

Childlight Safeguarding and Disclosure Policy: Metadata

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If you require this document in an alternative format, please email Childlight@ed.ac.uk or write to Childlight Global Child Safety Institute, University of Edinburgh, Third Floor, St John's Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, UK, EH8 8AQ.

Childlight Global Child Safety Institute

Childlight Safeguarding and Disclosure Policy

Contents

1. Mission and Vision	4
2. Purpose	4
3. Scope.....	5
4. Key Definitions	5
5. Roles, Responsibilities, and Contact Information.....	6
6. Preventative Measures	8
6.1 Policies and Procedures	8
6.2 Safe Recruitment	8
6.3 Code of Conduct and Behavioural Expectations	9
6.4 Training and Awareness.....	10
6.5 Risk Assessments	10
6.6 Partner Due Diligence and Collaboration	11
6.7 Digital Safeguarding	11
6.8 Empowering Individuals.....	11
7. Responding to Disclosures and Concerns	12
7.1 Principles to Follow When Receiving a Disclosure or Becoming Aware of a Concern	12
7.2 Immediate Actions for Staff, Volunteers, and Partners	12
7.3 Stakeholder-Specific Guidance	13
7.4 Actions Taken by the DSO or Deputy on Receipt of a Disclosure.....	14
8. Documentation, Record Keeping, and Confidentiality	15
9. Whistleblowing	15
10. Policy Review	16
11. Appendices.....	17

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1. Mission and Vision

Childlight uses the illuminating power of data to shine a light on the hidden pandemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). We catalyse action to safeguard children worldwide, acting with urgency because children can't wait.

Our vision is that no child lives in the darkness of sexual exploitation and abuse. We pursue this vision using a public health approach, focusing on prevention, early intervention, and systemic change.

The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all that we do. This principle is enshrined in international and domestic legislation and underpins every decision, ensuring that children's best interests come before all other considerations.

We believe that:

- All children have an equal right to protection from all forms of harm or abuse, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Some individuals are additionally vulnerable due to prior experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, or other factors; these individuals may require extra safeguards.
- All adults have a responsibility to respond when they are concerned that a child may be at risk of harm.
- Information must be managed confidentially and shared without consent only where the duty to protect children from harm supersedes an individual's right to privacy.
- Safeguarding decisions should be timely and not subject to unnecessary delay.
- Children have a right to have their voices heard, and their views should shape and influence Childlight's work.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Childlight's commitment to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all children, young people, and adults at risk who come into contact with our work. Safeguarding is integral to Childlight's mission to advance global child safety through research, advocacy, and capacity building.

This policy provides clear expectations, responsibilities, and procedures for all those connected to Childlight to ensure that all concerns, disclosures, or allegations of abuse,

neglect, or exploitation are recognised and managed promptly, sensitively, and in accordance with legal and ethical standards. It supports a proactive approach to preventing harm, promoting the wellbeing of children, and ensuring that the environments in which we operate are safe and respectful.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals and organisations acting on behalf of, or in partnership with, Childlight – Global Child Safety Institute, including:

- Childlight staff, whether directly employed by Childlight, the University of Edinburgh (UoE), or the University of New South Wales (UNSW).
- Contractors, consultants, interns, and volunteers, including youth interns.
- Partners and collaborators, including Global Data Fellows (GDFs) and research partners.
- Event participants and attendees, including youth engagement activities, workshops, and conferences.
- Members of the public who engage with Childlight through correspondence, enquiries, or project-related communications.

The policy applies to all Childlight activities and environments, whether conducted in person, remotely, or online, and extends to any location where representatives of Childlight are undertaking work or engaging with stakeholders.

4. Key Definitions

Child Anyone under the age of 18 years old.

Safeguarding A broad term that refers to all the policies, procedures and actions that Childlight takes and puts in place to ensure that anyone working on their behalf and anyone benefitting from the work that Childlight are doing does not come to any harm, either intended or unintended, as a result of the work taking place. It includes both policies and procedures and the culture within the organisation that either promotes or hinders best safeguarding practices.

