
Safeguarding Children Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this document is to inform staff of the Safeguarding Children Policy, which formalises and builds on the corporate values and principles of the organisation.

2. Policy

2.1 All children have the right to live free of violence, fear, abuse or neglect. In England, a child is defined as anyone who has not reached his or her 18th birthday. Stoll is committed to ensuring that, insofar as it is in our power to do so, children visiting or residing on our schemes are safe and protected from all forms of abuse; and that any concerns about children's wellbeing and safety are referred to the relevant services.

2.2 We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

3. Policy Aims

3.1 The aim of this policy is that Stoll employees, and anyone working on behalf of Stoll including Trustees, volunteers and agency workers are able to recognise where there is a safeguarding concern and respond appropriately.

3.2 To provide clear guidance to staff and volunteers on the procedures that they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or be at risk of harm.

3.3 To recruit staff and volunteers safely ensuring that all necessary checks are made.

3.4 To ensure that staff who come into regular contact with children, young people and their families, whilst carrying out their work, are aware of their general responsibilities:

- **The welfare of the child is paramount** as enshrined in the Children Act 1989. In addition, the 2017 Children and Social Work Act setting out how agencies must work together locally to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.
- **Where children might be staying with tenants** – within their own care, or for either holidays, short stays or possibly longer e.g. grandparents are looking after children owing to family difficulties. Children might stay in the tenant's own home or with parents/care givers in guest accommodation.
- **Where tenants may be acting as daytime childminders** for any child, including grandchildren or relatives.

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- **Where children are visiting individual tenants or attending scheme events -** as relatives or friends of an individual tenant or as part of an estate visit.

4. Legal Context

4.1 . Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action in law. The Children Act 1989 states that abuse should be considered to have happened when someone's actions have caused a child to suffer significant harm to their health or development.' *Royal College of Psychiatrists (Jan 2010)*

4.2 Child abuse occurs when children or young people under the age of 18 are hurt physically, emotionally or in some other way. Children can be abused in any section of society. Abuse occurs within all cultural, ethnic and religious communities.

4.3 There are four main areas of abuse:

- Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking and punching and in serious cases may even lead to death
- Emotional abuse includes degrading punishments, threats and withholding love and affection, which can undermine a child or young person's confidence. All abuse involves some element of emotional mistreatment. This can also cover discrimination due to differences in ethnicity, religion, gender, dis(ability) – these are referenced in Stoll's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Neglect occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met.
- Sexual abuse includes all forms of sexual activity where children and young people are sexually exploited. This includes all forms of inappropriate touching, rape and/or oral sex. It also includes inappropriate touching or involvement with activities with which the child feels uncomfortable or which could be damaging such as watching pornographic materials.

4.4 We recognise that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communications needs or other issues.

4.5 We also recognise the complexity of safeguarding and child protection issues including child criminal and sexual exploitation, county lines (when gangs and organised crime networks groom and exploit children to sell drugs across counties) , and "honour base" violence. Abuse can also occur online and via digital platforms.

4.6 Signs of abuse can be dependent upon the type of abuse being committed, and we recognise that sometimes children may not recognise that what is happening to them is abuse.

4.7 We recognise the wide range of possible perpetrators of abuse, and this can include other children. Children may also be abused by family or friends, by professionals who are in a caring role or by strangers.

5. Role of Staff

5.1 We do not expect or encourage our staff to have any ongoing role in respect of Child Protection, unless this is in the context of an interagency arrangement, such as Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Our approach is focussed upon raising concerns and alerting other agencies where issues arise.

5.2 We will work within the legal and best practice requirements regarding confidentiality and data sharing, outlined in the relevant Stoll policies.

5.3 Staff will be expected to act as 'good citizens' first and foremost, and in accordance with the expectations the Government has set out in its overall strategy 'Every Child Matters'. The Government expects a wide range of bodies to safeguard children including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

5.4 We will take immediate action in line with our relevant policies if there is an allegation against any staff member or volunteer, including Trustees.

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1 We are committed to respecting diversity in all aspects of our work and we will not tolerate any form of discrimination.

6.2 Our policy applies to all persons employed or volunteering within the organisation. We recognise our responsibility to work with other agencies to promote the safety of children and to have clear guidelines and procedures.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 Stoll's Trustee Board and Sub-Committees look to the support and professionalism of staff at all levels in making this policy truly effective. The effectiveness of this general statement of intent and other specific policies and procedures in use will be regularly reviewed and revised as a minimum every 3 years

7.2 Relevant employees are required to complete basic safeguarding children training. Training will be provided for staff on induction to their role and then on a continuous basis for updating staff. Front line staff to have annual refresher training as a minimum. Specific training will be provided for those with lead or named responsibility for child protection.

7.3 Stoll will continue to have a nominated member of the Senior Management Team as the lead for Safeguarding across Children and Adults.

7.4 It is advised that there is a lead Trustee Member for Safeguarding, and it is recommended that this rest with the Chair of the Housing and Services Committee.

<u>Policy:</u>	<u>Safeguarding Children Policy</u>
Date of last review:	Date: July 2026
Date of next review:	Date: June 2029
Approved by EMT on:	June 2026
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Approved by Residents' Policy Group:	July 2026
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Changes made following equality impact assessment:	N/A
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