



North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Writing a Child Protection Policy

Practice Guidance

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Writing a Safeguarding Policy Practice Guidance

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Writing a Safeguarding Policy

Practice Guidance

Introduction

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) recommends that every organisation whose members come directly in contact with children have a Safeguarding Policy. Each policy will need to reflect the activities of the organisation and the individuals involved. Due to the diverse ways in which organisations work with children each agency should produce a policy which is reflective of its individual needs.

This guidance has been prepared to help agencies identify the common themes which should be included in the safeguarding policies and includes a draft safeguarding policy (Appendix One) and Implementation Checklist (Appendix Two) for guidance only. This policy should not be developed in isolation and links to other policies agencies should have in place including whistleblowing and safer recruitment.

Help with preparing a safeguarding policy

In preparing a draft safeguarding policy the NYSCP recommends the guidance produced by the NSPCC. Publications are available from NSPCC website at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse> If you are part of a national organisation, you should contact them as your organisation may already have a template policy for adoption by local offices, or they may be able to offer advice and support. If you are a school, sample school safeguarding policies, guidance for safe working practice and safeguarding audit tools are available for education and early years settings on cyps.info

- Sample Schools Safeguarding Policy:
<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/resource-library/?search=SCHOOL>
- Guidance for Early Years Providers in writing a safeguarding policy:
<https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/resource-library/?search=early+years>

Local Authority Schools Guidance:

- <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding-schools>

Local Authority Early Years Guidance:

- <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding-early-years>

Operation of the policy

A safeguarding policy is a statement that provides clear information to staff, parents, children and young people about how the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people will be addressed by the organisation. The policy should help prevent abuse and protect children and should set out:

- What the organisation wishes to say about keeping children safe
- Why the organisation is taking these steps
- How, in broad terms, the organisation is going to meet this responsibility
- Who it applies and relates to (for example all staff and volunteers, children up to 18 years old)
- Specific roles, functions and responsibilities of all staff
- How the organisation will put the policy into action and how it links to other relevant policies and procedures, for example taking **photographs and videos**, internet use, and recruitment
- Recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- Briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy

Writing a Safeguarding Policy

An organisational Safeguarding Policy should be a public facing document. The policy should not be developed in isolation and it is recommended that as well as involving its staff, organisations should consider involving:

- Children
- young people
- their families and
- Partner organisations

The Safeguarding Policy should be:

- Written in a clear and easily understandable way
- Approved and endorsed by the relevant management body
- Be mandatory for all staff and volunteers
- Be kept under review
- Be published on the organisation's website and available to the public, service users, staff and volunteers

To be effective it must give clear instructions on what action is to be taken, when and by whom.

Check List

The Safeguarding Policy should include:

- The name and purpose of the organisation

- Contact details of the Safeguarding Lead Who the policy applies to
- Identify roles and responsibilities Definitions of abuse (please see examples in Appendix One)
- Step by step guidance on what to do if children need protecting (for agencies providing services to children in North Yorkshire this should link to NYSCP procedures and practice guidance). You may also want to incorporate guidance specific to certain issues, (e.g. child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, missing children and young people, honour based violence, female genital mutilation, special needs, etc.)
- Set out a system for recording information
- Links to the organisation’s policy for the safe recruitment and induction of staff and volunteers (See NYSCP Practice Guidance)
- Links to the organisation’s complaints and whistle blowing procedures
- Links to the organisation policy for dealing with and recording allegations against staff/volunteers/other young people (this should include informing the Local Authority Designated Officer **within one working day**)
- Identify lines of communication
- Contact details for local Children and Families Service and police, including out of hours contacts (see www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk for more information)

The above bullet points are not an exhaustive list. Depending on the nature of the organisation, it may also be relevant to include information which relates to specific services and functions provided, for example, safeguarding procedures if the organisation takes children and young people off site, links to e-safety issues, etc.

Implementation

The policy must be an agreed protocol for the entire organisation. It is not sufficient to simply identify a number of core principals and not follow these through with an appropriate action plan and adequate resources. In order to implement the policy, organisations need to ensure that they identify appropriate actions and responsible staff to ensure the policy is embedded into the organisations culture.

In order to support the implementation of a safeguarding policy it is recommended that each organisation:

- Identifies a Safeguarding Lead with a clearly defined role in relation to safeguarding and who is responsible for implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
 - They should have appropriate training in relation to safeguarding.
 - They should be identified as a person who an organisation member can talk to about safeguarding
- Has a training programme to ensure that all staff are provided with the training they need to support the continued implementation of the policy
- Adequate arrangements to discuss safeguarding concerns in supervision

Safeguarding Policies should be a public facing document. The Safeguarding Policy should be publicised within the organisation, to service users and partners, and where possible placed on the organisation’s website.

Appendix One

DRAFT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Name of Organisation
Location
Purpose of organisation

POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

This organisation recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse. (Name of organisation) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young children. We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Maintain good links with statutory child care authorities.

THE POLICY

(Name of organisation) recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly has adopted the policy contained in this document (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers recognises the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies. These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures. They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training.

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of the organisation and who come directly into contact with children. Every individual has a responsibility to inform the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Lead must decide if the concerns should be communicated to Children and Families Service or the police.

DEFINITIONS

Child/Young Person

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

A form of abuse which may involve 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline

abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Neglect

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:

- a) provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- b) protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- c) ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- d) ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Extremism

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

Awareness of Abuse and Neglect

(Name of the organisation) will provide all staff with adequate safeguarding training in order to carry out their role and responsibilities under this policy. Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that staff and volunteers.

All members of (Name of the organisation) should to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns; however, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- a) delay in sharing relevant information with an appropriate person or authority would increase the risk of harm to the child or young person
- b) asking for consent may increase the risk of harm to the child, young person, you or anyone else.

What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously to individuals or in groups. In these situations you must:

- ✓ Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
 - ✓ Give the child time and attention.
 - ✓ Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
 - ✓ Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Recordings must be kept secure and in accordance with organisation procedures.
 - ✓ Use the child's own words where possible.
 - ✓ Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
 - ✓ Reassure the child that:
 - ✓ you are glad they have told you;
 - ✓ they have not done anything wrong;
 - ✓ what you are going to do next.
 - ✓ Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- ✗ Children should not be required to provide multiple accounts of events within the organisation

You must:

- ✓ Treat all children and young people with respect
- ✓ Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities which children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- ✓ Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- ✓ Encourage young people and adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out
- ✓ Recognise that caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ✓ Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures

- ✓ Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- ✗ Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- ✗ Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- ✗ Reach conclusions about others without checking facts
- ✗ Either exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues
- ✗ Show favouritism to any individual

What you should do if you suspect abuse

You may become concerned about a child for a number of reasons, for example:

- They have not spoken to you or avoid speaking to you
- They are upset
- Because of your observations, or
- You are given information from another party about a child.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. You should make a note of your concerns and any actions agreed following your discussion with the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

Informing parents

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on organisations [Name of organisation] will be being transparent and accountable in relation to their use of data for collecting, storing, and sharing information.

Information to be shared with another agency will usually require explicit consent except where there are concerns for the welfare or safety of the child. In these circumstances the need for consent changes where it is believed that a child has or is likely to suffer:

- Significant harm and/or;
- Has developmental and welfare needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child's parent).

For cases not reaching this threshold, it is good practice to be open and honest at the outset with the parents/carers about concerns, and the need for a referral. All reasonable efforts should be made to inform parents/carers prior to discussing concerns with Children and Families Service; however, this should not be delayed if concerns cannot be discussed with the parents.

Where the child expresses a wish for his or her parents not to be informed, their views should be taken seriously and a judgement made based on the child's age and understanding, as to whether the child's wishes should be followed (see <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-child-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>).

There may be some circumstances where it is not appropriate to seek consent, either because the individual cannot give consent, it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or because to gain consent would put a child or young person's safety or well-being at risk.

Where a decision to share information without consent is made, a record of what has been shared should be kept along with the reason why consent was not obtained.

Consultation with the Children and Families Service

Where concerns have been highlighted to the Safeguarding Lead, they will contact the Customer Contact Centre to discuss the concerns with the Children and Families Service. Please see below for contact information.

You may also wish to consult with the Children and Families Service in the following circumstances:

- When you have been unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and you believe the child is at risk of harm
- When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether safeguarding concerns exist
- When there is disagreement as to whether safeguarding concerns exist, or
- When the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

Making a Referral to the Children and Families Service

In order to make a referral to Children and Families Service, the Customer Contact Centre should be contacted in the first instance. This will usually be by the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. The Customer Contact Centre can be contacted by the following methods:

During Office Hours

By Phone: 01609 780780

Email: children&families@northyorks.gov.uk

Outside Office Hours

Emergency Duty Team (for evenings, weekends and bank holidays): 01609 780780

For further information please see:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us-out-hours>

Confirmation of Referral

A written confirmation of the referral must be completed and submitted **within 24 hours**. This will normally be completed by the Safeguarding Lead. Where possible, North Yorkshire MAST request that you use the “[Universal Referral Form Referral Form](#)” to ensure that all relevant information is provided to ensure that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible.

When contacting the Customer Service Centre the staff should:

- Clearly identify themselves, their agency/relationship with the child(ren) and family,
- Give details of where they can be contacted.
- Provide as much relevant family information as possible and, clearly stating the name of the child, the parents/carers and any other children known to be in the household, the dates of birth and addresses and any previous addresses known
- Provide details of any special needs or communication needs of either the child or any family member
- State why they feel the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Share their knowledge and involvement of the child(ren) and family
- Share their knowledge of any other agency involved
- Indicate the child’s, parent’s/carers’ knowledge of the referral and their expectations
- Ensure they record within their agency files the concerns and action taken

Contact Details

- North Yorkshire Customer Contact Screening Centre
- North Yorkshire Police
- Other relevant organisations
- Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Any National or Support Body for Your Organisation

Other Safeguarding Information

As well as the above, organisations should consider other safeguarding issues which relate to their organisation which they may wish to include, for example:

- Equality and Inclusion
- Policies on transporting children
- Guidelines on taking and using photographs and videos, including guidance on use of personal equipment
- Guidance on the storage of information
- Guidance on camping and residential activities
- Health and Safety Standards

- Guidance on supervision
- Code of ethics in respect of acceptable adult behaviour to children including guidance on physical contact
- An equality policy
- Information on helplines, e.g. NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
- Details of Safeguarding Training
- Acceptable Use Policies for internet use (E Safety Guidance – NYSCP Website)
- Guidance on specific safeguarding concerns (e.g. child sexual Exploitation, missing children and young people, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, honour based violence, special needs, etc.)

Appendix Two

Implementation Checklist

1. A safeguarding policy states the organisation's commitment to safeguard children		
		(Tick)
The organisation has a safeguarding policy	The policy is written in a clear and easily understood format for staff, volunteers, children and parents.	
	The policy is publicised, promoted and distributed to relevant audiences.	
	The policy is approved and endorsed by the relevant management body (e.g., trustees, chief executive or senior management board).	
	The policy is mandatory for staff and volunteers.	
	The policy is reviewed every no longer than every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation or guidance.	
2. Safeguarding procedures - what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare.		
There are clear procedures which provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare.	The safeguarding procedures are available to all (including children and young people and their parents) and actively promoted on joining the organisation. Consideration is given to language, difference ways of communicating and ease of use.	
	Procedures are consistent with <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2018)</i> and with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Safeguarding Procedures (https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/nyscb-procedures/).	
	There is a safeguarding lead with a defined role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding which is appropriate to the level at which s/he operates.	
	There is a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these securely in compliance with relevant legislation.	
	There is a process for dealing with complaints by parents and young people about unacceptable behaviour towards children.	
	There is guidance on information sharing which clearly states the welfare of children is the most important consideration.	
3. Prevention - Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers		

There are rigorous policies and procedures for recruiting staff and volunteers who have contact with children.	All those who have significant contact with children are subject to safeguarding checks as required by legislation and guidance and these are properly recorded.	
	There are well publicised ways in which staff, volunteers, children and young people can raise concerns about unacceptable behaviour by anyone within the organisation. These include external contacts.	
	An assessment of risk of any activities and the environment in which they take place is made prior to commencement and action taken to minimise risk.	
	A safeguarding plan is in place for transporting children or for taking them away on trips.	
	Operating standards are set out to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times.	
4. Codes of practice and behaviour		
There are well – publicised codes of behaviour for which all staff and volunteers comply.	The organisation provides guidance on expected standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people.	
	There is guidance on expected behaviour by children towards other children.	
	There are processes for dealing with behaviour that is not acceptable.	
	All disciplinary measures/ sanctions are non-violent and do not involve humiliating children and young people.	
	Managers and senior staff promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals.	
	The consequences of breaching the code are clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures.	
5. Equality and Inclusion		
The safeguarding policy makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection.	The safeguarding procedures, guidance and training help staff and volunteers to recognise the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they face to getting help, because of their race, gender, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, social background and culture.	
	Codes of conduct/ behaviour make it clear that discriminatory, offensive and violent behaviour is unacceptable and that complaints will be acted on.	
6. Communication		
Information about the organisation's commitment to	Children and young people are actively involved in the development of procedures or protocols, recruitment, planning of services and evaluation of activities.	

safeguard children and young people is openly displayed and available to all.		
	Information for young people and for parents is made available in respect of support in relation to child abuse.	
	Information is provided in a format and language that can be easily understood by all service users.	
	Everyone in the organisation knows who the Safeguarding Lead is and how to contact them.	
	Contact details for the Children and Families Service, police and emergency medical help and child help lines are readily available.	
7. Education and Training		
	There is an induction process for all staff and volunteers that includes familiarisation with the safeguarding policy and procedures.	
	All staff and volunteers are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.	
	A staff development programme is in place.	
	Staff and volunteers with special responsibilities in relation to safeguarding have training to enable them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge and have regular opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding.	
	Training and written guidance on safe recruitment is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.	
8. Advice and Support		
	The Safeguarding Lead and their deputy have access to specialist advice, training support and information.	
	Children and young people are provided with information on where to go for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying, or significant difficulties at home.	
	National and local safeguarding contacts are identified for further information and support.	
	There are arrangements for providing regular supervision and support to staff and volunteers and particularly during and following an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint.	
9. Evaluation		
Plans are in place to evaluate	Arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the safeguarding procedures and the safe recruitment procedures.	

the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures.	The resources essential for implementing the evaluation plan are made available.	
	Policies are reviewed at stated intervals, at least every three years.	
	Processes are in place to consult children and young people and parents as part of the review of safeguarding.	
	All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.	