



Safeguarding Policy

*All Services**

This safeguarding policy sets out our commitment to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm and keeping them safe, across all the services that the Polaris community provides. A **policy** is a statement of intent, and is not intended to be implemented as a procedure. As such, you must refer to the appropriate Safeguarding **procedure** for full guidance on specific situations.

*Leaving Care Services have a separate Safeguarding Policy

This procedure forms part of the Polaris Quality Management system ISO 9001.

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| Procedure Owner: | Quality Assurance & Safeguarding Team |
| Approved by: | Operations Board |
| Date approved: | 13 March 2023 |
| Next review date: | March 2026 |
| Version No: | 04 |
| Associated Procedures: | Suite of Safeguarding Procedures and HR Procedures |

All Polaris companies are detailed in the current legal structure

Purpose and Objectives

The Polaris Community provides an extensive range of children's services. This includes independent fostering agencies, an adoption agency, supportive accommodation, bespoke children's services contracts, residential children's homes and education services. The delivery of these services frequently involves working with children, young people and adults who are vulnerable for a range of reasons. Our responsibilities to safeguard young people and adults are as important as our responsibilities to safeguard children. Polaris provides opportunities for children, young people and adults to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives in the community.

The welfare of children, young people and adults that the Polaris community has involvement with overrides all other considerations.

The Polaris community is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements. Polaris believes that all children, young people and adults have a right to protection from exploitation, neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Policy Statement

Polaris will take seriously and immediately report allegations or suspicions of abuse concerning children, young people or adults. Detailed **procedures** about how staff must respond to specific concerns are available and must be followed when applicable. All procedures should be followed in conjunction with published local safeguarding partnership procedures.

- Polaris will work in partnership with local authorities/trusts and other agencies to enable children, young people and adults to understand what abuse is and their right to be protected from harm (see the Safer Caring Policy if applicable).
- Polaris will ascertain the wishes and feelings of children, young people and adults in their care or with whom they work, inform them of their rights, help them put forward their views (using advocacy services if appropriate) and keep them fully informed.

Polaris will positively promote the needs of children, young people and adults they work with and will consider ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability.

- Polaris will pay attention to the needs of all children and is mindful of the needs of disabled people who are statistically at an increased risk of abuse and neglect.

- Polaris will provide an effective complaints procedure for all those that use its services.
- Polaris will work in partnership with the families of children, young people and adults who have suffered abuse and keep them fully informed where appropriate.
- Polaris will ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Polaris will provide high quality support and supervision to staff (and foster parents/prospective adopters) to ensure that any safeguarding issues are identified and acted upon.
- Polaris will offer appropriate support to children, young people and adults who have suffered abuse.
- Polaris will use safer recruitment practices to prevent the employment of unsuitable individuals.
- Polaris will provide safeguarding training for all staff as part of their induction and continuous professional development.

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. We will work together to prevent and minimise abuse. We will ensure that services we provide or offer are appropriate to the person at risk.