

Child Abuse Policy

Policy Title: PRN-015: Child Abuse Policy

Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd

Trading/Business Name: Trusted Companionship

Company Registration Number: 15556946

SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled

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1. Policy Introduction

Trusted Companionship, the trading name of AI Auto-Tech Ltd, is committed to safeguarding all children who may come into contact with the organisation. Although Trusted Companionship does **not** provide childcare services, companions may encounter children in private homes, community environments, or during family-based companionship activities.

Child abuse is a severe safeguarding concern requiring immediate action. This policy outlines how staff must identify, respond to, and report child abuse in line with UK safeguarding legislation.

2. Key Principles

- **Zero tolerance:** Child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm are never acceptable.
- **Duty of care:** All staff share responsibility for child safeguarding.
- **Immediate action:** Concerns must be reported without delay.
- **Boundaries:** Staff must avoid unsupervised contact with children.
- **Non-confrontation:** Staff must not challenge suspected perpetrators.
- **Compliance:** All actions align with UK child protection legislation.
- **Protection:** Children's safety overrides all other considerations.

3. Policy Statement

Trusted Companionship ensures that all staff:

- Recognise signs of child abuse
- Report concerns immediately

- Maintain professional boundaries
- Avoid unsupervised contact with children
- Document concerns accurately
- Cooperate with safeguarding authorities

Staff must **not**:

- Provide childcare
- Supervise children alone
- Transport children without authorisation
- Engage in inappropriate physical contact
- Share personal contact details
- Ignore signs of harm or distress

4. Purpose

- Protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm
- Ensure staff understand child safeguarding responsibilities
- Provide clear reporting and escalation procedures
- Strengthen organisational safeguarding culture
- Ensure compliance with UK child protection legislation

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers
- Zero-contract workers (**PRN-149**)

It covers child abuse concerns arising in:

- Private homes
- Community settings
- Public spaces

- Holiday companionship
- Overnight companionship
- Digital environments

6. Related Policies

Safeguarding & Protection

PRN-003 Adult Safeguarding Policy PRN-136 Safeguarding Children Policy PRN-150 Working with Vulnerable Children Policy (*newly added*) PRN-116 Domestic Abuse Policy PRN-131 Prevent Duty Awareness Policy PRN-129 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy PRN-070 Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure

Conduct, Ethics & Behaviour

PRN-014 Code of Conduct Policy PRN-015 Code of Ethics PRN-099 Professional Boundaries Policy PRN-004 Anti Harassment & Anti Discrimination Policy PRN-030 Dignity and Respect Policy

Human Resources & People Management

PRN-065 Recruitment and Selection Policy PRN-125 Induction Policy PRN-081 Supervision and Appraisal Policy PRN-115 Disciplinary Policy PRN-124 Grievance Policy PRN-149 Zero Contract Policy

Operational Delivery

PRN-109 Companionship Standards Policy PRN-017 Companion Charter PRN-018 Companion Completion Checklist

Digital & Information Governance

PRN-112 Data Protection and GDPR Policy PRN-023 Confidential Information Management Policy PRN-024 Confidentiality Policy PRN-049 Information Governance and Cyber Security Policy

7. Definitions

Child: Any person under the age of 18.

Child Abuse: Physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful harm inflicted on a child.

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for managing child safeguarding concerns.

8. Types of Child Abuse

8.1 Physical Abuse

Includes:

- Hitting, shaking, burning
- Unexplained injuries
- Fear of adults
- Aggressive behaviour

8.2 Emotional Abuse

Includes:

- Persistent criticism
- Humiliation
- Rejection
- Emotional manipulation
- Developmental delays

8.3 Sexual Abuse

Includes:

- Sexual activity with a child
- Exposure to sexual content
- Grooming
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour

8.4 Neglect

Includes:

- Poor hygiene
- Malnutrition
- Inadequate clothing
- Lack of supervision
- Failure to meet basic needs

8.5 Domestic Abuse Exposure

Children may show:

- Anxiety

- Aggression
- Regression
- Fearfulness

9. Staff Allocation Rules (Mandatory Safeguarding Controls)

These rules apply to **all staff**, including employees, volunteers, contractors, agency workers, and zero-contract workers (**PRN-149**).

9.1 Female Companions

Female companions may work with **all children**, including:

- Male children
- Female children
- Transgender children
- Non-binary children

Female companions have **no allocation restrictions**, except where a male child displays sexually inappropriate behaviour — in such cases, only a male companion will be assigned.

9.2 Male Companions

Male companions may **ONLY** work with **male children**.

Male companions may **NOT** work with female children unless:

- Senior management approves the case
- Written parental/guardian consent is obtained
- Internal written approval is stored securely
- A risk assessment is completed and documented

This rule also applies to:

- Transgender male children (female at birth → male)

Reason: Organ transformation cannot be confirmed; therefore, all such cases are treated as female for safeguarding purposes.

9.3 Transgender Staff Allocation

Transgender Female Companions

(Assigned male at birth → female)

- **May NOT** be allocated to female children
- This prevents safeguarding risks due to the inability to confirm organ transformation

Transgender Male Companions

(Assigned female at birth → male)

- May work with **all children**
- Follows the same rule as female companions

General Rule: All female staff — including transgender male companions — may work with all children, except transgender female companions (male at birth), who cannot work with female children.

9.4 No Proxy Working

Companions must **not** carry out their work in proxy or in the company of any third party.

The **ONLY** exceptions are:

- A family member of the client
- A registered carer

This rule applies to **both adult and child safeguarding**.

10. Companion Responsibilities

10.1 Safeguarding

Companions must:

- Treat child abuse concerns as emergencies
- Report concerns immediately
- Avoid confronting suspected perpetrators
- Protect children from harm

10.2 Professional Boundaries

Companions must **not**:

- Provide childcare
- Supervise children alone
- Transport children without authorisation
- Engage in inappropriate physical contact

- Share personal contact details

10.3 Ethical Conduct

Companions must:

- Uphold organisational values
- Maintain confidentiality
- Document concerns accurately
- Support children sensitively

11. Responding to Child Abuse Concerns

11.1 Immediate Actions

Companions must:

- Report concerns to the DSL
- Document factual observations
- Avoid making assumptions
- Avoid escalating conflict

11.2 Emergency Situations

If a child is in immediate danger:

- Call emergency services
- Move to a safe location
- Inform the office immediately

11.3 External Reporting

The DSL may contact:

- Local Authority Children's Services
- Police
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Child Protection Teams

12. Safeguarding Children in Different Settings

12.1 Private Homes

- Observe interactions sensitively

- Avoid unsupervised contact
- Report concerns discreetly

12.2 Community Settings

- Maintain public professionalism
- Avoid unsafe environments

12.3 Digital Environments

- Recognise unsafe digital behaviour
- Avoid digital contact with children

12.4 Holiday & Overnight Companionship

- Maintain boundaries
- Avoid informal behaviour
- Ensure safe sleeping arrangements

13. Confidentiality

Information is shared only:

- With safeguarding authorities
- With emergency services
- On a strict need-to-know basis

Records must be stored securely.

14. Training Requirements

Staff must receive training in:

- Child abuse awareness
- Recognising abuse
- Trauma-informed practice
- Professional boundaries
- Domestic abuse awareness
- Prevent Duty
- Digital safety

15. Documentation & Record Keeping

Records must include:

- Observations
- Reports
- Actions taken
- Safeguarding escalations
- Communication with authorities

Records must be stored securely.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Workforce feedback