



SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

Policy & Procedures

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A Policy for Everyone

This policy applies to all situations within the operation of Carlisle Youth Zone. It covers the wide variety of contact that staff, Board Members or volunteers may have with children/young people.

Young people (under 18) may be working within Carlisle Youth Zone, either as part of the staff team, on modern apprenticeships or a work experience placement. All of these individuals are children and as such are protected by this policy and associated procedures.

Although your work may not directly impact on or relate to children or young people it is important that you can recognise and respond to child protection situations and concerns appropriately.

1. Introduction

The welfare of children is paramount and every child has the right to live a life to the fullest of their potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy activities and to be treated with dignity and respect.

Carlisle Youth Zone has both a moral duty and a legal duty to ensure the highest possible standard of care for the children and young people who receive its services. The Children Act 2004 imposes a duty on key statutory agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Act embodies five principles that are central to well being in children and young people:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well being

2. Policy Statement

Carlisle Youth Zone believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. It is committed to implementing procedures to safeguard their well being and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by Carlisle Youth Zone or should Trustees or staff encounter situations in the course of their duties where children may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

The Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) continues to develop procedures, guidance and protocols, which provide a clear framework for agencies in Cumbria to work together to ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm and these can be found at www.cumbrialscb.com. The guidance within this policy has been produced within the spirit of a co-ordinated multi- agency approach to protecting the interests of children and young people.

3. The Scope of this Policy

- The terms ~~children~~ or ~~young people~~ are used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years i.e. up to 18th birthday.
- The principles and ethos of this policy will apply to vulnerable people over the age of 18 years. ~~Vulnerable adults~~ are broadly defined as those people covered by the community care legislation, including adults with physical or learning disabilities or those being supported because of mental or ill health and/or addiction but in each instance it will depend on the circumstances.
- Carlisle Youth Zone will also refer to the multi-agency procedures and guidelines developed by the Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Partnership when dealing with safeguarding concerns in respect of vulnerable adults. These can be downloaded from www.cumbrialscb.com, see ~~Vulnerable Adults~~
- The term ~~parents~~ is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.
- The terms ~~staff~~ and ~~volunteers~~ are used to refer to all people and organisations that work on behalf of, deliver services for, advise or represent Carlisle Youth Zone in any capacity either paid or unpaid employees, or volunteers.
- This policy extends to all sectors of the community. Child abuse occurs in all cultures, ethnic groups and social strata. All children have the right to equal protection from all types of abuse irrespective of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial heritage, religious belief, social status and sexual orientation or identity.

4. Aim of this policy

The aim of this policy and its associated procedures is to facilitate the best possible professional practice by its staff, volunteers and. There are three main elements:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Support

Prevention:, staff and volunteers will endeavour to ensure that all children and young people attending Carlisle Youth Zone do so safely and are treated with respect and understanding by providing safe and healthy environments within services to avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur. We will also ensure that staff and volunteers who work with children and young people are recruited safely and that all necessary checks are made.

Protection: Carlisle Youth Zone will take all reasonable steps to protect the rights, health and well being of children and young people who take part in activities or receive/use the services or assistance of Carlisle Youth Zone. It will give guidance and training about how to respond to allegations or concerns and share information. It will also increase awareness about child protection while actively improving good practice.

Support: Carlisle Youth Zone recognises that issues around the protection of children and young people can be emotive and Carlisle Youth Zone will offer suitable impartial support to staff or volunteers affected by this policy, whether directly or indirectly. Appropriate Child protection training will be made available to all who work or come into contact with children and young people.

5. Recruitment

All recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers will be undertaken as follows.

- References from two sources will be taken up confirming the candidates suitability to work with and have contact with children and young people.
- An enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be carried out.
- All staff and volunteers will be required to attend a Child Protection course and regular refresher courses are required.

6. How Might Abuse Come To Your Attention?

Concern about physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children or their neglect can cover a wide range of circumstances and all allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse will be treated seriously and with sensitivity.

There are various ways in which you may become aware of the actual or likely occurrence of abuse. These include:

- a child might tell you;
- someone else might report that a child has told them or that they strongly believe that a child has been or is being abused;
- a child might show some signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation;
- a child's behaviour may indicate to you that it is likely that she or he is being abused;
- something in the behaviour of another member of staff or volunteer, or in the way that a member of staff or volunteer relates to a child, alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way; or
- you may observe a child abusing another.

