

The Department for Education's Working Together to Safeguard Children defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm.

This document applies to children and young people below the age of eighteen. The term 'children' will be used throughout the policy to apply to children and young people below the age of eighteen.

RESOLUTION FOCUSED MEDIATION is fully committed to this policy for safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people, by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

This document outlines child protection policy and procedures. It is not a comprehensive 'how to' guide in child protection practice but relates specifically to the role of all those involved in working directly or indirectly with children in child protection practice, i.e. activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

RESOLUTION FOCUSED MEDIATION has a responsibility to work with others to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Mediators and staff may have varying degrees of contact with children and young people. It is essential that mediators and staff in contact with children, young people and their families have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out their jobs safely and effectively. All mediators and staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children with whom they work.

This document outlines our commitment to the protection of children and aims to:

- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and young people and reduce risks to them;
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken.

We ensure that all mediators, staff, including freelance, contracted staff and/or associates are aware of the requirements within this policy. It is the responsibility of these groups to ensure that the personnel they are responsible for are aware of and understand the procedures and have levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to the level and nature of their direct involvement with children and young people.

The following individuals will be required to read and sign this policy prior to undertaking any work or role relating to RESOLUTION FOCUSED MEDIATION:

- Any agent acting on behalf of RESOLUTION FOCUSED MEDIATION in a capacity that may bring them into contact with children and young people;
- All volunteers and students aged 16 and over.

Confidentiality

In any work with children and young people it is important to be clear about confidentiality. While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence, and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, when there are concerns that a child is or may be at risk of significant harm, then the over-riding objective must be to safeguard that child and disclosure of information is imperative.

Confidentiality and child protection should be discussed with children and young people at the beginning of any piece of work, and reminders and information given from time to time, to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities the staff members have. It is absolutely essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

RESOLUTION FOCUSED MEDIATION has no powers to investigate child abuse. Nonetheless, RESOLUTION FOCUSED MEDIATION mediators and staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies in order to achieve this.

It is important to remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so any concerns must be properly recorded and shared with the appropriate agencies including the police where appropriate

Definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. An individual may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Neglect or abuse, physically, emotionally or sexually, can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self-image and self-esteem, and on his or her future life. Harm may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The definitions of harm outlined in Working Together 2010 are used to determine whether a child needs a child protection plan.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Parents/caregivers of children with multiple needs may find it difficult to ensure that the full range of their needs, including their emotional needs, is met. It may be hard to include such children in everyday activities alongside other family members, but not to include them may be harmful.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person into sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual online or printed images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or caregiver failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing or shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment;
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caregivers;

- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Abuse and Children with a Disability

Evidence available in the UK on the extent of abuse among children with a disability suggests that they are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they will be acted upon in accordance with these procedures.