



CORBRIDGE YOUTH INITIATIVE
Reg. Charity Number: 1092789

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

- 1 All young people under the age of 19 are covered by this policy.
- 2 This document summarises the responsibilities of staff and volunteers with regard to Child Protection and explains the procedures we follow if we suspect that a child or young person has been or is being abused.
- 3 Copies of these policies are sent to each member of staff or volunteer on appointment. A copy is also held in the Youth Initiative Office. A summary of this policy is displayed on the wall of the Youth Centre, as is the Confidentiality Policy. This is important because it explains to Young People the consequences of disclosing anything to a Youth Worker.
- 4 The project aims to support all staff in accessing appropriate training on child protection organised by outside agencies. In addition, Child Protection forms part of our annual programme of staff training and dealing with child protection issues is part of regular staff and volunteer supervision.

This policy is reviewed annually.

- **A LEGAL DUTY**

Anyone working with children or young people is under a 'legal duty of care' which has been interpreted in a case of law as the duty to act as a careful parent would. This means that if a member of staff causes injury or loss by failing to carry out his or her responsibilities in a careful way, the worker (and possibly the organisation) could be held liable in civil law either to the young person or to the parents for this negligence.

This is particularly relevant in the case of child abuse. The protection of children is of paramount importance. It is essential that anyone who suspects or has knowledge that a young person is being abused follows the correct procedures. The fears of causing a false alarm, being subject to hostile reaction and subsequent unpopularity, or damaging a relationship *MUST* take second place to the prime objective of protecting the child or young person.

What is Safeguarding?

5 Safeguarding goes beyond the existing child protection responsibilities and covers areas such as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of child health and development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;

6 The role of safeguarding should be undertaken so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

7 Youth and community workers have close contact with children and young people and should be alert to signs of abuse and neglect, and know how to act on concerns about a child's welfare. Volunteers within the youth service are subject to the same requirement.

Definitions

8 There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* (1.33 – 1.36) as follows:

- A. Physical abuse
- B. Emotional abuse
- C. Sexual abuse
- D. Neglect

A Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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.

B Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is 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 children 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 the 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.

C Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, 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.

D 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.

YOUTH WORKER STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

9 Workers have the following responsibilities:

- To be aware
- To respond
- To listen
- To believe
- To record
- To be discreet
- Not to investigate
- Not to ignore
- To report immediately any unusual comment or occurrence
- To take emergency action (i.e. ring the police) if required.

ALL WORKERS SHOULD REALISE THAT:

10 You cannot promise to keep the disclosure a secret because you **must, by law, tell a designated member of staff - in the case of the Youth Initiative - the Project Manager.**

11 If the concern is about the designated safeguarding person (Project Manager) then it should go straight to the Chair of the Trustees AND the Local Authority Designated Officer .

12 The Project Manager has the responsibility for making the decision to pass on information to the appropriate authorities. However - if a member of staff feels that the information has not been dealt with appropriately then they can contact the Area Manager, West Northumberland (Northumberland Youth Service) or the Duty Social Worker, Hexham Children's Social Care Team.

- It is inappropriate to inquire into the details of the abuse. This should be left to an interviewer skilled in asking such questions. If you don't understand something, you can ask the child to repeat statements, but do not ask questions.
- You should never stop a child or young person who is freely recalling significant events provided that the child / young person is aware of the confidentiality policy.
- You MUST record all information - i.e. signs of physical injury

in detail.

13 In the event of a child or young person disclosing details of abuse to a member of staff, it is vital that the child or young person knows what action is to be taken.

14 Written records should be sent by post, marked confidential to the relevant person or sent via email on a password protected file. All records will be securely stored in the office.

A CHILD / YOUNG PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO BE:

- * Believed
- * Protected
- * Helped to protect him/herself
- * Cared for
- * Treated with discretion
- * Respected
- * **LISTENED TO IN PRIVATE** (It is important that in supporting this right that members of staff do not put themselves at risk. For example, staff could find a quiet corner of the youth centre or arrange a quiet time to meet, as long as another member of staff is around)

Reviewing the Child Protection Policy

15 The policy will be reviewed annually and will be part of internal and external reviews of the Youth Initiative

Training

16 The implementation of the Child Protection Policy will be part of the Annual Staff Training Programme. It will also be discussed as part of the induction process for new staff and the reporting process will be explained in full. Where appropriate, staff will attend training related to Child Protection and issues will be discussed in regular supervision sessions.

Open Access

17 A copy of the Child Protection Policy is given to all staff, trustees and volunteers. It is also available in the Policies and Procedures file in the Youth Office. A list of all policies and procedures is displayed on the wall of the Youth Centre and it is made clear that anyone can have access to them at any reasonable time.

Confidentiality Policy

This is extremely important as it explains to Young People the limits of the confidentiality we can offer.

Useful Contacts:

Northumberland Youth Service – Tel: 01670 511923

Hexham Children’s Social Care Team – Tel: 01434 603582

Children’s Social Care Emergency Duty Team – Tel: 0845 600 5252

Signed: **Date:**

Chair, Corbridge Youth Initiative on behalf of Trustees