FORWARD FUTURES

GROUP

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Protecting children, young people and adults at risk across all Forward Futures Group activity

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Applies To	All employees, volunteers, associates, contractors, agency workers, placement students, directors and others working on behalf of Forward Futures Group

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Document Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Reviewed By	Approved By
1.0	September 2026	First Forward Futures Group issue. Rebuilt from legacy safeguarding documents and aligned to current statutory guidance and Forward Futures Group delivery arrangements.	DSL	Founder & CEO
1.1	September 2026	Compliance review against Skegness Academy safeguarding policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and alternative provision guidance. Strengthened operational responsibilities, referrals, commissioned placements, attendance, online safety, allegations, recruitment, training and appendices.	DSL	Founder & CEO

Approval

This policy must be formally approved before issue. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that operational safeguarding procedures, forms, training and local referral information remain aligned with this policy.

Reviewed by / role	Brooke Wager – Founder, CEO and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Approval date	01 September 2026
Founder & CEO approval	Brooke Wager

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1. Purpose and Safeguarding Commitment

Forward Futures Group Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child, young person and adult at risk who engages with its services. Safeguarding is integral to the organisation's culture, decision-making, service design, and day-to-day practice.

This policy establishes the safeguarding principles, governance arrangements, and expectations that apply across Forward Futures Group. It is intended to ensure that concerns are recognised early, responded to appropriately, recorded accurately, shared lawfully, and escalated without delay.

Forward Futures Group recognises that effective safeguarding requires respectful, trauma-informed and inclusive practice, strong professional curiosity, clear accountability and effective partnership working.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Forward Futures Group activity, including provision delivered at Forward Futures Group premises, in schools or other partner settings, in the community, through outreach, during visits or placements, and through online or digital activity.

It applies to all employees, volunteers, associates, contractors, agency workers, placement students, directors and any other person undertaking work on behalf of Forward Futures Group.

The organisation may support individuals across an age range of 6-25. Different statutory safeguarding frameworks apply according to age and circumstances; these distinctions are set out in this policy.

3. Legal and Statutory Framework

Forward Futures Group will act in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance applicable to its legal status and activities and will adopt relevant education-sector safeguarding standards when delivering commissioned provision for schools or colleges.

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), applied as the safeguarding benchmark for school- and college-commissioned delivery, while recognising that duties addressed specifically to governing bodies, proprietors, schools or colleges remain with those bodies.
- Education Act 2002 and current statutory guidance on arranging alternative provision, where relevant to commissioners and partnership arrangements.
- Care Act 2014 and Care and Support statutory guidance in relation to adult safeguarding.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and current Prevent duty guidance, where applicable.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and relevant Disclosure and Barring Service requirements.
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Sexual Offences Act 2003, Modern Slavery Act 2015 and Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as amended.

The DSL will monitor changes in national guidance, Lincolnshire local safeguarding arrangements and commissioning requirements. This policy and supporting procedures will be updated promptly where a change affects practice; the annual review date is not a reason to delay an amendment.

4. Definitions and Age Framework

- Child: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- Young person: a term used by Forward Futures Group for individuals receiving services; it does not replace the legal definition of a child.
- Young adult: for the purposes of this policy, an individual aged 18-25 receiving Forward Futures Group support.
- Adult at risk: an adult aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and, because of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
- Safeguarding: action to promote welfare, prevent harm and protect people from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Child protection: action undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- DDSL: Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

A person aged 18-25 is not automatically an adult at risk. Where an adult safeguarding concern arises, Forward Futures Group will consider the Care Act criteria and the person's individual circumstances.

5. Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare and safety of children and adults at risk is paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
- Staff must maintain professional curiosity and consider the wider context surrounding a concern.
- Practice will be person-centered, trauma-informed, inclusive and anti-discriminatory.
- The voice, wishes and lived experience of the individual will be considered, while recognising that action may be required without consent where necessary to protect them or others.
- Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and with those who have a legitimate safeguarding need to know.
- Forward Futures Group will work collaboratively with families, commissioners and statutory and voluntary-sector partners where appropriate.
- No member of staff should assume that another professional or organisation will take action.

6. Governance, Roles and Responsibilities

Founder & CEO

- Holds organisational accountability for safeguarding and ensures that effective leadership, sufficient time, resources, safer recruitment, policies, training, supervision and quality assurance are in place.
- Approves this policy and receives proportionate safeguarding assurance information while respecting case confidentiality.
- Acts as case manager for concerns or allegations about the DSL, takes LADO advice before investigation or employment action, and ensures no person manages a concern about themselves.
- Promotes a culture in which concerns and professional challenge can be raised without fear of detriment.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and oversight of filtering and monitoring arrangements used by Forward Futures.
- Is available during delivery hours, in person or by an agreed reliable method. A trained DDSL or clearly communicated external escalation route must be available whenever the DSL is unavailable; action must never wait for a named person.
- Advises and supports staff, assesses risk, records decision-making and rationale, makes or supports referrals, follows up outcomes and escalates when appropriate.

- Acts as the main safeguarding contact for commissioners and statutory partners, contributes to multi-agency work, and understands Lincolnshire Family Help, child protection and adult safeguarding thresholds and pathways.
- Maintains secure, accurate and chronological records, oversees appropriate transfer, and ensures relevant safeguarding information is available to staff on a need-to-know basis.
- Maintains oversight of attendance and absence as safeguarding issues, the impact of welfare concerns on engagement and educational outcomes, and the additional risks faced by children with SEND or communication needs.
- Maintains training, Prevent knowledge, professional supervision and safeguarding quality assurance.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DDSL is trained to the same standard as the DSL, supports the DSL and acts with delegated authority when required. The DSL retains lead responsibility when present, but safeguarding action must not be delayed because the DSL is unavailable.

All Staff and Representatives

- Read and understand this policy, supporting procedures, the Staff Code of Conduct and KCSIE 2026 Part One. This expectation applies to staff who work directly and indirectly with children.
- Know the identity and contact arrangements for the DSL and DDSL, the internal reporting route and how to contact statutory services directly.
- Remain alert to abuse, neglect, exploitation, prejudice-based harm, online harm, absence and changes in presentation or behaviour; provide a safe environment and report concerns immediately.
- Make accurate, factual records, support referrals and statutory enquiries as required, and never investigate concerns themselves.
- Maintain professional boundaries, report low-level concerns and unsafe practice, complete required training and challenge inaction through the escalation route.

7. Safeguarding Culture and Professional Curiosity

Forward Futures Group will maintain a safeguarding culture in which individuals are listened to, concerns are welcomed and staff are expected to notice, question and appropriately explore indicators that something may be wrong.

Professional curiosity includes considering patterns, changes in behaviour, attendance, relationships, online activity, presentation, unexplained injuries, contextual risks and information from other professionals. Staff must avoid assumptions based on disability, communication needs, family circumstances, culture, behaviour or previous history.

Staff must not investigate. Where information creates a safeguarding concern, it must be reported to the DSL/DDSL.

8. Vulnerability and Additional Safeguarding Considerations

Any child can experience abuse or neglect. Some circumstances may increase vulnerability or create barriers to recognising or disclosing harm. Staff should be particularly alert where an individual:

- has SEND, communication needs or a disability;
- is looked after, previously looked after or otherwise care-experienced;
- is missing from education, provision, home or care;
- has experienced trauma, exploitation, domestic abuse, bereavement or significant instability;
- is experiencing homelessness, poverty, family breakdown or insecure accommodation;
- is socially isolated or experiencing bullying or discrimination;
- is involved with youth justice or is at risk of criminal exploitation;
- has mental health or emotional wellbeing needs;
- is a young carer;
- is at risk through online relationships, social media or technology;
- faces discrimination, racism or other identity-based harm.

Additional vulnerability must never be used to lower expectations of safety or to explain away possible indicators of abuse.

9. Recognising Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Safeguarding concerns may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, discriminatory abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, financial abuse, coercive control, online abuse, harmful practices, radicalisation or other forms of harm.

Indicators are not proof and must not be considered in isolation. Staff should consider patterns and context and report concerns where they arise. Appendix B - Categories and Indicators of Abuse provides further guidance.

10. Child-on-Child Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Forward Futures Group has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. All reports, concerns and indicators will be taken seriously; absence of a report does not mean abuse is not occurring. Behaviour must never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up or an inevitable feature of group provision.

Child-on-child abuse may include bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercive or controlling behaviour, abuse in intimate relationships, consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, AI-generated sexual imagery, upskirting, initiation or hazing and abuse within online groups.

Staff must report concerns immediately and must not mediate, investigate, view or forward sexual imagery. The DSL will make an immediate safety assessment and consider the needs of the child who may have been harmed, the child alleged to have caused harm, and other children. Decisions will consider wishes and feelings, ages and developmental stages, power imbalance, coercion, patterns, SEND, contextual risks and whether a crime may have occurred.

Where sexual violence or a potentially criminal offence is reported, the DSL will seek advice from police and/or Children's Services without avoidable delay and will preserve possible evidence. Risk assessments and safety plans will be recorded, reviewed and shared with the commissioning DSL on a need-to-know basis. Support will not be made conditional on a criminal investigation or prosecution.

11. Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, County Lines and Serious Violence

Staff must be alert to indicators of exploitation, including unexplained money or gifts, multiple phones, changes in friendship groups, missing episodes, unexplained travel, older associates, hotel use, substance misuse, fear of particular individuals, changes in behaviour and signs of coercion or debt.

Forward Futures Group recognises that children may not recognise themselves as victims and that apparent consent does not remove the possibility of exploitation. Concerns must be reported immediately.

12. Domestic Abuse, Relationship Abuse and Honour-Based Abuse

Children and young people may experience harm through seeing, hearing or experiencing domestic abuse, coercive control or abusive behaviour in their own intimate relationships. Concerns may also relate to forced marriage, female genital mutilation or so-called honour-based abuse.

Staff must report concerns promptly and must not approach family members or others where doing so could increase risk. The DSL will determine appropriate referral and information-sharing arrangements.

13. Online Safety and Technology-Facilitated Harm

Online safety is an integral part of safeguarding and is considered through the four areas of content, contact, conduct and commerce. Risks include grooming, exploitation, cyberbullying, sextortion, the creation or sharing of nude or semi-nude images (including AI-generated imagery), harmful content, fraud, coercion, radicalisation and contact with unsafe individuals.

Forward Futures Group will use appropriate filtering and monitoring for organisation-managed networks and devices, assign responsibility for oversight, review effectiveness and proportionality at least annually and after significant changes or incidents, and provide a clear route for staff and learners to report concerns or technical breaches. Filtering must not unreasonably restrict access needed for education or support.

Staff must use approved devices, accounts and communication channels, follow the Online Safety Policy, maintain professional boundaries, and report online concerns in the same way as offline concerns. Any online arrangements supplied by a host or commissioning setting will be confirmed before delivery; this does not remove Forward Futures' duty to act on concerns arising during its work.

14. Mental Health, Self-Harm and Suicide-Related Concerns

Mental health difficulties are not in themselves evidence of abuse. However, changes in mental health, self-harm, suicidal thoughts or significant emotional distress may be indicators that a person has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, or may themselves create an immediate safeguarding risk.

Staff must report safeguarding concerns to the DSL/DDSL and seek emergency assistance where there is immediate danger or a medical emergency. Staff must not attempt to provide clinical assessment beyond their competence.

15. Prevent, Radicalisation and Extremism

Forward Futures Group recognises vulnerability to radicalisation as a safeguarding concern. Staff must report concerns about radicalisation or extremism to the DSL/DDSL without delay.

The DSL will assess the concern, consider the organisation's role and any applicable Prevent requirements, and seek advice or make a referral through appropriate safeguarding or Prevent arrangements where necessary. Staff must avoid attempting to assess ideology or investigate suspected radicalisation themselves.

16. Responding to Concerns and Disclosures

When a disclosure is made or a safeguarding concern is identified, staff must:

- stay calm and listen carefully;

- take the person seriously and acknowledge that they have done the right thing by speaking;
- explain that information cannot be kept secret if it is necessary to keep them or another person safe;
- use open prompts only where clarification is essential;
- record the individual's own words where possible;
- report the concern immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

Staff must not investigate, ask leading or repeated questions, promise confidentiality, confront an alleged perpetrator, seek proof, or delay reporting while attempting to obtain further information.

17. Reporting, Recording and Escalation

Any safeguarding concern, disclosure, allegation or observation must be reported to the Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL immediately. If someone is in immediate danger, has sustained a serious injury, or urgent police or medical assistance is required, staff must call 999 first and notify the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible.

A factual written record must be completed as soon as practicable and normally on the same working day. It must include the date, time, location, people present, source of the information, the individual's own words where possible, immediate action taken, who was informed, decisions made, the reasons for those decisions, required follow-up and the outcome. Completing a written record must never delay an urgent verbal report, referral or protective action.

Learners placed by commissioning settings

Where a learner is placed with Forward Futures Group by a school, college, local authority or other commissioning organisation, the commissioning setting will normally retain lead responsibility for coordinating the learner's wider safeguarding arrangements.

The Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL will record the concern and notify the commissioning setting's DSL or authorised safeguarding contact as soon as practicable and normally on the same working day. Information must be shared securely, proportionately and only with those who need it for safeguarding purposes.

Where the learner remains on the roll of a commissioning school or college, its DSL will normally coordinate any referral to local authority Children's Social Care and subsequent multi-agency communication. Forward Futures Group will provide relevant information, contribute to assessments and meetings, and complete any actions agreed with the commissioning setting or statutory services.

This arrangement does not remove Forward Futures Group responsibility to safeguard learners. Forward Futures Group will take immediate protective action and contact emergency services where required. The Forward Futures Group DSL, DDSL or any member of staff may make a direct referral to Children's Social Care or the police where:

- A child may be at immediate or serious risk.
- The commissioning setting's DSL is unavailable.
- Waiting for the commissioning setting would create an unsafe delay.
- The commissioning setting asks Forward Futures Group to make the referral.
- The staff member reasonably believes appropriate action has not been taken.
- A referral has not been accepted but risk remains.
- Risk increases or circumstances worsen following the initial response.

Staff do not require permission from Forward Futures Group or the commissioning setting to make a necessary safeguarding referral. Where safe and appropriate, they must inform the Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL as soon as possible and record the action taken.

Forward Futures Group will maintain its own safeguarding record of the concern, decisions, communications, referrals, actions and outcomes. It will not rely solely on records held by the commissioning setting.

Escalating an inadequate response

If a referral is not accepted, no adequate response is received, required action is not taken, circumstances worsen or concerns remain, the DSL, DDSL or referring staff member must continue to escalate the matter.

Escalation may include requesting reconsideration, speaking to a manager within Children's Social Care, contacting the commissioning setting's DSL or senior safeguarding lead, or using the relevant local safeguarding partnership professional-resolution procedure.

Concerns about staff or organisational practice

Concerns or allegations relating to a Forward Futures Group employee, volunteer, contractor or other person working on its behalf must be managed under the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy or Low-Level Concerns Policy, as applicable.

Where the harm threshold may be met, advice must be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer. The commissioning setting's DSL must also be informed where this is necessary to safeguard its learner.

Concerns about the Founder and CEO must be reported through the independent external route set out in the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Where a member of staff believes safeguarding concerns have been ignored, concealed or handled improperly, or they feel unable to raise the matter through the normal safeguarding routes, they should follow the Whistleblowing and Speak Up Policy. Whistleblowing must not delay an immediate referral to Children's Social Care, the police or emergency services where a child may be at risk.

18. Referrals and Multi-Agency Working

The Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL will assess each concern against current local safeguarding thresholds and determine what immediate action is required. Where the learner has been placed by a school, college, local authority or other commissioning organisation, the Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL will normally consult the commissioner's DSL or authorised safeguarding contact when deciding how the concern will be progressed.

Where the learner remains on the roll of a commissioning school or college, its DSL will normally coordinate any referral to local authority Children's Social Care. However, consultation with the commissioning setting must not delay necessary protective action. Forward Futures Group may take emergency action or make a direct referral where there is immediate or serious risk, the commissioner's DSL is unavailable, waiting would create an unsafe delay, or Forward Futures Group reasonably believes appropriate action has not been taken.

Depending on the learner's age, circumstances and level of risk, possible routes may include Family Help, Lincolnshire Children's Services, Adult Social Care, the police, health services, the Local Authority Designated Officer, Prevent or Channel arrangements, Youth Justice, the commissioning education provider and other appropriate agencies.

A child's consent is not required to make a child-protection referral. Consent will normally be sought for voluntary support or Family Help unless seeking consent could place someone at increased risk, prejudice an assessment or investigation, cause unjustified delay, or another lawful basis permits information to be shared without consent. The reasons for decisions, including decisions not to refer, must be recorded clearly.

For learners aged 18 or over, the DSL or DDSL must consider whether the safeguarding-adults threshold is met and whether a referral to Adult Social Care is required. Wherever possible, the adult's wishes should be considered, but information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful safeguarding basis, serious risk, risk to another person or an overriding public-interest consideration.

Forward Futures Group will cooperate with statutory enquiries and multi-agency assessment, planning and review. Staff must support external agencies following a referral, share relevant new information promptly, complete agreed actions and use the appropriate Lincolnshire escalation or professional-disagreement procedure where necessary.

19. Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Data Protection

Safeguarding information will be handled securely and shared lawfully, proportionately, accurately and promptly on a legitimate need-to-know basis. Data-protection law does not prevent appropriate safeguarding information sharing and must not be used as a reason for failing to protect a child or adult at risk.

The DSL or DDSL will apply current government information-sharing guidance and use professional judgement when deciding what information should be shared. A record must be made of:

- What information was shared.
- With whom it was shared.
- When and how it was shared.
- The safeguarding purpose and lawful basis.
- Any restrictions placed on its further use.
- Any decision not to share information and the reasons for that decision.

Records must distinguish clearly between fact, professional observation, information received from another person and professional opinion.

