

Good Practice Guidance

Safeguarding Children

in

**Voluntary
Organisations**

(NAME OF Voluntary Organisation)

(Name of Voluntary Organisation) recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the framework of the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

Every Child Matters:

Change for Children was published in November 2004. This publication emphasised that no **single agency could be responsible for meeting the needs of all children and families.**

The Change for Children Programme focussed on reducing inequalities, improving outcomes for all children and helping them to achieve:

- **Be healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and enjoying a healthy lifestyle
- **Stay Safe:** being protected from harm and abuse
- **Enjoy and achieve:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- **Make a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- **Achieve economic well-being:** not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life

It is difficult to acknowledge that abuse or harm could take place within your organisation but any group working with children is vulnerable. It is the responsibility of all of us to put the welfare of children and young people first, and to recognise behaviours that can put children at risk. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004, anyone up to the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

All voluntary organisations need to have appropriate arrangements in place for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. These arrangements should include:

- Procedures for staff and others to report concerns they may have about the children they meet that are in line with the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board's
- Appropriate codes of practice for staff, particularly those working directly with children

Recruitment procedures in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) and the North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board Standards for Safer recruitment 2010

- Training and Supervision of staff (both paid and voluntary).

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to adult behaviours that can have an adverse impact upon their lives, such as domestic violence, parental substance misuse or neglect.

We aim to create a safe and fun environment within which children and young people can thrive in the security of clear guidance.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers, visitors and the parents and carers of the children and young people we offer a service to and through them, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
- All paid staff and volunteers are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures and the Criminal Records Board (CRB) clearance
- All paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate child protection training, support and, where appropriate, supervision.

The Guidelines are divided in to the following sections:

1. Understanding & Recognising Signs of Abuse
2. What to do with your concerns and how to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse
3. Allegations made against staff
4. Safe Recruitment
5. Good Practice
6. Safe Behaviour Do's and Don'ts
7. Safeguarding children in North Lincolnshire
8. Contacts

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child is at risk of or actually suffering abuse, you should tell the designated child protection officer within your Organisation.

**Your Designated Officer is:
Telephone Number:**

If the designated officer is not available, you must speak to a senior member of staff. In an emergency, or if you do not agree with the decision made by your child protection officer, you can make a referral directly yourself.

Referrals can be made by visiting, emailing or telephoning the Duty Team at 3-7 Cliff Gardens Scunthorpe DN15 7PH or on 01724 296500, or outside office hours on 01724 296555 or by calling the Police.

1. Understanding and Recognising Signs of Abuse

Most children receive the love and care they need to grow up as healthy and happy young people. However, some children can end up being hurt, neglected or abused which means they may not be being treated in a safe and proper manner. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the internet. Abuse is usually carried out by people known to the child and sometimes by strangers.

It can be difficult to recognise abuse and the signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may appear unhappy or behave strangely for many reasons as they grow through the stages of childhood and/or their families experience changes. It is still necessary to be alert to the signs of the possibilities of abuse and the responsibility to consult and discuss those concerns.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule; shouting or lack of love, affection and warmth emotionally harms a child. It includes conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only if they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse can also include constantly belittling, comparing them unfavourably to others or threatening a child. It may involve causing a child to feel frightened or in danger. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are placed upon them. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children, however this is much more difficult to detect than physical abuse because there are usually no physical signs. Children who are living with domestic violence are also impacted by the atmosphere of fear and violence within the home. Symptoms that can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention seeking behaviour
- Very low self esteem or excessive self criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness
- Anxious behaviour such as rocking and/or hair twisting
- Self harming
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to a child. This might involve punching, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, throwing or beating with objects. Using belts, whips, sticks or other similar objects as a form of administering discipline is also physical abuse. Further physical abuse can include poisoning, giving a child alcohol or illegal drugs, drowning or suffocation. It is against the law to discipline a child by doing any of these things. Physical abuse also includes allowing other children to harm a child. In addition it can occur when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention, this is called fabricated illness. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse can include:

- Bruising in unusual places, such as the face or the back
- An injury which arouses suspicion, perhaps the explanation doesn't seem possible with the nature of the injury.
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could have been caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages
- Injuries that look as if they have been caused by a weapon

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves any contact or interaction whereby a child or young person is used for the sexual stimulation of an older, stronger or more influential person. This may involve direct or indirect sexual contact, sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them in inappropriate sexual activities. It includes any touching, stimulating, rubbing or patting that is meant to arouse sexual pleasure in the offender. Sexual abuse can also involve sexual contact between a significantly older and younger child. In addition it includes exposing children to pornography and unsuitable videos and images; i.e. on the internet. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 any sexual activity – contact or non-contact – with a child under the age of 13 is a crime. Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Allegations or disclosure
- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted infections; urinary tract infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sex; inappropriately sexualised play, words or drawings
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults

Older children and/or young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self harm/mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer relationship problems and difficulties

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access adequate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate responses to emotional needs
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill health – a child may look too thin, too fat and/or undernourished
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Repeated wearing of inappropriate clothing for the weather

2. What to do with your concerns and how to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse

In the event that a child or young person makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse about an adult or another child or young person it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour
- Never Promise to keep a secret.
- Only ask TED questions..tell me, explain, describe. Do not ask leading questions. It is not your role to interview the child.
- If a child tells you someone has hurt them, listen carefully and explain that you will have to tell someone else who will help them to stop this happening. Tell them that you believe them.
- Make a note of what is said as soon as possible, remembering the exact words used if you can. Do not make judgements, rather evidence based recordings. Sign and date your notes.
- Inform your designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible
- Where possible it is good practice to inform the parent/carer of the disclosure and referral, however, **do not inform the person named as the abuser if you feel this might place the child at risk of further harm.**
- Do not discuss concerns/allegations/disclosures with other people. The child/young person and family have a right to confidentiality with only people who 'need to know' sharing the information.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated child protection officer, who will help you decide what to do.

It is not however the responsibility of the Child Protection Co-ordinator or other staff to investigate suspected abuse.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or young person or the concerns of an adult, lies with Children's Social Care social workers and police officers from the Protection Unit. It is normally the responsibility of your designated child protection co-ordinator to make a referral to these agencies but if you judge the situation to be urgent and/or you require immediate advice you can report your concerns directly.

Either the Children's Social Care worker or the Police Protection Unit officer will advise you if or when to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation you should;

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe;
- Attend a child protection conference, if you are invited, where you will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child. This is one of the reasons why it is important to keep dated records of your concerns;
- Attend any subsequent child protection conferences.

*You can find out more detail about the identification of abuse and what to do about it in the booklets, **"What to do if you are worried a child is being abused"***

You can access the procedures on how to make a referral by visiting www.northlincs.gov.uk/LSCB

3. Allegations made against staff

The LSCB has in place a procedure for the management of allegations against people who work with children. All agencies, groups and organisations that are working with children, young people, and their families must follow this procedure

All organisations that work or come in to contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations may be made against members of their staff or volunteers.

In every setting, there should be a Senior Manager/Child Protection lead to whom allegations or concerns that a member of staff or volunteer may have abused a child should be reported (unless the allegations refers to them) and all in the organisation need to be aware who it is.

Allegations will usually be that an adult has

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child,
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

They may be made by a child, young person or another concerned adult.

All allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a professional, staff member, foster-carer or volunteer must be taken seriously and treated in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, even though it may be difficult to accept that this could occur in your organization

www.northlincs.gov.uk/LSCB Refer to the Managing Allegations section.