7. Disclosure by a Child or Young Person

Abused children and young people will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to what a child or young person is saying you are already helping. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately:

- **Stay calm**
- **Listen** carefully to what is said and be supportive
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - **do not promise to keep secrets**
- **Allow** the child or young person to continue at their own pace.
- **Ask questions for clarification only**, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- **Reassure** the child or young person that they are not to blame and have done the right thing in telling you.
- **Tell them** what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- **Record** in writing as soon as possible, what was said using the child's own words.

- Contact the **Designated Child Protection Officer, Niall McNulty**.

8. Recording Information

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, it is vitally important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident, regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with a statutory child protection agency. You must complete the Carlisle Youth Zone Cause for Concern/Disclosure Form . appendix 1

The record should be clear and factual as it may be needed by child protection agencies investigating the incident and may, in the future be used in evidence in court. The record should be stored securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation. Keeping such a record may also help to protect Carlisle Youth Zone.

9. Information Sharing

“As a general rule you should treat all personal information you acquire or hold in the course of working with children and families as confidential and take particular care with sensitive information”

(What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, HM Government, 2006)

It is important to note however, that law does permit disclosure of confidential information without permission if it is necessary to safeguard a child or children.

The need to safeguard children from harm should be considered within the parameters of the Data Protection Act 1998 which requires that personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; accurate, relevant and not held for longer than is necessary; and kept securely. Also, Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that information should only be disclosed for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others and for the prevention of disorder or crime. Disclosures should be appropriate for the purpose and only to the extent necessary to achieve that purpose.

Information relating to concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm should not be withheld on the basis that it is believed it is unlawful under either of the above. When in doubt, advice should always be sought from someone experienced in dealing with these issues.

10. Referral of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

This section of the policy is relevant to everyone; it identifies the actions that staff, and volunteers should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse. Confidentiality cannot be promised to anyone who might disclose details of abuse.

There is a duty of care to refer any allegations or suspicions that a child or young person is suffering from, or is at risk of significant harm to Cumbria Children's Social Care.

Carlisle Youth Zone assures staff that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern. All matters of this kind will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

You may discuss your concerns first with your line manager and/or other senior colleagues as you think appropriate. If you still have concerns you must make a referral to Children's Services through a customer adviser at:

Carlisle Area Office
3 Alfred Street North
Carlisle
CA1 1PX
Telephone: 01228 227002

The office is open from 9.00am each day. It closes at 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and at 4.30pm on Fridays.

In an emergency, when the office is closed, you should contact the Out of Hours Service on 01228 526690.

If you are uncertain about whether to refer a child you can ask to speak to a duty social worker who will discuss your concerns and give you advice.

Referrals that suggest an immediate risk to a child will be taken by telephone. You must also send a copy of the Disclosure Referral Form to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

More detailed guidance on making child protection referrals and the process that Children's Services will follow on receipt of referral can be found at www.cumbrialscb.com, see Chapter 6, Safeguarding Children: Handling Individual Cases.

11. What Happens if the Concern or Allegation is about a Member of Staff, Board Member or Volunteer?

It is important that you take the allegation seriously and consider it to be potentially dangerous to the child or young person. You are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred, this is the task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

You should record any allegation or concern in writing using the Referral/Disclosure Form. You must inform the Designated Child Protection Officer immediately of any concerns or cases of alleged or suspected abuse about a member of staff, Board Member or volunteer.

In addition to the possibilities of a child protection investigation and a criminal investigation there may be a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

It is not your role to judge or investigate but to inform.

12. The Role of the Designated Child Protection Officer

If the nature of the allegation or suspicion suggests that someone who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that harms or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegation must be reported by the Designated Child Protection Officer (or the Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer if unavailable or is the subject of the allegations) to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours.

The Designated Child Protection Officer via an emergency meeting of the management team, in line with the recommendations of the Cumbria Children's Safeguarding Board will decide what to do about the allegation and take appropriate measures. In reaching its decision the emergency meeting should be guided by advice from the LADO.

Details of how to contact the LADO will be published on the LSCB website at www.cumbrialscb under Chapter 7 procedures. The LADO for Cumbria is Carol Holt, telephone 01228 226831 / 07795287902, email: carol.holt@cumbria.gov.uk. If the LADO is not available then the concerns or allegations should be reported to the relevant children's services office which is usually the office in the area of the child's main residence.