Staff must never promise absolute confidentiality. They should explain that information may need to be shared with the DSL, DDSL or another appropriate professional to keep someone safe.

Where safe and appropriate, the child or young person and their parent or carer should be told what information will be shared, with whom and why. Parents or carers should not be informed before information is shared where doing so could increase risk, place someone in danger, prejudice a police or Children's Social Care enquiry, lead to evidence being destroyed, or cause an unjustified delay in protective action.

Consent will be considered where appropriate, particularly for voluntary support. However, relevant information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful safeguarding basis and sharing is necessary to protect a child, adult at risk or another person. The child's best interests and safety must remain the primary consideration.

Where a learner has been placed by a commissioning school, college, local authority or other organisation, relevant safeguarding information will normally be shared with its DSL or authorised safeguarding contact. Information shared with commissioners will be limited to what is necessary for safety, statutory responsibilities, risk management and continuity of support.

Forward Futures Group will not assume that the commissioning setting already holds relevant information or that another professional will share it. Where information is significant to a learner's safety, the DSL or DDSL should confirm that it has been received by the appropriate safeguarding contact.

Safeguarding information must not be discussed casually, sent through personal email accounts or unapproved systems, or accessed by anyone without a legitimate safeguarding role. Records must be stored securely with access restricted to authorised personnel.

Forward Futures Group will retain its own safeguarding record of concerns, disclosures, decisions, referrals, information sharing and outcomes. It will not rely solely on safeguarding records held by the commissioning setting.

20. Parents, Carers and the Voice of the Individual

Forward Futures Group will seek to work openly and constructively with parents and carers where appropriate. The wishes, feelings and perspective of the child, young person or adult will be considered in safeguarding decision-making.

Parents or carers will normally be informed about safeguarding concerns unless doing so could increase risk, prejudice an investigation, place another person at risk, or conflict with advice from statutory agencies. The DSL will determine the appropriate approach.

21. Commissioned Placements and Partnership Delivery

Where a school, college, local authority or other organisation commissions or arranges a placement, Forward Futures Group retains responsibility for safeguarding, safe practice and the welfare of the learner while they are attending or receiving its services. The commissioner retains its own statutory and safeguarding duties. Referral to Forward Futures Group does not transfer or remove those responsibilities.

Before a placement begins, Forward Futures Group and the commissioner will confirm in writing:

- Named DSL and DDSL contacts, including availability and emergency contact arrangements.
- Essential safeguarding, SEND, medical, behavioural and risk information.
- Parental or carer contact details and any permissions or consents required for participation in the service.
- Safeguarding reporting, referral and escalation arrangements.
- Which organisation will normally coordinate referrals and communication with statutory agencies.
- Daily attendance reporting and absence-notification deadlines.
- Transport, arrival, collection and handover arrangements.
- Information-sharing, secure communication and record-transfer arrangements.
- Arrangements for placement monitoring, review and transition.
- Which organisation will lead any existing safeguarding plan, statutory process, Education, Health and Care Plan or multi-agency arrangement.

The Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL will notify the commissioning setting's DSL or authorised safeguarding contact without delay of any safeguarding concern, disclosure, significant incident or material change in risk arising during delivery. This will normally take place on the same working day, unless the police, Children's Social Care or another statutory agency directs otherwise.

Where the learner remains on the roll of a commissioning school or college, its DSL will normally coordinate any referral to local authority Children's Social Care and subsequent multi-agency communication. Forward Futures Group will provide relevant information, contribute to assessments and meetings, and complete agreed actions.

Forward Futures Group will make a direct referral to Children's Social Care, the police or another appropriate statutory service where:

- A learner may be at immediate or serious risk.
- Emergency action is required.
- The commissioning setting's DSL is unavailable.
- Waiting for the commissioner would create an unsafe delay.
- The commissioner asks Forward Futures Group to make the referral.
- Forward Futures Group reasonably believes appropriate action has not been taken.
- Risk remains or circumstances worsen following the initial response.

Forward Futures Group does not require the commissioner's permission to take emergency safeguarding action or make a necessary referral.

Forward Futures Group will report attendance for every commissioned session. Any unexplained, unexpected or concerning absence will be reported to the commissioning setting on the same day and within the agreed timescale. Forward Futures Group will follow its Missing Child or Young Person Procedure where the learner fails to arrive, leaves without authorisation or their whereabouts become unknown during a session.

Forward Futures Group will maintain its own records of safeguarding concerns, attendance, incidents, decisions, communications, referrals and outcomes. It will not rely solely on records held by the commissioning setting.

Forward Futures Group will cooperate with commissioner monitoring, safeguarding visits and placement reviews and will provide reasonable assurance concerning staff suitability, safeguarding training, premises, policies, risk management and service quality.

Commissioners must notify Forward Futures Group promptly of new or changed information affecting the learner's safety, needs, risk, suitability or support arrangements. Forward Futures Group may pause, amend or end a placement where required information has not been provided or where needs or risks exceed the service's agreed scope, competence, staffing or environment. Any such decision will be risk-assessed, recorded and communicated to the commissioner so that safe alternative arrangements can be considered.

22. Outreach, Community, Off-Site and Online Delivery

The same safeguarding standards apply wherever Forward Futures Group delivers activities, including schools, colleges, community venues, public spaces, employer premises and online environments.

Before delivery begins, the activity must be appropriately planned and proportionately risk-assessed. Arrangements must address:

- The suitability and security of the location.
- Staffing, supervision and any planned one-to-one working.
- Attendance, arrival, departure and handover arrangements.
- Emergency contacts and access to first aid.
- Travel and transport responsibilities.
- Lone-working arrangements and staff check-in procedures.
- Medical, SEND, communication and accessibility needs.
- Access to welfare and toilet facilities.
- Online-safety and approved communication arrangements.
- Safeguarding reporting and escalation routes.
- The respective responsibilities of Forward Futures Group and any host or commissioning organisation.

Staff must familiarise themselves with relevant emergency and safeguarding arrangements at the host venue. A host organisation's procedures do not replace Forward Futures' own safeguarding responsibilities. Concerns must still be reported to the Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL in accordance with the Safeguarding Reporting Procedure.

Where delivery takes place on the premises of a commissioning school or college, Forward Futures Group staff must also notify the setting's DSL or authorised safeguarding contact of relevant concerns. Responsibility for taking immediate action must be agreed according to the circumstances, but communication with the host or commissioner must never delay emergency action or a necessary safeguarding referral.

Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times and communicate with learners only through approved organisational accounts, systems and contact arrangements. Personal social-media accounts, private messaging services and unauthorised communication channels must not be used.

Online sessions must use approved platforms and be delivered with appropriate privacy, supervision, recording, parental or commissioner awareness and reporting arrangements. Staff

must consider the learner's location, who may be present, whether the learner can speak safely and what action will be taken if a concern arises or the connection is unexpectedly lost.

Forward Futures Group does not ordinarily deliver sessions or conduct visits in a learner's home. A home visit may take place only where it is necessary to meet an identified safeguarding, welfare, assessment or engagement need and no suitable alternative arrangement is reasonably available.

Any home visit must be:

- Authorised in advance by the Founder and CEO or DSL.
- Agreed with or notified to the commissioning setting.
- Supported by a documented risk assessment and clear visit plan.
- Conducted by two members of staff wherever reasonably practicable.
- Supported by agreed communication, check-in and emergency arrangements.
- Recorded following the visit, including its purpose, attendees, arrival and departure times, relevant observations, actions and concerns.

A lone home visit must be exceptional, specifically authorised and supported by enhanced lone-working and check-in arrangements. Staff must withdraw and seek assistance if they feel unsafe or if circumstances differ materially from those considered in the risk assessment.

Staff must not transport learners in their own vehicles unless this has been specifically authorised and all relevant license, insurance, consent, risk-assessment and safeguarding requirements have been confirmed.

Any concern arising during outreach, community, off-site or online delivery must be reported immediately under the Safeguarding Reporting Procedure. If someone is in immediate danger or urgent police or medical assistance is required, staff must call 999 before notifying the DSL or DDSL.

23. Missing or Absent Children and Young People

Absence from education or provision, particularly repeated, unexplained or prolonged absence, may indicate neglect, exploitation or wider harm. A learner going missing during an activity may present an immediate safeguarding risk. Attendance must therefore be monitored as a safeguarding matter and not treated solely as an administrative issue.

The action taken following absence will depend on the learner's referral, enrolment or commissioning arrangements. Responsibilities must be agreed and recorded before provision begins.

Learners placed by a commissioning organisation

Where a learner attends Forward Futures Group through a school, college, local authority or other commissioning organisation, Forward Futures Group and the commissioner must agree in writing:

- How and when the expected attendance list will be provided.
- Who is responsible for contacting the learner or parent or carer following non-attendance.
- Whether Forward Futures Group is authorised to make direct contact.
- The approved contact methods and details that may be used.
- The deadline for reporting absence to the commissioner.
- The action required for repeated, unexplained or concerning absence.
- The escalation arrangements for learners with known vulnerabilities or increased risk.

Forward Futures Group will follow the agreed same-day absence protocol. Staff will check the expected register, record the non-attendance and notify the commissioning setting within the agreed deadline.

Forward Futures Group will contact the learner or their parent or carer only where this is authorised by the commissioning arrangement or where immediate safeguarding circumstances make contact necessary and appropriate.

Where the commissioner is responsible for making contact, Forward Futures Group will not routinely duplicate that contact unless requested. However, Forward Futures Group must not assume that notifying the commissioner has resolved a safeguarding concern. Where the absence is unexpected, repeated or associated with increased risk, the Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL must confirm that the concern has been received and appropriately considered by the commissioner.

If no adequate response is received, risk remains or circumstances worsen, the Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL must escalate the concern through the agreed safeguarding routes. This may include contacting the commissioner's DSL or senior safeguarding lead, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care or the police.

Learners for whom Forward Futures Group holds attendance-contact responsibility

Where Forward Futures Group has agreed primary responsibility for monitoring attendance and responding to non-attendance, staff will undertake same-day welfare contact using the contact details and approved communication arrangements recorded at referral or induction.

For a child or young person under 18, staff will normally:

- Attempt contact with the parent or carer using approved organisational contact methods.
- Contact the learner directly only where this has been agreed as appropriate and authorised through the referral, consent or communication arrangements.
- Record every contact attempt and any response received.
- Contact the recorded emergency contact where the parent or carer cannot be reached and doing so is appropriate.
- Consider known risks, vulnerabilities, recent concerns and patterns of absence.
- Refer the matter to the DSL or DDSL where contact cannot be established or safeguarding concerns arise.

For a learner aged 18 or over, staff will normally contact the learner directly using approved organisational contact methods. Where the learner cannot be reached and there are welfare or safeguarding concerns, staff may contact their agreed emergency contact, Adult Social Care, the police or another appropriate service, taking account of consent, capacity, known risk and the urgency of the circumstances.

Staff must not use personal telephone numbers, personal email accounts, personal social-media accounts or unauthorised messaging services to contact learners or families.

Repeated, unexplained or concerning absence must be reviewed by the DSL or DDSL. Where appropriate, Forward Futures Group will liaise with the learner's parent or carer, education provider, local authority, social worker or other relevant professional and consider whether a safeguarding referral or welfare check is required.

Learners missing while under Forward Futures Group supervision

If a learner becomes missing while attending Forward Futures Group or participating in an activity under its supervision, staff must follow the Missing Child or Young Person Procedure and complete an immediate risk assessment.

Action may include:

- Checking safe and agreed areas without placing staff or other learners at risk.
- Contacting the learner using approved organisational methods.
- Contacting the parent, carer or emergency contact where appropriate.

- Notifying the commissioning organisation, where applicable.
- Contacting the police, Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care without delay where circumstances or known risks warrant it.
- Preserving relevant information, including the learner's last known location, clothing, presentation, communications and direction of travel.

When the learner is located or returns, Forward Futures Group will complete and record an appropriate welfare and safeguarding review. Any commissioning organisation will be informed where applicable. Required changes to the risk assessment, support plan, attendance arrangements, or placement must be agreed and documented.