Allegations may be made for a variety of reasons, some of them being that

- Abuse has actually taken place
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the child is unable to recognise that the people and situation are different
- Your language or actions are misinterpreted by a child or young person because they are reminded of someone else
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be and, if they are angry or upset with you, have made the allegation as a way of hitting out
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

It may be difficult to accept that abuse could occur in your organisation or that the person being named could be responsible but **all allegations should be brought to the attention of the child protection coordinator/ named person immediately**. In cases where the allegation is against the co-ordinator the complaint should be taken to a more senior member of the organisation or you should take the following action yourself:

- Contact Children's Social Care or the Police
- Contact the parents/carers of the child if advised to do so by the Childrens social care worker or the police officer
- Irrespective of any investigation by Children's Social Care Services or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedures. In some cases consideration will need to be given to the precautionary suspension of the person
- Consider whether the alleged abuser has access to children anywhere else and whether those organisations or groups need to be informed, when and by whom.
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy discussion
- **Refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer in line with LSCB procedures**

All incidents should be investigated internally, after any external investigation has finished, to review practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

It is important that you also develop support systems for the person who faces an allegation. If your organisation has a management committee it could be that a member is nominated to fulfil this role. As well as providing immediate support advice could be given on accessing appropriate outside help such as counselling or legal services.

Whistle Blowing Policy

It is good practice for organisations to develop and encourage an environment where people feel safe to express their concerns about the practice of others. If a staff member, volunteer or participant has concerns they should not be victimised in any way for expressing them and making an allegation. This should be contained in a Whistle Blowing Policy. Guidance for this can be available through the LSCB guidelines, or through your local Voluntary Sector development Agency.

4. Safe Recruitment

To reduce the risk of abuse to children and the likelihood of allegations being made that are founded, every organisation should have clear and rigorous recruitment procedures. These procedures are laid down in the LSCB guidelines.

- All prospective workers (paid and voluntary) should complete an application form which asks for details of previous employment and the names of two referees. Referees should be reminded that they should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that may be relevant to their employment.
- All prospective workers (paid and voluntary) must have a new Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before they start work with you – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed
- All prospective workers (paid and voluntary) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and their perceptions of acceptable behaviour
- **Nobody** should start work before positive references have been received and the CRB process completed with a disclosure certificate received.
- All appointments to work with children should be subject to a probationary period.
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible work to an agreed job description.
- These guidelines should be made available for all staff members and volunteers and be a part of any induction process.

For further information visit

Standards for Safer Recruitment 2010 at www.northlincs.gov.uk/LSCB

5. Good Practice

All Voluntary and Community Organisations should:

- Have a written Child Protection Policy – showing commitments
- Identify a designated Child Protection Officer/Co-coordinator who must undergo child protection training
- Have a designated person for Managing Allegations
- Display the name and contact details of the Child Protection Co-ordinator in a place accessible to all, including children, young people, parents & carers, so that they are aware of who to talk to if there are any concerns;
- Ensure that all staff working with children attend basic child protection training and receive regular supervision from a more experienced staff member;
- Observe Health and Safety Regulations through risk assessments and written, safe working practices;
- Train someone in First Aid and have a fully stocked First Aid box
- Have an accident/incident reporting procedure
- Have an attendance register for every session that is being run
- Encourage Management Committee members to visit unannounced
- Make sure everyone involved in the organisation actively promotes a culture of openness, where everyone (including children and young people) feels free to share their views and concerns
- Deal with any allegation about a child or adult in a confidential manner and only share the information with those who need to know
- Not allow any member of staff to be left alone with a child/children where they cannot be observed by others
- Not, under any circumstances, allow visitors to wander around the premises unaccompanied when there are children and young people present
- Ensure that there are always at least two members of staff/volunteers with a group of children – It is vital that the ratio of child to adult is adequate to ensure safety. For children under 8 no more than 1:8 and under 5 no more than 1:6
- Be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by anybody other than their parents unless prior notification has already been received
- Inform staff and volunteers that if a child has not been collected after a session it is reasonable to wait for at least half an hour. If the parent or carer has still not arrived and cannot be contacted they should contact the nearest duty team or the police and request advice and assistance
- Talk to young people and encourage their involvement and participation

If any outings or trips have been arranged you must ensure that:

- All vehicles being used are insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts
- All drivers have at least one escort and that they have up to date CRB checks and been subject to appropriate recruitment procedures.
- Roll call is taken at the beginning of the journey and again on the return trip. If more than one vehicle is used children and young people should use the same vehicle both ways
- Staff accompanying the trip have contact numbers for the home organisation and emergency services

- If a child goes missing on a trip, staff should instigate an immediate search and alert appropriate security staff. If the child cannot be found within half an hour the police must be notified
- If, having notified security staff and the police, the child still cannot be found the parents/carers must be informed immediately
- The care of the remaining children is paramount and it is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible. A senior staff member must remain at the visit site to co-ordinate contact between security/police staff and the parents/carers.