Adult at Risk Anyone 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves against harm or exploitation, whether due to age, physical or mental disability, or otherwise. In

Childlight's context, this includes victim-survivors over the age of 18 and staff members who may, while performing their role, be exposed to CSEA data.

Child Safeguarding Encompasses all actions we take to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, and to ensure the security of any data relating to them. It includes the proactive measures we put in place to ensure that children do not come to harm as a result of our contact with them or their data.

Adult Safeguarding Refers to all the actions we take to ensure the safety of any adults we encounter through our work, or who work on our behalf. It includes adults connected to the children we are seeking to benefit and adults that are included in the definition of resources supporting or affiliated to Childlight.

Child Protection Refers to the actions, measures, and structures to prevent and respond to harm affecting children. Harm includes abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence.

Data Protection Refers to the actions taken to control how personal information is used by government, businesses and organisations.

5. Roles, Responsibilities, and Contact Information

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) The DSO is the primary point of contact for all safeguarding concerns, disclosures, or allegations involving children, young people, or adults at risk in connection with Childlight's work. They are responsible for receiving and recording concerns, assessing risk, taking immediate protective actions where necessary, and ensuring that cases are escalated to appropriate authorities in line with this policy and legal requirements. The DSO also oversees safeguarding training, policy implementation, and periodic policy review. See Appendix 1 for the full role description.

Name: Doug Marshall

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Email: douglas.marshall@ed.ac.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Officer (Deputy DSO) The Deputy DSO supports the DSO in fulfilling their safeguarding duties and acts as the first point of contact when the DSO is unavailable. They may take the lead in managing specific cases, ensuring continuity of safeguarding provision, and assisting in the delivery of training and awareness-raising activities. The Deputy DSO also plays a role in monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and contributing to continuous improvement. See Appendix 1 for the full role description.

Name: Robin Alexander

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Senior Leadership Safeguarding Lead The Senior Leadership Safeguarding Lead is a member of Childlight's Senior Leadership Team with overarching responsibility for ensuring that Childlight fulfils its safeguarding duties. This role provides strategic oversight, ensuring that safeguarding is embedded across all aspects of Childlight's work, including governance, partnerships, and risk management. The Senior Leadership Safeguarding Lead supports the DSO and Deputy DSO by providing senior-level accountability, championing safeguarding culture, and ensuring sufficient resources, training, and systems are in place.

Name: Zoe Lambourne

Email: zoe.lambourne@ed.ac.uk

UoE Safeguarding Team The University of Edinburgh Safeguarding Team provides institutional oversight and specialist safeguarding advice for all University-affiliated activities, including those undertaken by Childlight. They act as an escalation point for cases that require university-level intervention, provide guidance on compliance with university policies and procedures, and liaise with statutory agencies when necessary.

Email: safeguarding@ed.ac.uk

UoE Safeguarding in Research This team provides expert guidance on safeguarding issues specific to research activities, particularly where projects involve vulnerable participants, sensitive data, or high-risk contexts. They support research staff in risk assessment, ethical compliance, and the development of safeguarding measures in research design and implementation.

To report safeguarding concerns within university research environments (anonymous submission available): [Report Safeguarding Concerns](#)

Further information: [UoE Safeguarding in Research Procedures](#)

Line Managers Line Managers are responsible for fostering a safe and supportive environment within their teams while upholding and enforcing safeguarding policies and processes. They are required to remain alert to safeguarding concerns raised by those they manage and report them promptly in line with this policy. Line Managers also play a key role in reinforcing safeguarding awareness, supporting staff in accessing training, and encouraging a culture of openness and accountability.

6. Preventative Measures

Childlight is committed to taking proactive and proportionate steps to prevent harm, abuse, and exploitation of children, young people, and protected adults. Prevention measures form the foundation of our safeguarding approach, ensuring risks are identified and managed before harm occurs, and are embedded across our recruitment, conduct, training, project design, partnership working, and day-to-day operations. These measures aim to create safe environments, minimise risks, and ensure that everyone representing Childlight understands their safeguarding responsibilities.

