

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

ISSUE NO: 3

ISSUED: December 2016

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Related Policies and Documents:

- Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Staff and Volunteer Training Policy
- North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedure and Practice
- 'No Secrets', Department of Health Guidance
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Social Media Policy
- Photographic and Digital Imagery Policy
- Safeguarding Adults & Children Framework

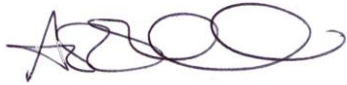
Scope of Policy

This Code of practice applies to all areas and staff, volunteers, trainees and clients of the the Group

This Policy:

Provides guidance in relation to responding to concerns, allegations, incidents or disclosures of abuse and fully reflects the North Tyneside Policy, Procedure and Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Children.

Authorised by:

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Alma Caldwell', written over a vertical line.

Alma Caldwell
Group Chief Executive

Age UK North Tyneside Group strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all, both as an employer and a provider of services. This policy has therefore been equality impact assessed by the Head of HR to ensure fairness and consistency for all those covered by it regardless of their individual differences

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

“Safeguarding Young People is about more than child protection. It means taking a comprehensive approach that prevents young people from any potential source of harm”.

National Council for Voluntary Youth Service (NCVYS), 2008

PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCUMENT

1. Purpose & Aim

The Group’s safeguarding policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Safeguarding issues. The policy also aims to make explicit the commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that Safeguarding concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child’s well being.

The Group believes that every child using any of its services has the right to live free from fear, violence or harm.

We know that being a young person makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by the organisation are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people.

PRINCIPLES

This document is based on the conviction that:

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount
- All children and young people will be valued equally
- The welfare of families will be promoted
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to

2. Introduction

The Group fully recognises the contribution it can make to safeguard and support children and young people in its care. There are three main elements to the organisations policy:

- Prevention (positive atmosphere, careful and vigilant working, support to children and young people, providing good adult role models),
- Protection (following agreed procedures; ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Safeguarding concerns).
- Support (to children and young people and staff and to children who may have been abused).

This policy applies to all employees/volunteers of the Group.

3. Framework

No organisation operates in isolation.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibility of North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board.

“We are committed to respond in accordance with North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board in all cases where there is a concern about significant harm”.

4. Significant Harm

It is a Local Authority’s duty to investigate (under S47 of the Children Act 1989). Where a Local Authority is informed that a child who is living, or is found, in their area is either subject to an Emergency Protection Order, Police protection or they have reasonable cause to suspect suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm they must make such enquiries as necessary to promote or safeguard the child’s welfare. Children’s Services Social Care undertake this responsibility on behalf of the Authority once a referral has been made.

Harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development; development means physical, intellectual, emotional social behaviour development.

Health means physical or mental health.

Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Note: Harm now includes the impairment of a child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill-treatment of another person. (Adoption and Children Act 2002)

Parents/carers should be aware that the Group will take any reasonable action to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people it has contact with. In cases where the organisation has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to significant harm, ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff have no alternative but to follow the North Tyneside's Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures and inform the Children's Services Social Care or the Police Public Protection Unit of their concern.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children. Within the organisation the following individuals have special responsibilities:-

- Head of Care at Home (Designated Person)
- Head of Wellbeing Services (Nominated Deputy)

Their role is to co-ordinate all matters relating to safeguarding issues. These will include:

- Ensuring that all reports of alleged abuse against children are reported in a timely and efficient manner and to the appropriate agency
- Ensuring appropriate actions are taken when dealing with complaints against staff/volunteers
- Making referrals, if appropriate, to Children's Services Social Care Initial Response Team (IRT) or for allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ensuring that The Group's Executive Team and Leadership Team and relevant Board of Trustees are fully informed of all Safeguarding issues that may arise

- Ensuring all staff/volunteers receive training in Safeguarding every 3 years. The Designated Person and the Nominated Deputies receive training in Safeguarding every 2 years.
- Ensuring that all new staff/volunteers are properly inducted in safeguarding issues within the first month of appointment.

6. Procedures

The Designated Person will be informed immediately by an employee, volunteer or other persons which include the parents, child or member of the public, in the following circumstances.

- Suspicion that a child is being harmed
- There is evidence that a child is being harmed

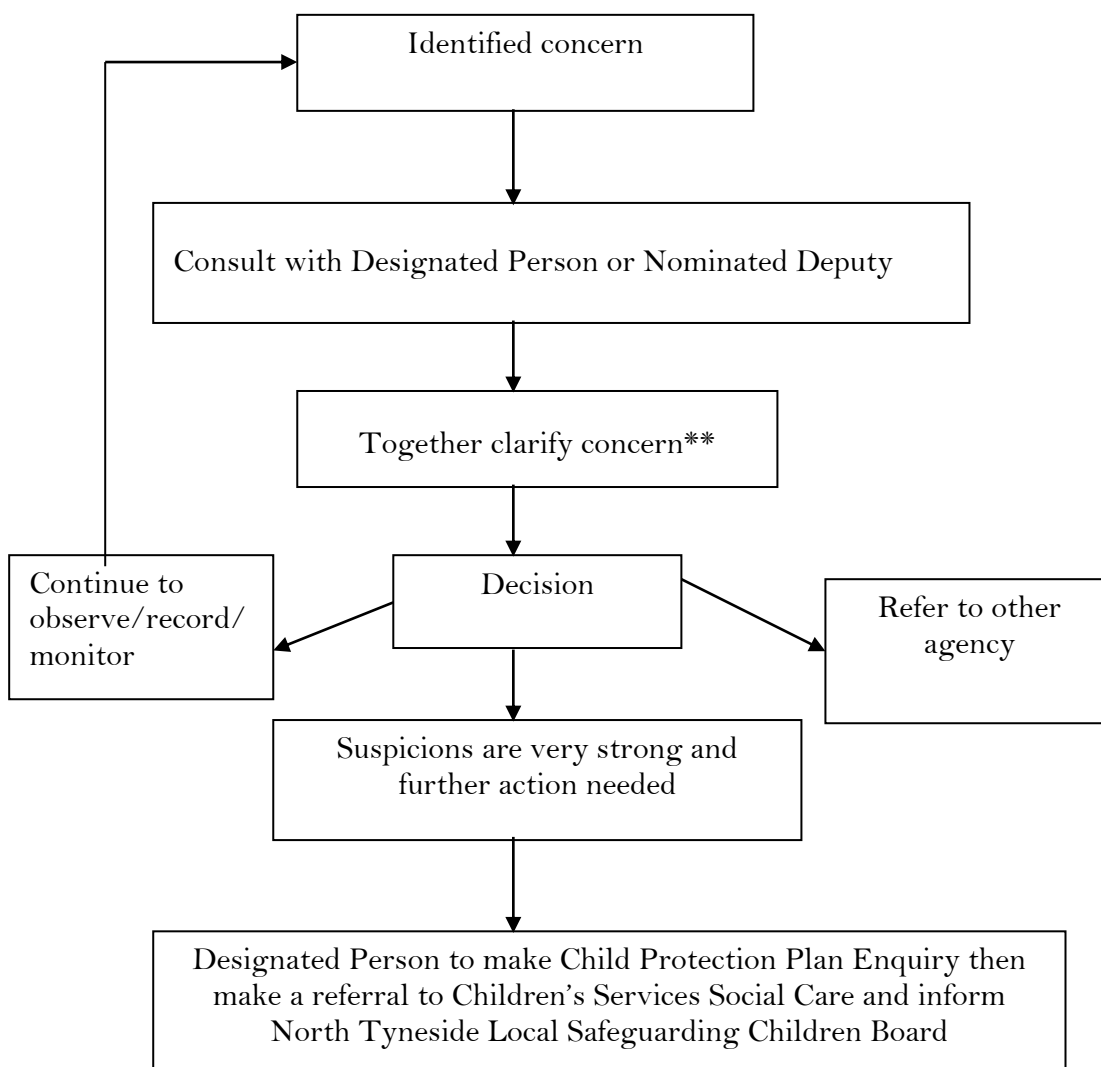
The Designated Person will keep a full record of concerns raised and make referrals to Children's Services Social Care/Police if necessary.

Referrals

Channels of communication should be quick and clear:

Suspected Child At Risk

Action to take



Any member of staff who is unhappy with the joint decision made with the Designated Person can contact Children's Services Social Care direct.

If unhappy about the outcome of the referral to Children's Services Social Care/Police, consider liaison with North Tyneside's Local Safeguarding Children Board for further support and advice.
<http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/lscb>

7. Safe Organisations/Safe Staff

Safe Recruitment & Selection

The Group takes great care in the recruitment of staff. It carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard, including Criminal Records Bureau and POVA checks. The Group will co-operate in all Government initiatives regarding the sharing of information on staff who are found to be unsuitable to work with vulnerable people

Whistle Blowing

The Group's Whistle Blowing Policy provides guidance to staff and volunteers on how they can raise concerns and receive appropriate feedback on action taken.

Staff are encouraged to take action when suspicious that abuse is occurring at work, no matter what the setting, who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. The Group will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused.

Staff, trainees or volunteers may be the first to realise that something is wrong but may not always express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues. They may also be afraid of victimisation or harassment. In these circumstances it is often easier to ignore the concern than report what may just be a suspicion that someone is being abused.

Confidential reporting through Whistleblowing is a process that enables staff, trainees and volunteers to raise concerns in the workplace and have them taken seriously. It is not easy to complain about a colleague's behaviour, but everyone has to remember that their first concern has to be the protection and safety of our client, who may need someone to speak on his/her behalf.

If, as a member of staff, trainee or volunteer you see abuse, go to your Line Manager or the Volunteering Co-ordinator and explain your concerns.

Advocacy

Staff, trainees and volunteers are encouraged to assist victims by putting them in touch with independent advocates.

Equal Opportunities

Sometimes people are the victims of abuse because they belong to a particular group in society. These policies and procedures take account of ethnic origins, gender, sexuality, age, religious and cultural background and are designed to counteract the abuse, whatever its underlying motivation.

Complaints against Employees

A Safeguarding complaint involving a member of staff must be reported to the Director immediately. If the complaint involves the Designated Person then the Chief Executive and/or Executive Director must be informed. Consultation should take place without delay with the Lead Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine what action follows. A multi agency strategy meeting will be arranged by the Local Authority to look at the complaint in its widest context. A senior member of The Group must attend this meeting.

Training & Support

The Group ensures that the Designated Person and Nominated Deputy/s receive training relevant to their role. The Group will also ensure that all its employees/volunteers are kept informed about Safeguarding issues through a programme of staff information.

Individual support will be provided to staff dealing with serious abuse and safeguarding issues are included for discussion in individual staff supervisions.

All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding training as part of their induction, with refresher sessions every two years. When there is a relevant change in the law all staff and volunteers will receive appropriate training. Appropriate training on abuse is delivered in partnership with North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of Safeguarding. The Group recognises that the only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child; in this instance the North Tyneside Policy, Procedure and Practice Guidance will take precedence.

Collaboration with Other Agencies

Safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse is a complex process and involves multi agency working. Staff assessment and action on abuse

must always be in co-operation and collaboration with other agencies, such as adult services, doctors and the police.

Records & Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good Safeguarding practice. The Group is clear about the needs to record any concerns held about a child or children within its care and pays due regard to its Destruction of Records criteria.

Staff must ensure that their recording of acts, incidents, assessments, referrals, case discussions are all sufficient, accurate, concise, up to date, legible, dated and factual. Opinions should be kept to a minimum and backed up by factual evidence. These records must be given to the Responsible Person who will store them securely. These may be used as evidence in civil or criminal prosecutions or in disciplinary proceedings.

Attendance at Safeguarding Conferences

In the event of the Group being invited to attend Initial Child Protection Conferences or Review Conferences or Core Groups, the Designated Person will represent the organisation and provide information relevant to the meeting.

8. Supporting Children

recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Some organisation may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of some of the children under its care. The Group, therefore, recognises that such children might exhibit challenging and defiant behaviour and will take careful note of the context of such behaviour.

The Group also recognises that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered and sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

The Group will endeavour to support all its children and young people through:

- The organisation's ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all children and young people and adults a sense of being respected and valued.

- A coherent management of behaviour
- Liaison with other professionals and agencies who support children and parents
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in the child's interest to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff and volunteer group whose role it is to respond appropriately in Safeguarding situations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies in the organisation. Listing provided at the front of this policy document.

The Group will also:

- operate safe recruitment practice throughout the whole process
- ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with children and young people and parents as advised by North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with children and young people age under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of position of trust)

This policy has been informed by the following:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Framework for the Assessment of Children and Families
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF) 2010
- North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board Procedures
- Safeguarding Children in North Tyneside
- Child in Need Pocket Guide
- First Call Information for Professionals Guide
- North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures for dealing with allegations/complaints against staff
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

9. Types of Abuse

It is the duty of all members of staff, volunteers or trainees to be vigilant regarding the welfare of our clients. All staff and volunteers will

be trained to recognise the signs of abuse when they occur. We believe that abuse may take the following forms:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Racial, discriminatory, religious or cultural abuse
- Institutional abuse (hidden abuse)
- Inhuman or degrading treatment

Reporting Abuse

Any member of staff, trainee or volunteer who knows or believes that abuse is occurring has an obligation to report it as quickly as possible to their manager. The Group will take vigorous action against anyone trying to suppress a possible report of abuse.

Action in Emergency Situations

If the situation is an emergency, with a child in immediate danger, staff should take urgent action to intervene and call for assistance as soon as possible. **Do not confront the abuser.** They should give any necessary first aid and contact appropriate emergency services if necessary. If the abuser remains present, staff should seek to calm the situation. Staff have a right to avoid putting themselves at risk of violence or other harm.

Immediate Action to Be Taken By Managers

When the Responsible Person receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse, the North Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures and Practice Guidance takes precedence.

If the suspected abuser is a member of staff or volunteer of The Group the Line Manager or Volunteering Co-ordinator should initiate appropriate steps under the disciplinary procedure or volunteering policy, which will involve suspension on full pay (staff only) while an investigation is carried out. Staff will take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by adult services or the police.

10. Safeguarding Adults & Children Framework

A separate document is available which summarises:

- What safeguarding means
- Safeguarding principles

- Making safeguarding part of service delivery
- Leadership, Staff and Culture
- Training requirements for staff and volunteers

CONTACT DETAILS

Police (Emergency)

Tel: 999

Police (Local):

Tel: 0191 214 6555

First Call

First Call Duty Team

Tel. 0191 643 7979

Out of Hours Service

Tel: 0300 123 0812

North Tyneside Council Children's Services

Tel: 0345 2000 101