



Purpose

This document describes the policy of this care service on safeguarding children, for whom the service might have some responsibility. It should be linked to the agency's main safeguarding of adults' policy concerning definitions of abuse and its overall approach to safeguarding. It also should be linked to the policies and procedures of the local safeguarding children's board, which will reflect a commitment to the Government's strategy as described in its current *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance.

Principles

This document is based on the conviction that:

- a. the children we encounter in the course of providing services may be at risk of abuse or harm in various forms
- b. abuse may be committed by the staff of agencies providing care or by others who could be in a trusting relationship with a child
- c. our agency has a duty to do everything possible to prevent abuse, but also to report and address it wherever we meet it.

Procedures

Recognising abuse

It is the duty of all members of staff to be vigilant regarding the welfare of children with whom we have contact in the course of providing services. Staff likely to be in contact with children and their families will be trained to recognise the signs of abuse when they occur and to respond in accordance with national and local child protection policies and procedures.

Reporting abuse

Any member of staff who knows or believes that abuse of a child is occurring has a duty to report it as quickly as possible preferably to their manager, but if necessary, as a direct alert to the local children's safeguarding authority, and where there is evidence of criminal abuse to the police. With any decision, the safety of the child must be the paramount consideration, and staff who report abuse of children will, in doing so, be protected by the service's whistleblowing policy.

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. 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 a manager receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse of a child, an internal investigation should be opened as soon as possible but care should be taken not to prejudice any action to be taken by police or social services. If the suspected abuser is a member of staff, the manager should initiate appropriate steps under the disciplinary procedure. Staff will take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by social services or the police.

Referral to Children's Services/Local Safeguarding Children Board

Alongside any internal enquiry and action, the situation should be reported without delay to the local authority children's services department and/or Safeguarding Children Board (or where in operation, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)), which will carry out its own investigation under local procedures, involving other agencies as necessary. Care Quality Commission (CQC) notification procedures should also be followed where the child is a service user of the agency, which is registered with the CQC.

Reporting to the police

If it is suspected that a criminal act might have been committed, the situation should be reported to the police. Every effort should be made not to interfere with possible evidence.

Contact details

The contact details of relevant organisations are as follows:

- Local Authority Children's Services
- Local Safeguarding Children Board/MASH
- Police.

Action to be taken in the absence of further evidence

In instances where an investigation by the local children's safeguarding services, police or others against a member of staff of this service is inconclusive, the appropriate manager should nevertheless proceed with an internal investigation within the disciplinary policy, should take any necessary steps to safeguard the child as far as possible, and should keep the situation under review in case it becomes possible or necessary to take further action.

Keeping records

All details associated with allegations of abuse will be recorded clearly and accurately. The record will be securely kept and the agency's rules on confidentiality carefully followed. Reports will be made available as required to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Recruitment

The service takes great care in the recruitment of staff, carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard and will co-operate in all government initiatives regarding the sharing of information on staff who are found to be unsuitable to be involved in work which brings them into contact with children.



Government guidance

This care service is committed to working within current government guidance on multi-agency policies and procedures to protect children from abuse and its CQC registration requirements.

Training

All relevant staff will be trained in child protection and safeguarding and in carrying out their responsibilities under this policy. Training will be updated as required.

Last reviewed 6th July 2020