADO, they are also in your Service User Letter. You can also google LADO to find the designated officer in your local area. The number and e mail address below are for your LADO in Devon.

Safeguarding Policy – LADO in Devon

LADO is for safeguarding with regard to professionals

‘LADO Officers provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations that have concerns about a person working or volunteering with children and young people who may have behaved inappropriately or if information has been received that may constitute an allegation.’ (www.devon.gov.uk)

Contact details:

contact the LADO Devon Team
on email: ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
or by calling 01392 384964

If you are concerned about the safety of a child in Devon or want to speak to someone, or if you are a child worried about your own safety, you can contact our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by:

- completing an online [request for support form](#)
- calling us on [0345 155 1071](tel:03451551071)
- emailing mashsecure@devon.gov.uk and giving as much information as you can

If a child is at immediate risk contact the police on [999](tel:999).

SAFEGUARDING FOR ADOPTION WEST

We also work as a provider for Adoption West whose authorities are

North Somerset, Bristol, Bath and NE Somerset, Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire. The contact details are as follows.

North Somerset Lado

North Somerset's LADO is James McMillan

07795 092 692

lado@n-somerset.gov.uk

Bristol Lado

Lado@bristol.gov.uk or Telephone **0117 903 7795**

Bath and North East Somerset Lado.

Bath & North East Somerset Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Tel: 01225 396810.

Information may then be requested to be sent to, e-mail: LADO@bathnes.gov.uk.

Wiltshire Lado

Phone 0300 456 0100 and ask for Lado.

South Gloucestershire Lado

Phone 01454 868508

Gloucestershire Lado.

Admin@gloucestershire.gov.uk

End

February 2026.