

**LINKS: THE CHESTERFIELD AND NORTH EAST
DERBYSHIRE COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE AND
ACTION LIMITED**

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Links complies with Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board Policies, which can be found at www.derbyshirescb.org.uk/procedures/

The child or young person's safety and well-being are our main concerns. We are therefore committed to all aspects of safety, welfare and protection of children and young people. This includes:

- having child protection procedures;
- having a rigorous staff recruitment and selection policy;
- on appointing a new member of staff the post will be assessed and a decision will be taken as to whether a CRB Disclosure or ISA Status Check will be taken;
- for existing staff a regular component of supervision will include a risk assessment whether changing in working patterns necessitate a CRB Disclosure or ISA Status Check;
- ensuring correct supervision and monitoring of staff;
- maintaining an accident and incident book at the office;
- providing appropriate training for staff in all aspects of child development and protection;
- any historical allegation will be taken as seriously as a recent allegation;
- any concerns will be reported to the Chief Executive (Nominated Child Protection Representative).

1. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- Workers must report any concerns to the Chief Executive
- The person reporting the concern will be asked to write down the details of their concern, it is important to write date, times, and to sign the account of the concern.
- The Chief Executive will document the information provided by the person reporting the concern, keeping a record of all details which will be signed and dated.
- The Chief Executive will then decide on a course of action as laid down by Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board

1.1 Why we have Child Protection Procedures

- It is the responsibility of everyone to protect children.
- No one person ever sees the total picture.
- Children cannot protect themselves.

1.2 When the Procedures should be used

- Abuse of a child is not always as obvious as a bruise; therefore it is important to discuss any concerns be it small or large with the Chief Executive.
- Concerns in isolation may seem trivial but others may have similar concerns.
- It is crucial therefore that concerns are reported and recorded immediately.

2. RESPONDING TO A CHILD MAKING AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

It is important that members of the organisation react responsibly and sensitively if a child discloses information of abuse. It is important that you read through and understand the information below to help you give the right service to a child.

- 1 Tell the children they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- 2 Do not show distaste, disgust or anger.
- 3 Don't ask direct questions. e.g. who, what, where, when.
- 4 Don't put words into the child's mouth by suggesting by whom.
- 5 Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child who has a speech disability and /or differences in languages says.
- 6 Keep calm, and even if you find what they are saying difficult or painful, keep listening.
- 7 Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality which may not be feasible in the light of subsequent events. Explain early on that the information will need to be shared and what you will do next (as simply as possible).
- 8 Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using the child's own words. Talk as soon as possible to your nominated child representative. If it is not possible to contact the Chief Executive and a child has made an allegation of abuse out of office hours contact 08456 058 058.
- 9 Do not contact or confront the individual who is alleged to be responsible.

3. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

3.1 Physical Abuse.

Physical abuse can include 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 feigns symptoms or deliberately causes ill health to a child.

3.2 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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child 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's basic emotional needs.

3.2 Sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration for example, rape or buggery, or non penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to act in a sexually inappropriate ways.

3.3 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 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 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.

4. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

Determined abusers have often managed to gain access to children and young people. Our policy and procedures are important safeguards to stop this happening. They will be understood by good applicants and will put ill intentioned people off.

All volunteers and staff, including temporary personnel will be subject to a careful and rigorous selection and vetting process with the following elements:

All aspects of recruitment will involve a Links trustee or several trustees. Staff will only act in an advisory capacity.

At least one trustee and the line manager will sit on interviewing panels. Recruitment methods must avoid informal discussions which may discriminate against certain groups.

All appointments will involve the completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their national insurance number.

Selection procedures should take account of the value of unpaid community and voluntary work and of experience gained in domestic or family work.

Throughout the selection procedure the only information about a candidate which should be used should be that contained on the application form, together with information obtained during the interview.

Shortlisting should be carried out by the whole panel on the basis of the essential requirements listed in the person specification.

Prior to the interview the panel should agree questions to be asked, who is to ask which question and how to record notes.

All questions asked at interview will relate directly to the person specification. No candidate will be asked about their personal circumstances.

All efforts possible will be made to facilitate the employment of any candidate with a disability or additional needs.

Links is committed to the principle of flexible working arrangements with regard to how and when hours are worked.

Training in equal opportunities recruitment and selection procedures is made available to all trustees and staff.

In particular, Links ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. Links also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

At the interview, or in a separate discussion, Links will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or subsequent dismissal.

For the recruitment of people who will be working with children the candidates will be asked to identify reasons for gaps or inconsistencies in employment. No unsupervised access to children and young people will be allowed until checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)/Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have been carried out.

Links makes every subject of a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure or an Independent Safeguarding Authority Status Check aware of its existing policy and practice on safeguarding children & young people and makes a copy available on request.

Links undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar any job applicant from working with Links. It will depend on the nature of the position, the circumstances and background of the offences committed.

Advice will be sought about appointing people with a criminal record. For the recruitment of people who will be working with children the candidates will be asked to identify reasons for gaps or inconsistencies in employment.

Two references will be used to support or deny the appointment of a candidate, and not to choose between candidates.

5. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BREACHES OF THE POLICY

- In the case of paid staff, a serious breach of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.

- In the case of members (including Board members), a serious breach of this policy may result in termination of membership and removal from the Board, in line with the procedures contained within the Memorandum of Agreement and Articles of Association (which includes calling a Special General Meeting).
- In the case of honorary officers, a serious breach of this policy may result in the other Board members voting to remove them from office but they cannot be removed from the Board other than by calling a Special General Meeting, as above.

6. SAFE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS.

Links will ensure that:

- Parents and carers are aware of the child protection policy and who to speak to. The Chief Executive will be the nominated child protection representative in Links responsible for making sure that the child protection policy is working. She/he will be trained to know how to respond when child protection concerns are raised to him/her. Alternative arrangements will be in place when the Chief Executive is away.
- All relevant staff will receive training in recognising the signs of abuse. Forms of abuse are physical, sexual, neglect and emotional. They can include bullying, or putting people down because of their race, religion, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.
- Links will ensure that users of the service, including children & young people know what to do if they have any concerns and the procedures to follow.
- Links will develop appropriate guidance for staff involved with groups of children and young people, which outline codes of behaviour. These will be developed on a group by group basis taking into account the needs of the particular group.
- Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy rests with the Board.
- All work with children will be monitored in accordance with Links monitoring and evaluation procedures:
- The Board receives regular reports from its recruitment panels, sub-groups and staff.
- All staff receiving line management which includes monitoring the equal opportunities aspects of their work.
- Major projects managed by Links are regularly evaluated by means of questionnaires, surveys and other forms of consultation.
- Specific surveys are carried out from time to time in communities experiencing deprivation.
- The results of any monitoring and evaluation exercises are fed into priorities for work and future funding.

7.GUIDELINES FOR THE NOMINATED CHILD PROTECTION REPRESENTATIVE

You are the person with responsibility for making sure any child protection issues are responded to properly and should make yourself familiar with the Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures September 2008 Handbook at: www.derbyshirescb.org.uk/procedures/

You should:

- Know about signs and symptoms of abuse
- Know about how abusers (perpetrators) behave Ask about training if you don't know these things
- Know about Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines on dealing with concerns about abuse Ask your local council's principal officer for child protection for a copy of the guidelines and about any training available from the Safeguarding Board
- Know who to contact in Children's Social Care so that you can either ask for advice when you are not sure what to do or refer a case without delay where there are child protection concerns. This information can be found in the Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures September 2008 Handbook Appendix 6 Contact Details at: www.derbyshirescb.org.uk/procedures/

- Make sure the children and young people using Links know: about the child protection policy and procedures that you are the person to speak to if they have any concerns and who to speak to if you are not there.
- Make sure staff and volunteers know how to respond if a child or young person talks to them about abuse and that they have access to guidelines.
- Provide information about help lines and other sources of help for children and young people.

8. KEEPING A RECORD OF CONCERNS

When a child protection concern arises, it is essential you record what is said or seen and what action was taken.

This record or any other written record should be kept in a locked cabinet or drawer. Access should be limited to only:

- The person who has completed the form
- The nominated child protection representative or deputy
- The Chair of Links if the person complained about is the Chief Executive.

It may be shown to the police or Children's Social Care and could possibly be used in court, although this is rare. The young person concerned can be shown this document but discretion should be used. Their permission should be obtained before showing to the parent/carer.

Policy Adopted 10/1/12

Review Date: 2017

Appendix A

Sample Document

**CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES
RECORD OF CONCERNS**

Name of Child:
Address:
Telephone No:
Parent/Carers details: Name(s):
Telephone No(s):
What is said to have happened or what was seen?
When and where did it occur?
Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?
What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs e.g., bruising, bleeding changed behaviour?
Was the child able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it?
Who has been told about it and when?
Do the parents/carers know?

Signed

Date