Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy, Strategy and Procedure

Contents

[1. Safeguarding Policy Statement 2](#_Toc187851004)

[The purpose of our policy is: 2](#_Toc187851005)

[Supporting Documents 2](#_Toc187851006)

[2. Legal Framework 3](#_Toc187851007)

[3. Procedure 3](#_Toc187851008)

[4. Responding to Concerns 4](#_Toc187851009)

[How to respond if you receive an allegation: 5](#_Toc187851010)

[If you witness abuse or abuse has just taken place, the priorities will be to: 5](#_Toc187851011)

[How to Record a Safeguarding Allegation 5](#_Toc187851012)

[What happens next? 6](#_Toc187851013)

[5. Managing an allegation made against a member of WCC staff or volunteer 6](#_Toc187851014)

[6. Information Sharing 7](#_Toc187851015)

[7. Definitions and Indicators of Abuse 8](#_Toc187851016)

[8. Contact Details 9](#_Toc187851017)

[9. Document Approval 9](#_Toc187851018)

[Appendix 1- Reporting Form 11](#_Toc187851019)

[Details of child 11](#_Toc187851020)

[Your details 11](#_Toc187851021)

# 1. Safeguarding Policy Statement

This policy applies to all staff, including employees, volunteers and Trustees, at all levels within the organisation, and extends to sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of WCC.

## The purpose of our policy is:

* Wallsend Children’s Community (WCC) values and encourages the involvement of children and young people in its work to support us in shaping our work and that of our partners in creating better services to meet their needs.
* To protect children and young people who receive WCC’s services. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
* To provide all staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

WCC believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to operate in a way that protects them. We are committed to listening to and respecting children and young people and building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers, children and young people, know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

## Supporting Documents

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Role description for the designated safeguarding officer
 | * Induction, training, supervision and support
 |
| * Confidentiality & Data Protection
 | * Recruitment and Selection
 |
| * Equality and Diversity
 | * Code of Conduct
 |
| * Health and Safety at Work
 | * Disclosure Barring Service
 |
| * Managing Complaints
 | * Volunteers
 |
| * Disciplinary
 | * Whistleblowing
 |
| * Acceptable use of ICT
 | * Anti-Bullying
 |
|  |  |

# Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England, namely:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Children Act 1989
 | * GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
 |
| * United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
 | * Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 |
| * Children Act 2004
 | * Human Rights Act 1998
 |
| * Children and Families Act 2014
 | * Equality Act 2010
 |
| * Children and Social Work Act 2017
 | * Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 |
| * Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
 | * Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
	+ Keeping Children Safe in Education Act 2024
 |

**We recognise that:**

* The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
* Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and

other agencies is essential in promoting children and young people’s welfare

* All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
* Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
* Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

# Procedure

Protecting people and safeguarding is a priority for WCC. We recognise that in the course of our activities, our representatives may come into contact with children who may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

Therefore, we will:

1. Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), and a lead board member for safeguarding.
2. Adopt child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers.
3. Provide effective management for staff, volunteers and trustees through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
4. Recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are made in accordance with our Disclosure and Barring Policy.
5. Record and store information professionally and securely and share information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, poster, one-to-one discussions, where appropriate.
6. Using our safeguarding procedures, share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
7. Using our procedures, manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
8. Create and maintain an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
9. Ensure that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
10. Ensure we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
11. Develop and implement an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
12. Be quick to respond to concerns and comply with the North Tyneside safeguarding and child protection procedures, in particular the section 11 duties of the Children Act 2004, set out in the ‘Shared Responsibilities’ section of the procedures.
13. Treat failure to address safeguarding issues as a very serious matter.

# Responding to Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. All paid staff, volunteers, Trustees and others acting on behalf of WCC have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns in line with the guidance provided below. Possible abuse may become apparent in several ways:

* A child or young person may tell you.
* A third party may have reported an incident or may have strong suspicion.
* You may have a suspicion that child abuse is occurring or a risk of it occurring.
* You may witness an inappropriate incident occurring.

Led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as the DSO, overseen by the Board of Trustee’s Safeguarding Lead, it is the responsibility of those working for/with WCC to follow all procedures where there are any concerns that child abuse may be occurring by informing the appropriate authority.

## How to respond if you receive an allegation:

* Reassure the person concerned.
* Listen to what they are saying.
* Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible.
* Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
* Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
* Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
* Do not promise to keep any secrets.
* Let them know what will happen next.

Share this information immediately, or as soon as possible, with WCC’s DSO.

## If you witness abuse or abuse has just taken place, the priorities will be to:

* If medical assistance is required call a Designated 1st Aider (contact numbers by all WCC Office Doors) and ambulance (999 [or 9999 from an internal extension.]).
* Call the police if you believe a crime has been committed (999, or 101 if not an emergency – [9999 or 9101]).
* Preserve evidence.
* Keep yourself, staff, volunteers and service users safe.
* Inform WCC’s Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

## How to Record a Safeguarding Allegation

When making a record of a safeguarding incident or allegation you should:

* Write down exactly what you are told or have seen.
* Use the exact words of the person telling you, not your own.
* Include times of incident.
* Include the type of alleged abuse.
* Include the location of the alleged abuse.
* Make it clear who said what and when.
* Write down everything you saw, keep it factual.
* Write down people's names in full, explaining who they are.

