

## 3.10 Children's Safeguarding Policy

The Carers' Resource is committed to:

- improving the quality of carers' lives;
- involving and empowering carers in developing and influencing our own and other services;
- addressing the learning and training needs of carers;
- responding to perceived and identified carer needs;
- working in partnership with other agencies;
- influencing the planning and commissioning of mainstream carer sensitive services

### Policy statement on safeguarding children

The Carers' Resource recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse. We take the responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young children seriously and to this end we will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Maintain good links with statutory child care authorities.

### The policy

The Carers' Resource recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly the Carers' Resource has adopted the policy contained in this document (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers. The Carers' Resource recognises the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies. These guidelines have been

prepared in accordance with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures. They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training.

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of the organisation and who come directly into contact with children. Every individual has a responsibility to inform the Safeguarding Lead or a deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Lead must decide if the concerns should be communicated to Children's Social Care or the police.

## **Definitions**

### **Child/Young Person:**

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

### **Abuse:**

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical Abuse:**

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

### **Emotional Abuse:**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse:**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), which may not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Neglect:**

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);  
or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

## **Awareness of Abuse and Neglect**

The Carers' Resource will provide all staff with adequate safeguarding training in order to carry out their role and responsibilities under this policy. Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that staff and volunteers.

All members of The Carers' Resource should respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns; however, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- a) delay in sharing relevant information with an appropriate person or authority would increase the risk of harm to the child or young person
- b) asking for consent may increase the risk of harm to the child, young person, you or anyone else.

## **What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect**

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously to individuals or in groups. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Recordings must be kept secure and in accordance with organisation procedures.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that:

- you are glad they have told you
- they have not done anything wrong
- Explain what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Ensure that children should not be required to provide multiple accounts of events within the organisation

### **You must:**

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities which children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out.
- Recognise that caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse.

### **You must not:**

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people.
- Reach conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.

### **What you should do if you suspect abuse**

You may become concerned about a child for a number of reasons, for example:

- They have not spoken to you or avoid speaking to you.

- They are upset.
- Because of your observations, or
- You are given information from another party about a child.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. You should make a note of your concerns and any actions agreed following your discussion with the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

## **Informing parents**

It is good practice to be open and honest at the outset with the parents/carers about concerns, and the need for a referral.

All reasonable efforts should be made to inform parents/carers prior to discussing concerns with Children's Social Care; however, this should not be delayed if concerns cannot be discussed with the parents.

Where the child expresses a wish for his or her parents not to be informed, their views should be taken seriously and a judgement made based on the child's age and understanding, as to whether the child's wishes should be followed (see <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>). .

## **Consultation with Children's Social Care**

Where concerns have been highlighted to the Safeguarding Lead, the worker with first hand information will contact the Customer Contact Screening Centre to discuss the concerns with Children's Social Care. Please see below for contact information.

You may also wish to consult with Children's Social Care in the following circumstances:

- When you have been unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and you believe the child is at risk of harm
- When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether safeguarding concerns exist
- When there is disagreement as to whether safeguarding concerns exist, or
- When the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

## **Making a Referral to Children's Social Care**

In order to make a referral to Children's Social Care, the Customer Contact

Screening Centre should be contacted in the first instance. This will usually be by the worker with first hand information. The Customer Contact Centre can be contacted by the following methods:

### **During Office Hours**

- By Phone: 01609 780780
- Email: [social.care@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:social.care@northyorks.gov.uk)

### **Outside Office Hours**

Emergency Duty Team (for evenings, weekends and bank holidays): 01609 780780

## Confirmation of Referral

A written confirmation of the referral must be completed and submitted within 24 hours. This will normally be completed by the worker with first hand information, supported by the Safeguarding Lead. Where possible, North Yorkshire CYPS request that you use their “Referral Form to Children’s Social Care or Disabled Children’s Service” to ensure that all relevant information is provided so that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible.

When contacting the Customer Service Centre the staff should:

- Clearly identify themselves, their agency/relationship with the child(ren) and family,
- Give details of where they can be contacted.
- Provide as much relevant family information as possible and, clearly stating the name of the child, the parents/carers and any other children known to be in the household, the dates of birth and addresses and any previous addresses known
- Provide details of any special needs or communication needs of either the child or any family member
- State why they feel the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Share their knowledge and involvement of the child(ren) and family
- Share their knowledge of any other agency involved
- Indicate the child’s, parent’s/carer’s knowledge of the referral and their expectations
- Ensure they record within their agency files the concerns and action taken

## Contact Details

- North Yorkshire Customer Contact Screening Centre
- North Yorkshire Police
- Other relevant organisations
- Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Any National or Support Body for Your Organisation



## Appendix 1 - Other Safeguarding Information

As well as the above, organisations should consider other safeguarding issues which relate to their organisation which they may wish to include, for example:

- Equality and Inclusion
- Policies on transporting children
- Guidelines on taking and using photographs and videos, including guidance on use of personal equipment
- Guidance on the storage of information
- Guidance on camping and residential activities
- Health and Safety Standards
- Guidance on supervision
- Code of ethics in respect of acceptable adult behaviour to children including guidance on physical contact
- An equality policy
- Information on helplines, e.g. NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
- Details of Safeguarding Training
- Acceptable Use Policies for internet use ( E Safety Guidance – NYSCB Website)
- Guidance on specific safeguarding concerns (e.g. child sexual Exploitation, missing children and young people, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, honour based violence, special needs, etc.)

## Appendix Two - Implementation Checklist

### 1. A safeguarding policy states the organisation's commitment to safeguard children

- The organisation has a safeguarding policy.
- The policy is written in a clear and easily understood format for staff, volunteers, children and parents.
- The policy is publicised, promoted and distributed to relevant audiences.
- The policy is approved and endorsed by the relevant management body (e.g., trustees, chief executive or senior management board).
- The policy is mandatory for staff and volunteers.
- The policy is reviewed every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation or guidance.

### 2. Safeguarding procedures - what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare.

- There are clear procedures
- The safeguarding procedures are available to all (including children and young people and their parents) and actively promoted on joining the organisation. Consideration is given to language, difference ways of communicating and ease of use.
- Procedures are consistent with Working Together (2015) and with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding Procedures.
- There is a safeguarding lead with a defined role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding which is appropriate to the level at which s/he operates.
- There is a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these securely in compliance with relevant legislation.
- There is a process for dealing with complaints by parents and young people about unacceptable behaviour towards children. There is guidance on information sharing which clearly states the welfare of children is the most important consideration.

### **3. Prevention - Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers**

- There are rigorous policies and procedures for recruiting staff and volunteers who have contact with children.
- All those who have significant contact with children are subject to safeguarding checks as required by legislation and guidance and these are properly recorded.
- There are well publicised ways in which staff, volunteers, children and young people can raise concerns about unacceptable behaviour by anyone within the organisation. These include external contacts.
- An assessment of risk of any activities and the environment in which they take place is made prior to commencement and action taken to minimise risk.
- A safeguarding plan is in place for transporting children or for taking them away on trips.
- Operating standards are set out to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times.

### **4. Codes of practice and behaviour**

- There are well –publicised codes of behaviour for which all staff and volunteers comply.
- The organisation provides guidance on expected standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people.
- There is guidance on expected behaviour by children towards other children.
- There are processes for dealing with behaviour that is not acceptable.
- All disciplinary measures/ sanctions are non- violent and do not involve humiliating children and young people.
- Managers and senior staff promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals.
- The consequences of breaching the code are clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## 5. Equality and Inclusion

- The safeguarding policy makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection.
- The safeguarding procedures, guidance and training help staff and volunteers to recognise the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they face to getting help, because of their race, gender, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, social background and culture.
- Codes of conduct/ behaviour make it clear that discriminatory, offensive and violent behaviour is unacceptable and that complaints will be acted on.

## 6. Communication

- Information about the organisation's commitment to safeguard children and young people is openly displayed and available to all.
- Children and young people are actively involved in the development of procedures or protocols, recruitment, planning of services and evaluation of activities.
- Information for young people and for parents is made available in respect of support in relation to child abuse.
- Information is provided in a format and language that can be easily understood by all service users.
- Everyone in the organisation knows who the Safeguarding Lead is and how to contact them.
- Contact details for children's social care, police and emergency medical help and child help lines are readily available.

## 7. Advice and Support

- There is an induction process for all staff and volunteers that includes familiarisation with the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- All staff and volunteers are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.
- A staff development programme is in place. Staff and volunteers with special responsibilities in relation to safeguarding have training to enable them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge and have regular opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding.

- Training and written guidance on safe recruitment is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.
- The Safeguarding Lead and their deputy have access to specialist advice, training support and information.
- Children and young people are provided with information on where to go for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying, or significant difficulties at home.
- National and local safeguarding contacts are identified for further information and support. There are arrangements for providing regular supervision and support to staff and volunteers and particularly during and following an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint.

## **8. Evaluation**

- Plans are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures.
- Arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the safeguarding procedures and the safe recruitment procedures.
- The resources essential for implementing the evaluation plan are made available.
- Policies are reviewed at stated intervals, at least every three years.
- Processes are in place to consult children and young people and parents as part of the review of safeguarding.
- All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.