6.1 Policies and Procedures

Childlight will maintain clear, accessible, and up-to-date safeguarding policies, procedures, and guidance for identifying, reporting, and responding to concerns. These will be reviewed at least annually to ensure they remain current and effective.

6.2 Safe Recruitment

All staff, Global Data Fellows (GDFs), volunteers, and other representatives working with children or protected adults will undergo safe recruitment processes. These include:

- Robust background and reference checks appropriate to the role.
- Verification of identity and qualifications.
- Screening for any relevant safeguarding or conduct concerns.

Appointment to such roles will only be confirmed once all checks are satisfactorily completed.

6.3 Code of Conduct and Behavioural Expectations

Childlight expects the highest standards of behaviour from staff, volunteers and affiliated partners in relation to safeguarding; especially when working with or around children and protected adults. Minimum standards include:

- Treating all children and protected adults with fairness, dignity, equality, and respect.
- Being sensitive to age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and intersectional identities.
- Respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Working in open environments and avoiding unnecessary one-to-one situations. (If it is necessary to hold a confidential interview or a one-to-one meeting, these should be conducted in a room where the exit is clearly visible and, where possible and appropriate, either the door to the room is left open or the walls are made of glass.)
- Maintaining professional boundaries with children and protected adults, avoiding the sharing of personal contact details or social media connections outside of approved Childlight activity.
- Not engaging in sexual relationships, rough physical contact, or sexually provocative conduct with children and/or protected adults. This is a criminal offense in addition to being an abuse of a position of trust.
- Not providing alcohol (where unlawful or inappropriate) or banned substances.
- Modelling positive behaviour, avoiding inappropriate language, and challenging unacceptable conduct.
- Obtaining written consent before taking photographs or making video or audio recordings.
- Adhering to Childlight's data governance, management, and security standards when handling children's data.
- Administering first aid in the presence of another adult wherever possible, especially if you are concerned that necessary physical conduct may be misconstrued.

Prohibited behaviours are outlined in full within the Childlight Code of Conduct and are strictly enforced.

6.4 Training and Awareness

All Childlight staff, volunteers, and affiliates will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns:

- Within 4 weeks of joining, staff sign the Childlight Safeguarding Statement.
- Within 8 weeks of joining, staff complete the Childlight safeguarding induction (1-hour, including scenario-based learning) with the DSO. This includes information on how to report concerns and who to report them to.
- On an annual basis, staff attend Childlight safeguarding refresher training.
- On an annual basis, staff are required to review and re-confirm their understanding and acceptance of this policy.
- On an ongoing basis, staff complete any University of Edinburgh-mandated safeguarding training relevant to their role.

The DSO and Deputy DSO periodically raise awareness by sharing case examples, updates, or reminders through internal communications, and by promoting a culture of continuous improvement and reporting.

Staff members in roles with particularly high risk of exposure to vulnerable individuals, e.g., the DSO, Deputy DSO, and Youth Engagement Officer, receive additional safeguarding training from accredited external organisations.

6.5 Risk Assessments

Safeguarding risk assessments must be conducted for all projects, events, and travel involving children or protected adults. This includes youth engagement activities, and any activity involving direct or indirect contact with vulnerable individuals.

Risk assessments should be carried out for:

- Travel to and from events and activities
- Overnight stays
- Venues
- Special events, trips and outings
- Equipment

Identified risks must be addressed with preventative measures, such as additional supervision, environmental controls, or changes in activity design. For research or youth projects, safeguarding risks must also be addressed in ethics applications.

Mitigation measures can include:

- Appropriate supervision

- Consent forms
- Collecting information from attendees about their needs (i.e. medical, dietary, allergies, care-related)
- Obtaining an emergency contact
- Photo and video consent forms
- Safe spaces guidelines/principles
- Safety/content warnings

Clear records must be kept of risk assessments and mitigation measures.

6.6 Partner Due Diligence and Collaboration

Childlight fosters communication and collaboration between different agencies ensuring a coordinated approach to safeguarding.

Before entering into partnerships or accepting funding, Childlight will conduct due diligence in line with the Childlight Contracts and Collaboration Guidelines to ensure that the organisation or individual shares Childlight's safeguarding values, has satisfactory safeguarding policies and practices in place, and agrees to safeguarding clauses in contracts or agreements.

The DSO, Deputy DSO, or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will escalate safeguarding concerns to the University of Edinburgh Safeguarding Team within 24 hours, where appropriate, and will foster collaboration with other agencies to ensure a coordinated safeguarding response.

6.7 Digital Safeguarding

Childlight is committed to ensuring the safe and secure handling of children's data and promoting safe online engagement. This includes:

- Following Childlight's Data Management Policy.
- Using secure communication channels and platforms.
- Applying online conduct guidelines for staff, volunteers, and affiliates during virtual engagement activities.

6.8 Empowering Individuals

Childlight promotes the independence and participation of children and protected adults in decisions affecting their lives, recognising that empowerment is a key safeguarding strategy.

7. Responding to Disclosures and Concerns

Childlight takes all safeguarding concerns seriously. This section outlines the steps to follow when receiving a disclosure or becoming aware of a concern, and the process that will be followed by designated safeguarding leads.

7.1 Principles to Follow When Receiving a Disclosure or Becoming Aware of a Concern

Concerns may be raised by, or disclosures may be made to:

- Childlight staff, employed by UoE
- Childlight partners, including GDFs
- Members of the public e.g., via email to the Childlight@ed.ac.uk inbox
- Participants or attendees at Childlight-hosted events, e.g., Youth Engagement Assemblies
- Individuals volunteering with Childlight, e.g. Youth Interns

When receiving a disclosure:

- Listen calmly and without judgement, giving the individual time to speak.
- Do not promise confidentiality, instead explain that you may need to share information with the DSO/Deputy DSO, or other authorities as appropriate, to keep them safe.
- Determine whether the concern requires immediate safeguarding action, including whether the individual is in need of police intervention or medical attention. Record the facts – capture all relevant details, using the individual's own words wherever possible. Avoid speculation, assumptions, or personal opinions. Make your notes as soon as possible after the disclosure to ensure they are as detailed, precise and reliable as possible.
- Reassure them. Thank them for speaking up and confirm they have done the right thing.
- If in doubt, report – never delay reporting because you are unsure; the DSO/Deputy DSO will make the necessary decisions.