24. Safeguarding Adults and Young Adults Aged 18-25

Forward Futures Group recognises that a young adult aged 18 to 25 may experience significant vulnerability, exploitation, abuse, neglect or welfare concerns without necessarily meeting the statutory definition of an adult at risk.

For safeguarding purposes, a person aged 18 or over may meet the Care Act adult-safeguarding threshold where they:

- Have needs for care and support, whether or not those needs are currently being met by a local authority.
- Are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- Are unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it, because of their care and support needs.

Where these criteria appear to be met, the DSL or DDSL will consider referral to Adult Social Care and any other relevant agency. If the person is in immediate danger, has sustained a serious injury, or urgent police or medical assistance is required, staff must call 999.

Adult-safeguarding practice will have regard to the principles of empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability. Wherever possible, action will be person-led and will take account of the adult's wishes, desired outcomes, communication needs and circumstances.

Consent will normally be sought before making a referral concerning an adult. However, information may be shared or a referral made without consent where there is a lawful basis and this is necessary and proportionate, including where:

- There is a risk of serious harm.
- Other children or adults may be at risk.

- A serious crime may have been committed.
- The person may be subject to coercion, control or undue influence.
- The person may lack capacity to make the relevant decision.
- Staff or professionals may be at risk.
- An overriding public-interest or legal requirement applies.

Where there is reason to doubt whether the adult can understand, retain, use or weigh relevant information or communicate their decision, the DSL or DDSL will seek appropriate advice and apply the Mental Capacity Act principles. A person must not be treated as lacking capacity merely because they make a decision that others consider unwise.

Where an individual aged 18 or over does not meet the adult-safeguarding threshold, Forward Futures Group will still respond to welfare, safety and risk concerns within the scope of its service. This may include offering support, agreeing a safety plan, signposting, seeking consent to contact another service, liaising with an authorised professional or taking other lawful and proportionate action.

Adults aged 18 or over are entitled to confidentiality and independent decision-making. Parents or carers will not automatically be informed or involved unless the adult consents, lacks capacity in relation to the particular decision, or information sharing is otherwise necessary and lawful to prevent harm.

All concerns, the adult's wishes, decisions made, advice obtained, information shared, referrals and reasons for action or inaction must be recorded clearly.

25. Safer Recruitment and Suitability

Forward Futures Group will take reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and adults at risk. Recruitment will follow the Safer Recruitment Policy and will include appropriate pre-employment checks, safeguarding-focused selection and ongoing suitability arrangements.

At least one person involved in recruitment should have completed appropriate safer-recruitment training. Recruitment decisions must be documented and must consider the nature of the role, the level of contact with learners and whether the work constitutes regulated activity.

Before employment or engagement begins, checks appropriate and legally available for the role will include:

- Verification of identity.
- Confirmation of the right to work in the UK.

- An enhanced DBS check.
- Children's and/or adults' barred-list information where the role and activities are legally eligible.
- Appropriate references obtained directly from the referee.
- Scrutiny of employment history and satisfactory explanations for gaps, inconsistencies or repeated changes.
- Verification of relevant qualifications and professional registrations.
- Safeguarding-focused application, shortlisting and interview questions.
- Overseas criminal-record or equivalent checks where appropriate and reasonably available.
- Prohibition, restriction, disqualification or professional-status checks where these are applicable to the role and organisation.

Original identity, qualification and right-to-work documents must be examined in accordance with the relevant requirements. The date of each check, who completed it, its outcome and any required follow-up must be recorded on Forward Futures' secure single central recruitment record or equivalent compliance register. Copies will only be retained where this is lawful, necessary and consistent with the organisation's retention arrangements.

References should normally include the candidate's current or most recent relevant employer. They must be obtained from an appropriate and verifiable source and should specifically address suitability to work with children, young people or adults at risk. Open references or references supplied only by the candidate must not be accepted without independent verification. Any inconsistency, qualification or safeguarding concern must be resolved before appointment is confirmed.

Forward Futures Group will carry out proportionate online searches concerning shortlisted candidates as part of its safeguarding due diligence. Candidates must be informed that these searches may take place. Searches must focus on information relevant to suitability for the role and must not be used unlawfully or to discriminate. Relevant findings must be discussed with the candidate and considered fairly before a decision is made.

No person will undertake unsupervised regulated activity until all checks required for that activity have been completed satisfactorily.

Any exceptional start before receipt of a DBS certificate or another outstanding check must:

- Be lawful and genuinely necessary.
- Be authorised in writing by the Founder and CEO.
- Be supported by a written, role-specific risk assessment.
- Confirm that all other available checks have been completed satisfactorily.

- Exclude unsupervised regulated activity.
- Include appropriate supervision and any restrictions on duties.
- Be reviewed regularly until the outstanding check is received.
- Be ended or revised immediately if adverse information becomes known.

Volunteers, contractors, agency workers, self-employed workers, placement students and visitors will be checked, verified, risk-assessed and supervised according to their role, frequency of attendance and level of contact with learners. Where another organisation has completed checks, Forward Futures Group must obtain written confirmation of the checks undertaken and verify the person's identity on arrival.

Suitability is an ongoing requirement. Staff and others working on behalf of Forward Futures Group must disclose relevant criminal investigations, cautions, convictions, professional restrictions, safeguarding allegations or other changes that may affect their suitability, subject to the requirements of the law and Forward Futures Group policies.

Forward Futures Group will respond promptly to concerns about ongoing suitability through its safeguarding, allegations, low-level concerns, disciplinary or risk-management procedures. Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer, Disclosure and Barring Service, police, commissioning organisation or relevant professional body.

Recruitment and suitability information will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel and retained or destroyed in accordance with data-protection and record-retention requirements.

26. Professional Boundaries, Low-Level Concerns and Allegations

All employees, volunteers, contractors, agency workers, placement students and other adults working for or on behalf of Forward Futures Group must follow the Staff Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy. They must maintain safe, appropriate and transparent relationships with learners at all times.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern, however small or apparently insignificant, that an adult working for or on behalf of Forward Futures Group may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy.
- Does not meet, or may not meet, the harm threshold.
- Causes a sense of unease or doubt about whether the conduct is appropriate.