Be accurate - write down facts as they happened, be unbiased/do not take sides, do not ask leading questions, use the phrases ‘tell me about it, explain that to me, describe that’. Share your concerns with WCC’s Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately, providing them with a fully completed Safeguarding Reporting form (Appendix 2).

## What happens next?

All situations of abuse, or alleged abuse, will be discussed with WCC’s Designated Safeguarding Officer or their Deputy as soon as possible. If the person sharing the information feels unable to raise this concern with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or their Deputy, then concerns can be raised with the Children and Families Social Care. The alleged victim will be told that this will happen. This stage is called raising a concern. When WCC’s Designated Safeguarding Officer receives a safeguarding alert, they will review the information to make sure they have sufficient and accurate details. If it is appropriate and there is consent from the individual, or there is a good reason to override consent, such as risk to others, a referral will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Officer to the Children and Families Social Care. If the individual experiencing abuse does not have capacity to consent, a referral will be made without that person’s consent, in their vital interests.

Contact North Tyneside Children and Families on 0345 2000 109 (office hours) or 0330 3337474 (evenings and weekends) or make an online referral <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/488/are-you-worried-about-child>

If you are worried about someone working/volunteering with children? The Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) looks at allegations made against professions in the children’s workforce (including paid employees and volunteers). Follow the link to make a report [Local Authority Designated Officer | North Tyneside Council](https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/884/local-authority-designated-officer).

# Managing an allegation made against a member of WCC staff or volunteer

WCC will ensure that any allegations made against members of staff will be dealt with swiftly.

Where a member of staff/volunteer is thought to have committed a criminal offence, the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately.

The safety of the individual(s) concerned is paramount. A risk assessment must be undertaken immediately to assess the level of risk to all service users posed by the alleged perpetrator. This will include whether it is safe for them to continue in their role or any other role within the service whilst the investigation is undertaken.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the child Social Care team to discuss the best course of action and to ensure that WCC’s disciplinary procedures are coordinated with any other enquiries taking place as part of the on-going management of the allegation.

Staff will be supported to use WCC’s Whistle Blowing policy where appropriate.

# Information Sharing

To ensure clear information sharing, WCC is committed to the simple process of sharing relative information and follows the seven “Golden Rules” for information sharing taken from the HM Government Information Sharing guidance package (2008):

* Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
* Be open and honest with the person from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
* Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
* Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You should go ahead and share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
* Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
* Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
* Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

# Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

**Physical abuse** includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning or misuse of medications, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm like broken bones.

**Emotional abuse** is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

**Sexual abuse** is when a child or young person is forced, tricked or manipulated into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong for the abuser to do this to them. They might be afraid to tell someone or behave as though this is normal for them to experience; both are valid for the child to be displaying. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.

**Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

**Grooming** is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

**Bullying** is intentional behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. A person can be bullied online and offline at the same time.

**Domestic abuse** is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people who are or have been in a relationship. It can also happen between adults related to one another. It can seriously harm children and young people, and experiencing domestic abuse is child abuse.

**Online abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online.

**Child sexual exploitation** (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship so the sexual activity may appear consensual. This is called grooming and is a type of abuse. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can also occur through the use of technology.

**Child trafficking** is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold.

**Criminal exploitation** and gangs is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. They might be victims of violence or pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited and put into dangerous situations.

**Female genital mutilation**, FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting’ but has many other names. FGM is a form of child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK.

# Contact Details

**Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Name: Paula McCormack

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Phone/email: paula.mccormack@ntlp.org.uk

**Designated Safeguarding Trustee**

Name: Louise Laws

Phone/email:

# Document Approval

This Safeguarding policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on 27 January 2025 and will be reviewed annually.



David Baldwin, Chair of the Board of Trustees

27 January 2025



Louise Laws, Trustee Safeguarding Lead

27 January 2025

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# Appendix 1- Reporting Form

Reporting concerns about a child at risk: This form should be used in conjunction with the procedure for dealing with concerns about a child at risk.

##  Details of child

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of child:  |  |  |
| Gender  | Age  | Date of Birth  |
| Ethnicity  | Language  | Additional needs  |
| Home address:    |  |  |

## Your details

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Your name:  | Your position:  | Date and time of incident (if applicable):  |

|  |
| --- |
| Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else? ☐ Reporting own concerns ☐ Responding to concerns raised by someone else  |
| If you are responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position within the organisation:   |
| Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates, description of any injuries, whether information is first hand or the accounts of others, etc:  |
| The child’s account/perspective:  |

|  |
| --- |
| Please provide details of anyone alleged to have caused the incident or to be the source of any concerns:  |
| Provide details of anyone who has witnessed the incident or who shares the concerns:      |
| Summary of discussion with manager:       |
| Has the situation been discussed with WCC’s Designated Safeguarding Officer? ☐Yes ☐No If yes, please summarise the discussion:        |
| If appropriate, have you spoken to the child’s parents/carers? ☐Yes ☐No  If yes, please summarise the discussion:        |
| Have the following authorities been informed? **Police**: ☐yes ☐no Date and time: Name and phone number of person spoken to: **Local Authority Children and Families Social Care**: ☐yes ☐no Date and time: Name and phone number of person spoken to: Action agreed with child protection authorities:     |
| What has happened since referring to statutory agencies? Include the date and nature of feedback from referral, outcome and relevant dates:      |
| **Signed**   | **Date and time**   | **Name and position**  |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |