

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:**

Child protection and the protection of vulnerable adults is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect a specific child or vulnerable adult who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard a child or vulnerable adult and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of child or vulnerable adult – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Individual children or vulnerable adults, especially some of the most vulnerable are those at greatest risk of social exclusion, who will need coordinated help from health, education, social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

For those children or vulnerable adults who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote their welfare and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children or vulnerable adults. All agencies and professionals should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to a child or vulnerable adult;
- share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child or vulnerable adults's needs and circumstances;
- contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child or vulnerable adults's welfare;
- take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child or vulnerable adults against specific plans; and
- work cooperatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child or vulnerable adults safety.

### **Definitions of abuse and neglect:**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adults. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adults by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or or children.

#### *Physical abuse*

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also

be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

### *Emotional Abuse*

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or vulnerable adults's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child or vulnerable adult. These may include interactions that are beyond the child or vulnerable adults's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adults participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing a child or vulnerable adult frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child or vulnerable adult. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adults, though it may occur alone.

### *Sexual Abuse*

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving a child or vulnerable adult in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging a child or vulnerable adult to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### *Neglect*

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adults's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adults's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child or vulnerable adult is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child or vulnerable adults's basic emotional needs.

### *Staff awareness*

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff.

Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses, such as those run by CSVSF or Wiltshire Council.

### *Reviewing the Policy and Procedure*

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

### **Procedures**

What to do if you have concerns about a child

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child or vulnerable adult refers to it. For example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
- Do not interrogate the child or vulnerable adult ; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (eg: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as 'Anything else to tell me?'
- Do not ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child or vulnerable adult (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the designated safeguarding lead Dawn Wilson 07467391809. If this person is not available report the incident to the Police or to the Multi Agency Support Hub - MASH on 0300 4560108

### **What information will you need when making a referral?**

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs

### **Allegations Involving a Members of Staff / Volunteer**

Small Charity Support is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Child Protection Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Child Protection Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the London Borough of Barnet Supporting Families Division is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Barnet Supporting Families Division and the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the Child Protection Officer will immediately refer the matter to the Barnet Supporting Families Division and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the Barnet Supporting Families Division. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently the Child Protection Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1: The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2: Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services;
- 3: Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

### **Escalating Concerns**

It is important to note that if you raise a safeguarding concern or pass on an allegation, you have a responsibility to ensure your concern is addressed to your satisfaction.

Therefore, if you feel that your concern has not been addressed (and that the child or vulnerable adult has not been protected) you should escalate the matter to the MASH team at Wiltshire Council.

For information on local procedures, including escalating concerns, look at your Local Safeguarding Children Board website for relevant information.

### **Legal issues Information Sharing & Confidentiality**

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child or vulnerable adults. Information should always be shared if you think a child or vulnerable adults is suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse.

The protection of young people must take precedence over other legal rights. Please be assured that as long as information is shared in an appropriate manner and in good faith, the law will protect you. You should ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and shared promptly.

For further guidance see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

## Useful Contacts

You must be aware of the contact details of your local Children's social care, the police, relevant health professionals and the LADO.

### Wiltshire Council Children 's Safeguarding Board

We all have a responsibility to keep young people and young people safe from harm. If you believe a child or vulnerable adults or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm or injury, or you believe a criminal offence has been committed, call the police on 999.

If you believe a child or vulnerable adults or young person is at risk of significant harm, neglect or injury, report your concerns to the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) on 0300 4560108 (out of hours 0845 60 70 888).

If you have significant safeguarding concerns about someone who is working or volunteering with child or vulnerable adult or young people, call 0300 456 0100 and ask to speak to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) for advice.

If you think a child or vulnerable adults or young person is in need of support from a range of services and none of the above applies, see [our services and who to contact](#).

For e-safety concerns <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> is a useful resource.

The NSPCC helpline can also be a useful source of information <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/nspcc-helpline/>

### Review of Policy

The safeguarding policy must be reviewed, approved annually or when legislation changes.

Policy updated and adopted September 2021

## Appendix One

### Definitions

#### **“Safeguarding” and “Child Protection”**

The definition of safeguarding is much broader than child or vulnerable adults protection and is set out in “[Working Together to Safeguard Young people 2018](#)” - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people “. This is the statutory guidance that sets out the legislative requirements and expectations of individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people .

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* does not separate safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. This is the definition:

- Protecting young people from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of young people’s health or development;
- Ensuring that young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all young people to have the best outcomes

Separate to safeguarding young people is “child or vulnerable adults protection”. Child protection is defined in the Children Act 1989 as where there is “reasonable cause to suspect a child or vulnerable adults is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm”. The Children’s Act 1989 introduced significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of young people . Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect are all categories of significant harm. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development.

In simple terms, safeguarding is the overall well-being of the child or vulnerable adults and every professional and every organisation is responsible for the safeguarding of young people. Within that there is child or vulnerable adults protection, when it is thought a child or vulnerable adults is either being maltreated or is at risk of maltreatment.

#### **Age of a Child**

A child or vulnerable adults becomes an adult in law at 18 in the UK, this is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many people use the term “young people” but there is no legal definition for the age of a “young person”. 16 and 17 year olds are young people, in legal terms.

## Appendix 2

### **A Designated Safeguarding Person's role is to:**

Promote PCAP's commitment to safeguarding young people in all aspects of their work and conduct

- Take responsibility for dealing with concerns about the safety of young people raised by staff or volunteers who they supervise, following the scheme's policies and procedures
- Inform the Wiltshire Council Lead for Safeguarding of concerns raised and processes followed; ensuring records of concern and action (ROCA) are discussed, signed off and actioned appropriately
- Liaise with relevant agencies and the Local Safeguarding Children Board where appropriate about concerns, in accordance with PCAP's confidentiality policy
- Ensure the safeguarding/child or vulnerable adults protection policy is available to those who work on projects
- Deal fairly with allegations against staff and volunteers; in accordance with PCAP and local child or vulnerable adults protection policies and procedures Immediately inform the police in the event of the serious harm or death of a child or vulnerable adults and liaise with other agencies as appropriate