7.2 Immediate Actions for Staff, Volunteers, and Partners

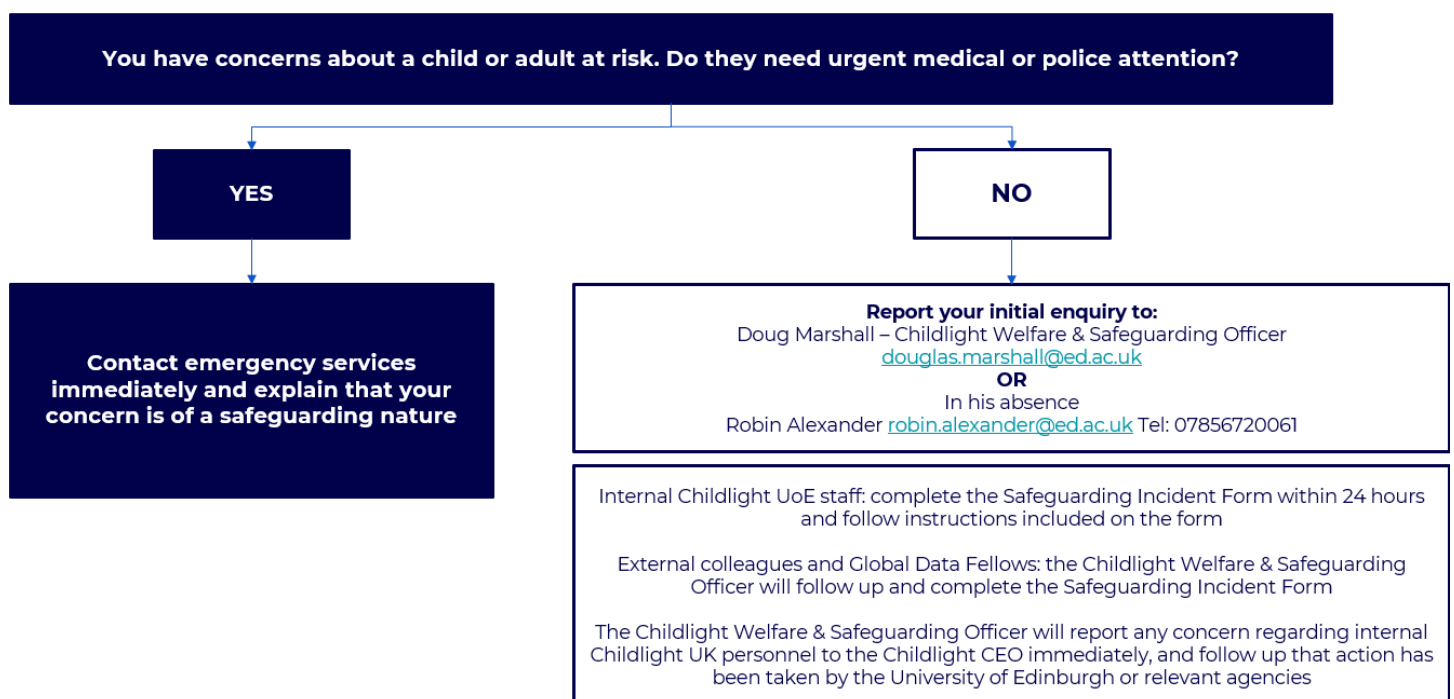
A Childlight member of staff, volunteer, or a GDF engaged in Childlight business should:

1. In the case of an urgent safeguarding concern, immediately contact the emergency services within the country where the safeguarding concern is apparent.

- a. If the safeguarding concern is not deemed to demand an immediate response (is not urgent), contact the DSO/Deputy DSO.
2. As soon as practicable, verbally inform the DSO/Deputy DSO.
3. Having made initial verbal contact with the DSO/Deputy DSO, confirm the details of the safeguarding concern in writing via email. Always ensure contact has been made with the DSO/Deputy DSO prior to submitting the concern in writing. This assists with further discussion about whether immediate action should be taken, ensures the DSO/Deputy DSO is aware of the email disclosure and can prioritise it, while creating a record of the concern.

The steps outlined above apply to the reporting of all safeguarding cases, including where the concern or disclosure is made via email to the Childlight@ed.ac.uk inbox, or, where the concern relates to the staff/volunteer/GDFs own actions.

Note: A recurring theme in Serious Safeguarding Reviews is the failure to share concerns early. If in doubt – report.



7.3 Stakeholder-Specific Guidance

Stakeholder	Guidance
Childlight Staff (UoE-employed)	Follow this policy and relevant University of Edinburgh safeguarding processes.

Childlight Staff (UNSW-employed)	Follow this policy and relevant University of New South Wales safeguarding processes.
Childlight Partners (including GDFs)	Follow your own organisation's safeguarding policy and notify the Childlight DSO or Deputy promptly.
Members of the Public	Direct your concern to the DSO or Deputy and follow the above reporting steps. In the case that a member of the public sends their concern to Childlight@ed.ac.uk via email, the message should be forwarded to the DSO in addition to following the steps outlined in this policy.
Event Attendees or Participants	Event staff must escalate concerns to the DSO/Deputy DSO on-site or immediately after the event.
Youth Interns	Disclosures from youth interns must be handled with the same seriousness as any safeguarding concern, with additional attention to providing support.

7.4 Actions Taken by the DSO or Deputy on Receipt of a Disclosure

Upon receiving a report, the DSO or Deputy will:

- Assess urgency and take immediate action where necessary.
- Inform the CEO and/or COO if appropriate.
- Liaise with the UoE Safeguarding Team within 24 hours, if required. Any safeguarding report that is likely to lead to the investigation of any individual employed by the university or any report that is likely to be reported in the public domain should be escalated to the UoE Safeguarding Team.
- Consider whether the disclosure may need to be considered for an internal HR investigation within UoE.
- Determine and record next steps and the rationale for each action.
- Share information with relevant authorities in line with legal and policy requirements.
- Ensure follow-up and resolution – either by Childlight or by an appropriate authority taking responsibility.

- Update the person who reported to acknowledge and thank them for their referral and provide reassurance, referring them to further support services as appropriate.

8. Documentation, Record Keeping, and Confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, decisions, and resulting actions must be recorded promptly and accurately. Records should reflect the facts of the matter, using the words of the person making the disclosure wherever possible, and should include the rationale for any decisions taken.

Safeguarding records are stored in a dedicated register within Childlight's SharePoint. Access to this register is restricted to the DSO, Deputy DSO, Chief Operating Officer (COO), and Quality and Compliance Manager. Where necessary, the DSO or COO may authorise access for additional individuals. Restricting access in this way ensures confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Information relating to safeguarding matters is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with safeguarding best practice, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the [University of Edinburgh's data protection policies](#). Records are retained for a minimum of 6 years from the date a case is closed, after which they are securely deleted/destroyed.

This approach ensures that safeguarding information is handled lawfully, ethically, and with the utmost respect for the privacy and safety of all individuals involved.

9. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the act of a person, often an employee disclosing information about wrongdoing within an organisation or workplace. This disclosure is typically made to someone in a position to act, such as a manager or regulatory body and often involves concerns about perceived illegal activities, safety violations, or other issues that affect the public interest.

Childlight adhere to the Human Dignity Foundation's Whistleblowing Policy which should be read in conjunction with this Safeguarding Policy.

10. Policy Review

The Childlight Safeguarding Policy is subject to regular review. Amendments are made to reflect changes in local practices, national and international policies, and professional best practice. This policy will also be reviewed and updated as necessary by the DSO and/or the Quality and Compliance Manager, based on findings from internal audits and feedback from stakeholders. Any such amendments require the approval of the Childlight SLT.

This policy must be reviewed every year. The review may result in one of three outcomes:

Approved The policy has undergone changes which have been accepted by the Childlight SLT. Results in a change of version number.

Renewed The policy was reviewed with no necessary changes identified. Does not result in a change of version number.

Discontinued The policy was found to no longer hold relevance for the organisation, either as a result of content integration with other policy documents, or a change in operational need.

This policy was approved on 25th September 2025

This policy is due for review on 24th September 2026

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Designated Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Role Description

Role purpose:

To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place at Childlight for protecting the welfare of all children, young people, and adults at risk who come into contact with our work. To promote the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk involved in Childlight's activities at all times.

Duties and responsibilities:

1. Take a leading role in developing and reviewing Childlight's safeguarding policies and procedures.
2. Take a lead role in implementing Childlight's safeguarding policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding issues are responded to appropriately.
3. Make sure that everyone working at Childlight understands the safeguarding policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have safeguarding concerns.
4. Make sure children, young people, and adults at risk who are involved in activities at Childlight know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.
5. Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Childlight's activities.
6. Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a safeguarding concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Childlight may present a safeguarding risk. This includes:
 - a. assessing and clarifying the information
 - b. making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate

- c. consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management
 - d. following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures
- 7. Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as:
 - a. the local authority child protection services
 - b. the police

This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.

- 8. Consult the NSPCC Helpline when support is needed, by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.
- 9. Store and retain safeguarding records according to legal requirements and the applicable safeguarding and data protection policy and procedures.
- 10. Work closely with the senior leadership team to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding practice.
- 11. Report regularly to senior leadership team on issues relating to safeguarding, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation.
- 12. Attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works at Childlight.
- 13. Work flexibly as may be required and carry out any other reasonable duties.