- May indicate a pattern of concerning or inappropriate behaviour.

The behaviour may have occurred inside or outside work. The term “low-level” does not mean that the concern is unimportant or can be ignored.

Examples may include:

- Being over-friendly with a learner.
- Showing favouritism.
- Humiliating, intimidating or ridiculing a learner.
- Using inappropriate language or discussing unsuitable personal matters.
- Unauthorised personal communication, social-media contact or photography.
- Giving gifts or special treatment contrary to agreed arrangements.
- Conducting one-to-one work in a secluded area or behind a closed door contrary to the agreed risk assessment or safer-working arrangements.
- Creating unnecessary secrecy or dependency.
- Using physical contact that is unnecessary, inappropriate or open to misinterpretation.

Low-level concerns must be reported promptly, recorded confidentially and managed under the Low-Level Concerns Policy. Records must be reviewed for patterns, repeated concerns, wider cultural issues or information that may collectively meet the harm threshold.

Staff are encouraged to report concerns about their own conduct where they believe they may have acted in a way that could be misinterpreted or may have fallen below expected professional standards.

Harm-threshold allegations

The harm threshold may be met where an adult working for or on behalf of Forward Futures Group has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This includes relevant conduct outside the workplace and concerns arising from the person’s private or personal life where that conduct may indicate a transferable risk to children.

Any concern that may meet the harm threshold must be reported immediately to the Founder and CEO, who will normally act as case manager. The case manager must seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer without delay and before beginning an internal investigation, interviewing witnesses, informing the person who is the subject of the allegation or taking action beyond what is immediately necessary to protect a child.

The police, Children's Social Care, commissioning setting or another appropriate agency must be contacted where required. Emergency protective action must not be delayed while advice is sought.

Concerns about the Founder and CEO

No person may receive, assess or manage a concern or allegation about themselves.

Because the Founder and CEO is also the Forward Futures Group DSL, any low-level concern or allegation concerning the Founder and CEO must not be reported to them for assessment or decision-making.

The concern must be reported directly to:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer where the harm threshold may be met.
- The commissioning setting's DSL or senior safeguarding lead where the concern involves or may affect one of its learners.
- The police or Children's Social Care where immediate protection or statutory intervention may be required.
- An independent safeguarding adviser or other formally appointed external case manager, where Forward Futures Group has established that arrangement.

Staff may contact the Local Authority Designated Officer directly and do not require the permission of the Founder and CEO or any other person to do so.

Adults aged 18 or over

Where an allegation concerns conduct towards a learner aged 18 or over, the DSL or DDSL must consider the adult-safeguarding threshold and whether Adult Social Care, the police, the commissioning organisation, the Disclosure and Barring Service or another relevant body should be contacted.

The LADO process applies to allegations involving children. Where the concern may also indicate that the individual is unsuitable to work with children, LADO advice should still be sought even if the particular incident involved an adult.

Shared and supplied personnel

Concerns involving agency workers, contractors, volunteers or personnel supplied by another organisation will be managed jointly with the relevant employer or organisation. Forward Futures Group must not pass away or avoid its safeguarding responsibility because another organisation employs the individual.

The commissioning setting's DSL must be informed where the concern involves or may affect its learner, subject to any direction from the LADO, police, Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care.

Referrals and records

Forward Futures Group will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the legal referral conditions are met. This responsibility continues where a person resigns, withdraws their services or otherwise leaves before the safeguarding or disciplinary process has concluded.

Forward Futures Group will also consider referral to a relevant professional regulator, awarding organisation or other statutory body where appropriate.

All concerns, decisions, advice, protective actions, referrals and outcomes must be recorded securely and managed in accordance with the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy and applicable statutory guidance.

27. Whistleblowing and Escalation

Forward Futures Group expects staff to raise concerns about unsafe, inappropriate, dishonest or unlawful practice. No member of staff will be penalised or treated unfairly for raising a safeguarding or whistleblowing concern in good faith or on the basis of a reasonable belief, even where the concern is not subsequently substantiated.

Safeguarding escalation

Safeguarding escalation concerns the welfare of a particular child, young person or adult at risk, including circumstances where:

- The DSL or DDSL cannot be contacted.
- A concern has not been passed on or recorded.
- The required safeguarding action has not been taken.
- A referral has not been accepted but risk remains.

- An external agency or commissioning organisation has not responded adequately.
- Risk has increased or circumstances have worsened.

The staff member must continue to escalate the concern until it has been appropriately considered and a clear safeguarding decision has been made.

Depending on the circumstances, escalation routes may include:

- The Forward Futures Group DSL or DDSL.
- The commissioning setting's DSL or senior safeguarding lead.
- A manager within Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer where the concern relates to an adult working with children.
- The relevant Lincolnshire professional-disagreement or escalation procedure.
- The police or emergency services.
- Another relevant statutory or regulatory body.

Staff may contact statutory services directly and do not require prior permission where someone may be at risk, delay would be unsafe or they reasonably believe appropriate action has not been taken.

A safeguarding concern must not be closed merely because the first person, organisation or agency contacted did not act. All escalation attempts, responses, decisions and continuing concerns must be recorded.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing applies where a worker reasonably believes there is wrongdoing or unsafe practice within or connected to Forward Futures. This may include:

- Safeguarding concerns being ignored, concealed or deliberately mishandled.
- A failure to follow statutory safeguarding duties or organisational procedures.
- Unsafe working practices.
- Criminal activity, fraud or unlawful conduct.
- Deliberate falsification or destruction of records.
- Victimisation or retaliation against someone who has raised a concern.
- Conduct by a senior person that staff feel unable to report through normal management routes.

Staff should follow the Whistleblowing and Speak Up Policy. They may also seek advice from their trade union, an independent legal adviser, an appropriate prescribed body or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line can be contacted on **0800 028 0285** where a worker is concerned that their organisation may be putting children at risk. Contact can be made anonymously.

Where a concern relates to the Founder and CEO, staff must not report the matter to the Founder and CEO for assessment or investigation. They should use the independent reporting routes stated in the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Whistleblowing does not replace safeguarding action and must never delay an immediate referral to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer, the police or emergency services where someone may be at risk.

28. Training, Induction and Supervision

Before or at induction, all staff and relevant representatives will receive this policy, supporting reporting arrangements, the Staff Code of Conduct, absence procedures, online safety expectations, the identity and availability of the DSL/DDSL, and KCSIE 2026 Part One. Understanding will be checked and recorded.

Safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, child-on-child abuse, Prevent, information sharing, whistleblowing and local referral arrangements, will be appropriate to role and regularly updated. All staff will receive updates as required and at least annually. Staff working with particular cohorts or risks will receive additional training.

The DSL and DDSL will complete formal role training at least every two years and refresh their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, and at least annually, through updates, learning and professional engagement. They will maintain working knowledge of local thresholds, statutory processes, allegations management, online safety and commissioner requirements.

Safeguarding will form part of supervision, case discussion, induction review and organisational learning. Staff wellbeing and support will be considered after difficult disclosures or incidents without compromising confidentiality.

29. Safeguarding Records and Retention

Forward Futures Group will maintain a separate, secure and chronological safeguarding record for each individual where required. Records will show the concern, context, decisions and rationale (including decisions not to act or refer), actions, referrals, communications, review,

follow-up and outcome. Entries must be factual, dated, timed and attributable; they must not be deleted or overwritten, and corrections must be made through a new dated entry.

Access will be restricted to authorised people. The DSL will regularly review open cases, recording quality, actions due and outcomes. Safeguarding information will be retained according to the Records Retention Policy and legal or commissioner requirements, with a documented hold where litigation, an allegation or statutory process requires longer retention.

When a placement ends or responsibility transfers, the DSL will agree with the commissioning DSL what information must be transferred, to whom and by when. Transfers will be secure, separate from routine records, confirmed as received and logged. Forward Futures Group will retain only the information it lawfully needs, while ensuring that relevant safeguarding history is not lost.

30. Quality Assurance, Learning and Review

Forward Futures Group will monitor safeguarding effectiveness through case audits, training compliance, supervision, review of low-level concerns and allegations, incident learning, feedback, partnership working and other quality assurance activity.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where required following changes to legislation or statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, commissioning requirements, significant incidents, audit findings, organisational change or identified learning.

The DSL is responsible for identifying required amendments. Material changes require approval by the Founder & CEO.

31. Related Documents

- SGPR-001 Safeguarding Reporting Procedure.
- SGF-001 Safeguarding Concern Form.
- Appendix A - Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart.
- Appendix B - Categories and Indicators of Abuse.
- Body Map Form.
- SGP-002 Low-Level Concerns Policy.
- SGP-003 Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- SGP-004 Online Safety Policy.
- Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Missing Child / Young Person Procedure.
- Data Protection Policy.

- Records Retention Policy.
- Lone Working / Outreach arrangements.

Appendix A Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

Immediate danger or serious injury
Call 999. Take immediate proportionate action to protect the person. Notify the DSL/DDSL as soon as possible and make a written record.

Concern disclosure observation or allegation
Listen, reassure, use only essential open prompts, do not investigate, preserve evidence, and report immediately to the DSL/DDSL. Record facts and the person's own words on SGF-001 on the same working day.

DSL or DDSL response
Assess immediate safety and context; check known information; decide and record the action and rationale; notify the commissioning DSL where appropriate; seek consent when appropriate; consult or refer to Family Help, Children's Services, adult safeguarding, police, LADO, Prevent/Channel, health or another relevant service; create and review a safety plan; follow up and escalate until an adequate response is achieved.

If the DSL or DDSL is unavailable or action is inadequate
The staff member contacts Children's Services, police or another statutory service directly and informs the DSL as soon as safe. Escalate through the Founder & CEO, commissioner and local professional-disagreement route as required.

Concern about an adult working for or on behalf of Forward Futures
Report immediately to the Founder & CEO, or to the DSL if it concerns the Founder & CEO. Potential harm-threshold concerns must be discussed with the LADO before internal investigation. Low-level concerns follow SGP-002. Do not alert the subject unless authorised.

Appendix B Categories and Indicators of Abuse

Indicators are not proof and lists are not exhaustive. Staff must consider patterns, context, extra-familial harm and online/offline overlap, and report uncertainty rather than waiting for certainty.

Physical abuse
May include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, fabricated or induced illness, or otherwise causing physical harm. Indicators can include unexplained or patterned injuries, inconsistent explanations, delay seeking care, fearfulness or flinching.

Emotional abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment may include humiliation, threats, rejection, silencing, developmentally inappropriate expectations, coercion, exposure to domestic abuse, serious bullying or corruption. Indicators can include marked anxiety, low self-worth, extremes of behaviour, withdrawal or developmental change.

Sexual abuse and exploitation

Includes contact and non-contact abuse, grooming, sexual activity, sexual images, exploitation and technology-facilitated abuse. Indicators may include sexualised behaviour or knowledge, pain or injury, pregnancy or infection, gifts, older associates, secrecy, missing episodes, distress or abrupt behavioural change. A child under 18 cannot consent to exploitation.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet physical or psychological needs may affect health or development and can include inadequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, education, emotional responsiveness or protection from danger. Indicators may include hunger, poor hygiene, unsuitable clothing, untreated needs, tiredness, repeated absence or being left without safe care.

Exploitation contextual and other harms

Concerns may include criminal exploitation and county lines, trafficking and modern slavery, financial exploitation, serious violence, domestic abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour- or faith-based abuse, radicalisation, discriminatory or prejudice-based harm, child-on-child abuse, online harm, self-harm and abuse outside the family. Staff must report combinations, patterns and changes even where no single indicator appears conclusive.

Safeguarding Contacts

Forward Futures Group will maintain current safeguarding contact information for the DSL, DDSL, relevant local authority children's and adult safeguarding services, LADO, Police and Prevent arrangements. Operational contact details should be maintained in the safeguarding procedure/contact sheet so that changes can be updated without requiring the whole policy to be reissued.

In an emergency or where someone is in immediate danger, call 999.