



SUPPORT SERVICES

REGISTERED NUMBER CIC 11373253
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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY & PROCEDURES

Title of Policy: Safeguarding Children

Effective Date: October 2019

Review Date: October 2020

Policy Number: 2

Policy Authorised by: Nicola Williams

Introduction

Allsorts Support Services CIC, hereinafter referred to as the Organisation, has written this safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures to provide an understanding of Safeguarding and establish procedures which demonstrate the Organisation's values and commitment in this particular area. It provides guidance for staff and volunteers about what to do in specific circumstances.

Within the area of safeguarding children, it is vital that all staff, including volunteers, know what to do if they are concerned about a vulnerable child. It is equally important that others are aware that the Organisation takes the safety and welfare of vulnerable people into consideration in every activity undertaken.

The first part of this document provides the Organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy followed by Procedures.

The organisation accepts that Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are not enough in themselves to cover the wider remit of caring for children, which is primarily about prevention, and will develop suitable training and provide advice to staff and volunteers where necessary.

Safeguarding Children Policy

The Organisation is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, recognising its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

The Organisation acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

In implementing this Safeguarding Children Policy, the Organisation will:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child, member of staff, or a volunteer's conduct towards a child, to the Organisation's Lead Safeguarding Officer (Nicola Williams) or another Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL). To ensure you know who the DSL's are.
- Ensure that the named person understands their responsibility to refer any safeguarding concerns to the statutory agencies (i.e. Police and/or Suffolk's child Safeguarding Board)
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of staff and volunteers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
- Provide opportunities for all members of staff and volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of the children
- Ensure that all children are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the Organisations Complaints procedure

- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the welfare and safeguarding of children

Commitment

The Organisation is fully committed to protect and promote individual human rights, the capacity for independence and improved wellbeing so that all children stay safe, are treated with dignity and respect, enjoy a sustained quality of life and are at all times protected from abuse, neglect, discrimination or poor treatment.

The central purpose of the Organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are to ensure that people know how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect and, where they do occur, that there is an appropriate response to protect those affected from further harm.

Definitions

Who is a Child?

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Child protection guidance highlights that under 18s who are:

- aged 16 or over
- living independently
- in further education
- a member of the armed forces
- in hospital, or
- in custody in the secure estate

are still legally children and should be given the same protections and entitlements as any other child.

What is abuse?

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person's human and civil rights. Abuse can happen anywhere – in a person's own home, in a residential or nursing home, in a supported living

setting, a hospital or GP surgery, a prison, day centre or educational setting, library, sports centre, within the workplace or within the community. Abuse can happen anywhere!

Examples of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking or injuring someone and misuse of medication
- **Sexual abuse:** including rape, sexual assault or pressuring someone into sexual acts they haven't consented to, don't understand or feel powerless to refuse
- **Emotional abuse:** including threats of harm or abandonment, isolation, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- **Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, misuse of property, possessions, benefits and deliberate/premeditated mismanagement of finances by people in positions of trust
- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services, with holding medication, nutrition and heating
- **Discriminatory abuse:** including abuse that is racist, sexist, or based on disability or age, or other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment
- **Institutional abuse:** sometimes happens in places where people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care/support, neglect and poor working practice that affect the whole of that service

Procedure for what to do if you suspect abuse

All members of staff and volunteers must take the following action where appropriate:

- Ensure the person is safe.
- Listen carefully to what the person has to say, but do not ask questions other than to clarify what has been said.

- Inform the person disclosing the abuse that you cannot keep this information confidential and must pass this information on to the Organisation's named person for safeguarding issues.
- Contact the emergency services if urgent medical help is required.
- Contact **Nicola Williams (Lead Safeguarding Officer) immediately**. If Nicola is unavailable then a **DSL** (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be contacted immediately.
- The Lead Safeguarding Officer or the **DSL** will decide whether to contact the Suffolk Customer First Children's Services Duty Team **0808 800 4005** or Police on **999, LADO 0300 1232044**.
- Lead Safeguarding Officer or DSL will make a referral (MARF) using the new secure Suffolk Children and Young People's Portal.
- Take care to preserve any evidence eg. Clothing, bedding, weapons, text messages, letters etc.
- Record the allegation or your suspicion of abuse as accurately as possible.

Do Not:

- Question the victim as this may affect any police action
- Discuss the allegation/abuse with the alleged perpetrator
- Discuss the allegation/abuse with other members of staff or volunteers, other than Lead Safeguarding Officer or a DSL
- Take any other action without first discussing this with Nicola Williams or a DSL
- Promise to maintain confidentiality
- Delay reporting the incident/allegation

Raising Concerns

All members of staff and volunteers have a clear professional and moral duty to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse or potential abuse of a vulnerable child to Nicola Williams (Lead Safeguarding Officer) or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Any worker within the Organisation who is involved directly or indirectly with any child has the responsibility to be aware of the possibility of abuse.

They have a responsibility to take appropriate action whenever there is a concern that abuse may have taken place or may occur, unless someone does something to stop it. This is called “alerting”.

It is important that any allegation of abuse is taken seriously, however insignificant it may seem on first appearance to the person receiving the information.

Key questions to be kept in mind when deciding whether an alert becomes a referral:

- Is the child under 18?
- Is the person in need of or may be in need of community care services by virtue of frailty, mental disorder, disability or other condition of illness?
- Do the circumstances indicate actual or potential risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation or significant harm?
- Is the person unable or likely to be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation?

Who to tell – Alert and Referral

If you have a concern about actual or possible child abuse, generally, you should talk urgently to Lead Safeguarding Officer or a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) making clear what you know or suspect. The only exception to this is of course if the Lead Safeguarding Officer or DSL may be implicated in your concerns.

When a suspected incident of child abuse is reported, the DSL must take it seriously and decide whether the allegation needs further investigation. If it appears that there are grounds to believe that child abuse is or may be happening, the DSL must ensure that the alert is acted upon at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than at the end of the working day in question.

If the DSL is uncertain that abuse has occurred or is indicated then advice should be sought by Safeguarding Lead Officer who will contact:

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) 03456 061 499

LADO@suffolk.gov.uk 0300 123 2044

The details should include:

- your name, position/relationship and contact details as the referrer
- when the incident happened
- where the incident happened
- who was involved (names and relationships)
- details of the concern or alleged abuse
- what action was taken and other organisations involved e.g. Police, Ambulance
- where there is an immediate or future risk

Ensuring immediate safety

If the child is in immediate danger or in need of urgent medical attention, action must be taken to ensure their immediate safety and well being. This may include contacting the appropriate emergency services by calling 999.

Police advice

It should be noted that the Police, as well as taking a lead in any criminal investigation, are available for advice and consultation at an early stage. It is important that the Police are able to gather forensic evidence immediately and therefore they should be contacted in any case where a serious incident or criminal offence has occurred or is suspected of occurring.

Important things to consider when abuse is known or suspected:

In all cases where a person is in immediate danger, urgent action must be taken at once, by calling the relevant emergency services.

If there is a reason to believe a crime has been committed, seek the child's consent to inform the Police. If the child gives permission, ensure the situation is discussed with the Lead Safeguarding Officer or DSL and then contact the Police.

If the child does not give permission to involve the Police, this information should be passed to the Lead Safeguarding Officer or DSL as soon as possible and clearly recorded in the service user's case file. If other service users are considered to be at similar risk, discussion with the Police may occur taking into account the service user's wishes.

If you believe the person lacks the capacity to give consent and there is reason to believe a crime has been committed, action can be taken in their best interests. You must act in accordance with the wishes of the child, wherever possible.

However, consideration should be given to circumstances in which a child's wishes may be overridden. In some cases, it will be essential for other or additional services to be provided, for example residential care, to be provided immediately, before any investigation starts.

If the child indicates a wish for action to follow as a result of alleged or actual abuse, offer necessary support, but do not ask investigative questions. Rather, give the person reassurance that the matter is being reported and that someone will make contact with them.

In cases where serial allegations of abuse are made, each allegation must be treated separately and seriously, taking into account the child's wellbeing.

Allegations against Staff or Volunteers

Where an allegation concerns the actions of a member of staff or volunteer (who may also be a colleague), it is the clear duty of all those concerned to report the matter as set out above. When it comes to raising child abuse concerns no distinction should be made between staff and other persons. The child's wellbeing is paramount.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, Lead Safeguarding Officer or the DSL will need to clarify with the investigating team what action he or she intends to take under the Disciplinary Policy.

It is important that the action taken:

- Protects the rights and wishes of the vulnerable child
- Protects the rights of the member of staff or volunteer concerned
- Enables the Lead Safeguarding Officer or DSL to take appropriate action either on behalf of the vulnerable child or against the staff member/volunteer where appropriate
- Does not compromise any criminal investigation

To achieve these outcomes it will be necessary for the Lead Safeguarding Officer or the DSL to co-ordinate his/her responsibilities for pursuing disciplinary matters in relation to the member of staff/volunteer with those of the investigating team, who will be working within these safeguarding children procedures.

Anyone who works, or has contact, with a child thought to be at risk has responsibility to report actual or suspected abuse. This includes family members, carers, staff and volunteers, support workers.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION!