



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

CHIPS is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The safety and protection of all children and young people that CHIPS supports are paramount and has priority over all other interests.

The purpose of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to ensure, at all times, the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all children, young people and vulnerable adults, involved in any way with CHIPS

- **Abandonment** – leaving a child alone and unattended in circumstances that are inappropriate for their age/level of ability.
- **Emotional/Psychological abuse** – persistent emotional ill treatment that has a severe adverse effect on the emotional development of a young person. It may involve conveying to them that they are not wanted, not loved, useless, worthless. It may involve inappropriate expectations (such as taking on the responsibilities of an adult within the family) being placed on the young person leaving them feeling frightened and unable to cope. It may also involve the exploitation or corruption of young people.
- **Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and physiological needs of a young person that results in the serious impairment of their health and development, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter and failure to respond to basic emotional needs, such as being cared for when sick.
- **Physical abuse** – hitting, kicking, shaking, slapping, throwing, burning, scalding, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or any other action intended to cause physical harm or ill-health to a young person.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - This may involve racist, sexist and religious abuse; abuse that is based on a person's disability, size, gender, age or marital status.
- **Domestic abuse** - This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse.
- **Modern slavery** - This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Self-neglect** - This covers a wide range of behaviours including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and includes behaviours such as hoarding.

Vulnerability of Children and Young People with Additional Needs

Children with additional needs, including those with physical disabilities, special educational needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental health issues are particularly vulnerable and at greater risk of all forms of abuse, including abuse whilst being cared for in institutions.

The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of both abuse and neglect. Children with disabilities have the same rights to protection as any other child. People caring for and working with children with additional needs need to be alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse.

Children with disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse for several reasons:

- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated
- A need for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care
- Physical dependency with consequent reduction in ability to be able to resist or avoid abuse
- Communication or learning difficulties preventing disclosure or making disclosure more difficult
- Carers and staff lacking the ability to communicate adequately with the child
- The child being especially vulnerable to bullying, intimidation or abuse by their peers
- Some sex offenders may target disabled children in the belief that they are less likely to be detected
- Over-identification with the needs of parents/carers that can lead to a professional reluctance to make judgements about aspects of parenting

In addition to the universal indicators of abuse/neglect, the following abusive behaviours must be considered in relation to children/young people with disabilities:

Responsibilities (Employees, Volunteer and Trustees)

- All staff, volunteers and trustees whether paid or unpaid, working on behalf of CHIPS have a duty of care and a responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people that they work with in relation to their employment.
- A duty of care is defined as the duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child or young person involved in any activity or interaction for which that individual or organisation is responsible. Any person in charge of, or working with, children and young people in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally to owe them a duty of care.
- All staff, volunteers and trustees whether paid or unpaid, have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection or radicalisation is reported using the reporting procedures detailed in this policy.
- If in any doubt about what action to take, staff, volunteers and trustees must seek advice from the local authority safeguarding team or police.
- CHIPS frequently takes photographs of children and young people participating in activities and events. At all times written permission from parents will be obtained before any photographic material of young people under the age of 18 is used in the public domain.

Reporting Procedures

- Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence) to another member of staff, volunteer or trustee

- Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence). Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.
- The employee/volunteer/trustee must record the concern using the Safeguarding Form. It must not be saved on any computer. This form must be kept strictly confidential and stored securely following the Data Protection Procedures.
- The employee/trustee is responsible for making the decision as to whether further referral is necessary. This will either be to Children's Services, the MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub), or the Child Protection Unit of the police.
- The employee/volunteer/trustee will decide who the most appropriate person is to make the referral (depending on the case/circumstances) and ensure that the referral is made. All trustees will be informed of the decision
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely following the procedures laid out in the GDPR & Data Protection Policy.

1.2 GUIDANCE NOTES FOR DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES

An employee/volunteer/trustee who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

Guiding principles, the seven R's

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and take it seriously
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable

Reassure

- Reassure the child/young person, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'
- Do reassure e.g. you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'

Respond

- Respond to the child/young person only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court

- Do not ask the child/young person why something has happened
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the child/young person to repeat it all for another member of employee/volunteer. Explain what you must do next and whom you must talk to. Reassure the child/young person.

Report

- Share concerns with another/volunteer/trustee as soon as possible
- If you are not able to contact a volunteer/trustee and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the Children's Services department directly
- If you are dissatisfied with the level of response you receive following your concerns, you should press for re-consideration

Record

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible on to a Safeguarding Form (YO02a)
- Keep your original notes on file
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words
- Complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'

Remember

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues
- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it

Review (led by a trustee)

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff/volunteer/ should be informed by the trustees what has happened following the report being made. If they do not receive this information, they should be proactive in seeking it out.

If they have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, they might contact the Children's Services Department.