



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Children's Services has a responsibility to ensure that children and young people who live here are protected from abuse.

The primary responsibility for the investigation, registration, and planning of all child protection work rests with the Local Authority who places their children and young people, working in liaison with the local Police and other statutory agencies such as LADO.

The procedures for this work are set out in the Department of Health's "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015" and also the Children's Act 1989, Children's Act 2004

Each borough has its own Safeguarding Children Board.

THE YOUNG PERSON'S WELFARE

The child's/ young person's welfare is paramount.

If a young person wishes to discuss, or has to be questioned about, a possible safeguarding issue, then they should be seen in circumstances that are comfortable to them. Ideal conditions for the young person should put them at ease, allowing them to express their views in a way appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

All discussions must be accurately recorded.

Any investigative work carried out by staff should involve the Local Authority concerned, the Police and where applicable LADO, and the designated safeguarding lead; liaison with other appropriate agencies may be necessary.

Issues such as language, religion, culture, race, gender and disability should always be taken into account.

PROCEDURE STATUS

Children's Services expect all workers to follow these procedures when there is suspicion, evidence, or disclosure of a safeguarding Issue.

ROLE OF NEW START CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A child/young person's welfare is paramount.

If workers believe there is a possible safeguarding issue, they must inform the **Registered Manager** or **Responsible Individual** immediately.

All safeguarding concerns will be automatically referred to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will be the Registered Manager in the first instance, this person will have received training to enable safe management of safeguarding concerns, conduct an investigation and provide intervention, have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct child protection, has access to the

organisation's policies and procedures, be alert to the specific needs of the children/young people for whom the organisation cares for.

Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk, and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks, staff should encourage children to express their views about whether they feel safe both within and outside the home.

Staff should support children to understand how to ask for help to stay safe and the home should provide an environment which supports this.

Following discussions, a decision may be made to inform the Local Authority concerned.

Children's Service's staff will cooperate with the investigating authority.

Staff are to inform LAC Nurses if there are any concerns alongside the local safeguarding team.

The primary responsibilities of Children's Services are:

1. To protect the young person from further harm;
2. To take emergency action if there is an injury;
3. To contact the Local Authority concerned;
4. To work co-operatively with the investigating authority;
5. To record all disclosures in the internal procedural documents.

Children's Services is not solely responsible for investigating safeguarding matters and this will be done working in partnership with all agencies.

Where there is a suspicion of a safeguarding issue, it should be reported to both the Local Authority where the incident occurred and the Local Authority where the young person resides.

RECORDING

All discussions, decisions and evidence must be carefully and accurately recorded, signed and dated in a chronological order.

Information recorded may be used as evidence in criminal or civil proceedings.

STAGES

Safeguarding children work should proceed through the following stages:

- Referral and recognition
- Immediate action
- Strategy discussion
- S.47 enquiries and core assessment
- Inter-disciplinary forum or safeguarding conference and decision making about the need for registration
- Formulating a safeguarding plan
- Completion of core assessment and formulating an interagency plan
- Implementation, review, refinement and monitoring of plan

Members of staff at Children's Services may be involved in any of the above stages. However, Children's Service's procedures are focused on its responsibilities during stages one and two.

RECOGNITION

Changes in a young person's behaviour or physical and emotional state can be a possible indication of abuse.

If a worker discovers an unexplained injury to a young person, which they feel may indicate possible abuse, they must share this information with the young person, stating that they have seen the injury.

- Members of staff must sensitively ascertain from the child how the injury happened.
- Members of staff should not in any way indicate that a secret can be kept.
- Members of staff should report the injury to the **Registered Manager/on-call manager**
- Members of staff must record this injury on a body map.

Suspicion or evidence of safeguarding issues may come from:

- Direct observations by workers of suspicious injuries.
- Observation of an act upon a young person.
- Direct or indirect information from an adult - professional, relative or member of the public - alleging or raising concerns that the young person may, currently or in the past, have suffered abuse.
- Direct information from the young person.
- Observation of abnormal behaviour.

A safeguarding Concern may be:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse.
- Financial abuse
- Social media

Members of staff should be vigilant where there are instances of:

- Young person appearing to have been involved in sexual activity
- Running away
- Bullying
- Problems following family visits

It is not the role of workers to investigate allegations of abuse. Young people must not be questioned about the details of the allegation.

The Registered Manager/on-call manager must be informed at the earliest opportunity.

IMMEDIATE PROTECTION

If a young person requires immediate attention, telephone for an ambulance or arrange for them to be taken to the nearest A & E department. Inform the **Registered Manager/on-call manager** of your actions.

Record in detail the events and the reasons for your actions. Sign and date the report. Complete all necessary internal safeguarding documents, such as Notes of Concern.

A member of staff should inform the person with parental responsibilities as soon as possible.

You must take appropriate action to secure the protection of the young person if they are at immediate risk of abuse from:

- Another young person or visitor to the home, who is still on the premises;
- A parent or other adult who is threatening to harm the child or to remove them from the home and will not leave the premises;
- A parent / family member who the young person has visited and intends to return to that person;
- A professional person against whom the young person has made an allegation and to whom the young person is expected to return.

Always try to minimise stress for the young person.

If any person, who does not have parental responsibility or authority for the young person, is trying to remove the young person from your care and refuses to leave, you must contact the local **Police**.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CONCERNS (RESPONSE):

Even when events do not require or warrant emergency action, there should be no delay in making a decision.

You should:

1. Safeguard the young person;
2. Inform the **Registered Manager/** on-call manager
3. Inform the **Local Authority** concerned (if out of hours use **EDT**);
4. Record in detail and forward to local authority.

REFERRAL

The following information should be available when a referral is made to the Safeguarding Children Officer:

- Name of the young person
- Legal status
- Details of allegation
- Action taken to protect the young person
- Details of other people involved and their whereabouts, if known
- Physical and emotional state of the young person

NB

- *The member of staff making the referral should clarify with the **Designated Safeguarding Officer** what immediate action should be taken;*
- *The member of staff should be aware that the investigating authority has the responsibility to decide if there should be a medical examination and if there is a safeguarding issue, it must be noted that it may involve other young people– i.e. peers, siblings;*
- *If the investigating authority decides they will not continue with the proceedings, then staff must liaise with them to plan the best course of action to provide support for the workers. Counselling may be required.*

Case Conference/Strategy Meeting

If the **Safeguarding Children Officer** decides that there is sufficient evidence to warrant an investigation, then it is usual practice for the **Local Authority** to convene a case conference (strategy meeting).

The purpose of this conference is to:

- Discuss the concerns which initiated the investigation
- Share the information and evidence collected
- Discuss the level of risk to the young person
- To decide if the child should be placed on the young person at risk register
- Protection Register and if so to decide on the core group of professionals to implement the Child Protection Plan.

NB

*A case conference does not make decisions on those alleged to have abused the young person. This will be a matter for the **Police**.*

Individuals who are normally invited to the conference are:

- Young person's parents / other relatives (where appropriate)
- Other professionals, e.g. teachers, doctors, health visitors etc.
- The **Social Worker** and **Team Manager** from the investigating authority
- Management from Children's Services
- The Safeguarding Officer

Management would be required to feedback to the workers the information gathered and decisions made so that the home can make adequate plans.

It is expected that Children's Services will work closely with the core group.

The conference may decide that a Core Assessment should take place. This would usually follow the format laid down in the Department of Health's publication - "**Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families**".

In some cases, members of staff may be required to attend Court.

This may be:

- To give evidence, if the young person has disclosed information to them.
- To secure emergency protection for the young person.
- To obtain a court order such as an Interim Care Order or a Full Care Order.

If a member of staff is required to attend Court, then it will be the duty of the **Registered Manager** to support them. There should be discussions on their role as a witness, the format which court proceedings will follow and how they will present their evidence.

If it is necessary for the worker to seek professional legal advice, the **Registered Manager** will arrange such consultations.

CHILDREN'S SERVICE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

If a young person is subject to a safeguarding concern:

- They must be informed of the actions to be taken by staff and told in a way that they can understand.
- Their wishes and feelings, particularly in relation to their safety and welfare should be discussed and their views taken into account when any decisions or plans are made.
- Members of staff must not mislead or misinform the young person.

NB

Always record this information accurately

CONFIDENTIALITY

In any safeguarding issue, workers must treat all information as confidential.

Members of staff must not communicate with any individual or group outside the home except external agencies involved in the investigation.

ABUSE BY ANOTHER YOUNG PERSON WITHIN THE HOME

Abuse by another young person may include physical, sexual or emotional bullying.

All injuries of a non-accidental nature, incidents of disclosure as allegations of abuse must be reported immediately to the Registered Manager.

Remember

- Always protect the young person from further abuse.
- Always protect other young person who may be at risk from the alleged perpetrator.
- Report the incident to the **Registered Manager** and the young person's **Social Worker if out of hours the Local Authorities EDT team must be informed.**
- Report the incident to the **Local safeguarding team**

All reports must include;

- The type of injury and the seriousness of the injury.
- The risk of possible repetition.
- The antecedents to the injury.

ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF STAFF

Any information relating to abuse by a member of staff must be immediately reported to the on-call manager, who will automatically inform the **Registered Manager**.

If the **Registered Manager** is the alleged perpetrator, then the member of staff should contact the **Responsible Individual, Local LADO** (or **Ofsted** whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk. Or phone 0300 123 3155)

Following allegations, a course of action must be immediately decided upon.

Should the alleged perpetrator:

- Be removed immediately from their duties?
- Remain on duty until the facts have been discussed?
- Be suspended from all duties pending an investigation?

At this point the Responsible Individual/Registered Manager will contact the Local Authority LADO to discuss further investigation and work in partnership together from this point onwards until conclusion.

The worker who has been accused should be informed of an allegation, but not told any information regarding the allegations unless directed to do so from LADO.

All outcomes of the investigation will be recorded and kept together within the Ofsted Notification File in a locked cabinet. This can only be accessed by the Registered Manager.

At any time, staff can access the Staff Handbook and refer to the Whistleblowing Policy, which gives clear direction on how you can report information.

Please be advised this is not in connection with safeguarding, as staff you must be aware of the above procedures within this policy.

THE PREVENT DUTY

In order for childcare providers to fulfil **the prevent duty**, it is essential that staff are able to identify when a young person maybe vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified.

Staff should build up the young person's resilience by promoting fundamental British values and enable them to challenge extremist views.

It is important to emphasise that **the prevent of duty** is not intended to stop young people debating controversial issues, we should provide a safe place for young people and staff to understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremists arguments.

Staff should have the knowledge to assess the risk of young people being drawn into terrorism including support for extremist ideas that are part of a terrorist's ideology, this means being able to demonstrate both the general understanding of the risks affecting young people in the area and specific understanding of how to identify individual young people who may be at risk of radicalisation.

Staff should be aware of the risks associated with radicalisation online and social media, staff should be aware that **ISIL** seek to radicalise young people through this site.

Staff should be aware of how to make a referral to agencies such as **CHANNEL PROGRAMME (CHANNEL DUTY GUIDANCE-PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE FROM BEING DRAWN INTO TERRORISM)**

An online general awareness training module is also available on this site.

Statutory guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify young people at risk of being drawn into terrorism; the Home Office has developed a core training product for this purpose Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent- WRAP.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN

If a staff member has a particular concern regarding a young person they should follow the normal way of reporting a safeguarding concern.

You can also contact the local police on 101, to talk to someone in confidence.

The DFE has a designated helpline 0207 340 7264 to help staff to raise concerns relating to extremists directly, please note that the helpline is not intended for emergency situations, such as a child being at immediate risk of harm or a security incident, in which case the normal emergency procedures should be followed.

E-SAFETY

Young people living within the company's provisions may have access to social media. Staff will need to be trained in regard to internet safety children homes to be able to identify signs.

If there are concerns around a child/young person on social media, staff must inform the Registered Manager who will contact the police to ask if a meeting can be called to identify and clarify concerns.

Young people may have to have their mobile phones seized by the police for investigation purposes, however if staff see need for immediate action the phone can be taken by staff to safeguard the child with immediate effect, this is to be done at all times with the needs of the young person in mind.

Staff can restrict mobile phone top allowances up for the young person; ask family or carers to work with them in regard to restrictive uses of the mobile phone.

Young people's risk assessments will indicate concerns and how these are managed.

SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE

There are many ways in which children/young people may self-harm, these can include behaviours that staff may not be aware of and low-level signs may only be presented.

Children/young people who self-harm must be treated with respect and dignity; they must never be made to feel inadequate because of their behaviours.

Children/young people who self-harm will often identify their own patterns and ways to develop strategies.

Safe ways to reduce incidents may be developed by the companies Psychotherapist and CAMHS, along with self-identification from the young person.

If a child/young person does self-harm, staff must approach with a robust attitude, if there is need for medical attention this should be acted upon with immediate effect. If a young person refuses to accept medical attention then emergency services should be called, staff should also be able to access NHS helpline in meantime of any incidents.

Attempts of suicide are always to be taken seriously - staff MUST call emergency services and if possible stay with the young person and apply their first aid training if appropriate.

All incidents of self-harm/suicide with admission into hospital must be notified to senior management at the very earliest opportunity.

Bedrooms may be made sterile to reduce risks of further incidents, and restrictive free time implied.

Action plans will be in place supported by the companies Psychotherapist to effectively manage self-harm and suicide attempts, regular reviews of these plans will be overseen by managers and senior managers.

LSCBs are responsible for co-ordinating what is done by local agencies for the purpose of safeguarding young people

Remember

Protecting the child/young person is paramount.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

The company will review this document on at least an annual basis, or sooner depending upon law and legislation.