The LADO will give advice as to whether the matter needs to be referred to the Children's Services Social Care team. Any referral to Children's Services should be made using the forms and following the procedures set out in Section 6 above (ie how to refer a child). The referral will be made by the person who was first concerned or alerted to the possibility of an incident of abuse.

The making of a referral to Children's Services must not be delayed if any of the relevant officers cannot be contacted and there is evidence that a crime has been committed which may require urgent police investigation.

If the matter does not meet the criteria for referral to Children's Services the matter will be dealt with by the Designated Child Protection Officer acting under the advice and guidance of the LADO. Any disciplinary action will follow the Carlisle Youth Zone's Disciplinary Procedure.

If the allegation is reported to the police it should be reported to the designated force liaison officer without delay who should report it to the LADO within 24 hours.

In addition to the possibilities of a child protection/criminal investigation there would also be internal Carlisle Youth Zone disciplinary procedures followed in terms of Gross Misconduct.

13. Safe Working Practice for Board Members, Staff and Volunteers

Children should be given every opportunity to learn that no-one has the right to do anything to them that makes them feel uncomfortable.

There are adults who deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children and it is possible to limit the situations where abuse may occur by promoting good practice to all staff working with children.

The following basic guidelines are a summary taken from the Guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults working with Children and Young People which is endorsed by the Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board and must be adopted by all staff working with children or young people as part of their terms and conditions of employment . They aim to promote positive practice and are examples of care, which should be taken by staff, Board Members and volunteers while working with children and young people.

You must:

- treat all children and young people with respect and provide a safe and positive environment;
- provide an example of good conduct and at all times demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement in a way that you wish others to follow;
- ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or that you are at least within sight or hearing of others;
- ensure that where physical contact occurs regularly it is part of a formally agreed plan or within the parameters of established, agreed and legal professional protocols eg National Governing Body of Sport Guidelines;

- respect a young person's right to personal privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care;
- remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned and if your responsibilities necessitate intimate or personal care, work in pairs and ensure that there are sufficient numbers of male and female staff to supervise the group;
- be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted and should only take place with consent of the child or young person and the purpose of the contact should be clear;
- operate within Carlisle Youth Zone's guidance and procedures; and
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse. (See the procedures outlined in Section 6 above).

You must not:

- spend unreasonable amounts of time alone with children or young people or take them alone on a car journey, take them alone to your home or arrange to meet them outside an organised activity or service unless with the full prior knowledge and consent of your line manager and the child or young person's carer;
- exchange your personal contact details to children or young people, including mobile telephone numbers or internet or web-based communication channels for sending personal messages unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents or carers;
- have inappropriate physical, verbal or electronic 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;
- jump to conclusions or make assumptions about others without checking facts;
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- show favouritism or preferential treatment to any individual;
- rely on your good name or that of Carlisle Youth Zone to protect you;
- believe "it could never happen to me";
- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach; or
- possess indecent images of children in any circumstances or you will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children.

14. Monitoring and Implementation

Carlisle Youth Zone will make available the resources required to implement the Child Protection Policy and develop an Action Plan for the introduction of the policy, making sure that arrangements are in place to monitor compliance.

15. Working with the Aftermath

Careful thought should be given to the sharing of information and the provision of appropriate support e.g. counselling. The opportunity to debrief after the event should be routinely considered and deciding who should be involved in this will be related to the extent of knowledge about the concern and the impact on other individuals.

16. Review

This policy will be revised at least annually and when Carlisle Youth Zone feels it is appropriate in the light of changing needs, changes in legislation and guidance. Ultimate accountability for the Child Protection Policy will sit with the Chief Executive.

Staff Declaration

Carlisle Youth Zone is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

As an employee of Carlisle Youth Zone it is therefore important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Child Protection Policy. By being made aware of the policy, it is our intention to ensure that all employees are pro-active in providing a safe environment for the young people in their care. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures. Copies of which are available from the Administration Manager.

(Should there be a need to investigate an alleged breach of this policy occurring during an Active Sports activity, the will liaise with the relevant Sports National Governing Body (County or Regional Officer) and the Local Authority within whose boundaries the alleged incident took place.)

Employee Declaration

I have read and fully understood Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection, and hereby declare that I will carry out my role in line with policy statements and procedures contained therein.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