In the event that a room or rooms within the organisation are let out to other organisations, the letting organisation must work to approved child protection procedures and must agree to read and abide by these guidelines.

6. Safe Behaviour Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Treat everyone with respect
- Provide an example you want others to follow
- Encourage children, young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they don't like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children and young people and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust
- Respect a child or young person's right to personal privacy, protection and safe environment
- Provide access and space for children and young people to talk about concerns they may have
- Listen to children and young people
- Remember that your behaviour outside of the role can impact on you, and may lead to questions on whether you are a suitable person to work with children.

DON'T

- Permit abusive peer activities (for example, ridiculing, bullying, name calling)
- Have any inappropriate physical contact with children or young people
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name to protect you
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse, go unrecorded or unreported
- Jump to conclusions without checking facts
- Believe 'it could never happen here'
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'

7. Safeguarding Children

The local North Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (NLSCB) www.northlincs.gov.uk/LSCB is responsible for coordinating the arrangements made by statutory and voluntary local organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The NLSCB will also approach individual organisations as and when their advice and experience in particular areas could be valuable to the production of guidance and information to the public.

Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire (Children and Young Peoples services) represents the interests of community groups and the voluntary sector on the NLSCB subgroups. VANL can be contacted via www.vanl.org.uk, or at www.kids4vanl.org.uk. VANL is available to support all voluntary organisations in safeguarding children and developing policies as well as health & safety and advising on best practice. Level 1 training can also be provided to groups who ask for help subject to VANL having the staff resources available to do this.

The LSCB coordinates an inter-agency training programme on child protection related topics. The diary and booking forms for these courses can be accessed via www.northlincs.gov.uk

It is essential that all designated child protection coordinators, senior officials and those working or volunteering directly with children and/or young people attend training at the levels indicated in Chapter 4 of Working Together to Safeguard children (2010)

This will enable you to gain the necessary knowledge and increase your confidence in providing safe activities for the children that come to your group.

A referral to Childrens Services is only a part of addressing the support needs of children and young people. There is a continuum of need which can be met in a variety of ways.

The LSCB document "Understanding Referrals to Social Work Services" puts this into context.

8. Contacts

Social Work Service Duty Team, 3-7 Cliff Gardens Scunthorpe Email 13cliffduty@northlincs.gov.uk	01724 296500
Out of office hours	01724 296555
The CAF co-ordinator	01652 656005
The Head of Safeguarding practice	01724 296422
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire	01724 845155
Local Authority Designated Officer(LADO)	01724 298244

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

These child protection procedures will only be effective if all of the staff and volunteers in your organisation understand and own them:

- Identify the designated Child Protection Officers (CPO) for your organisation, and who is responsible for implementing procedures to manage any allegations that are made against staff/volunteers.
- Add CPOs name and contact details to this procedure
- Ensure CPOs attend training on child protection and update that training regularly
- Ensure CPOs name and contact details are posted where they can be seen by children, young people, their parents or carers
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have a copy of the procedures and know how to put them into practice.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers know what to do if they have concerns about a child or young person, and provide refresher training on a regular basis.
- Ensure all existing staff and volunteers who have contact with children have an up to date enhanced CRB check
- Ensure that all new staff and volunteers who have contact with children have enhanced CRB disclosures before they start work.
- Provide regular management supervision and monitor volunteers and staffs progress.
- Ensure that the premises used for your organisation/activity conform to health and safety guidelines
- Ensure that any letting arrangements are bound by contracts that include an agreement to adhere to the host organisation's child protection procedures
- Have an accident/incident reporting procedure
- Have an accident/incident reporting book
- Have trained First Aid personnel
- Have a current First Aid kit