

Child Protection

Child Protection at Woodentots

Policy Statement

Everyone employed by the provision has a responsibility in relation to child protection and safeguarding children. In most cases this will be the referral of concerns to his/her line manager. In day-to-day contact with children and families – and particularly children identified as being at risk, staff have an opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults.

This policy aims to outline the role that the provision will have in relation to child protection, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should use as a rule of thumb the needs and safety of the child as being at the centre of any decision they make.

The Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases.
- To provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse.
- To provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison.
- To identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk.

Procedure

In order to safeguard children we will:

- Adopt child protection guidelines as recommended by our Local Safeguarding Children Board and other appropriate professional bodies.

- Implement appropriate procedures and code of conduct for the practice team.
- Raise awareness with staff and parents that concerns about the welfare of a child and child protection are taken seriously, with appropriate action being taken.
- Create an environment where children are listened to and their concerns taken seriously.
- Share information with other agencies on a need-to-know basis.
- Involve parents and children, except where doing so would put the child at greater risk of harm.
- Follow safer recruitment guidance and procedures.
- Provide effective staff management through access to supervision, support and training.
- Review this policy at regular intervals to ensure it is updated and informs day-to-day practice.

Designated Person

The designated person is Paula Woodman. Their role is to help co-ordinate any concerns that are raised regarding the welfare of a child and to liaise with other professionals where appropriate, including the local authority social care for children.

The designated person will:

- Co-ordinate action within the provision and liaise with social care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse.
- Act as a source of advice within the provision.
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the provision's policy and procedure.
- Make child protection referrals, recording and reporting accordingly.
- Liaise with agencies about individual cases.
- Organise training on child protection and safeguarding children within provision.
- Ensure that appropriate strategies for recording and reporting incidents are kept within provision.
- Provide appropriate feedback to members of staff as and when necessary.

Staff

Staff should:

- Be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed in this policy.
- Report any concerns immediately, where possible to the designated person.
- Consult with the designated person if in any doubt as to how to proceed.
- Follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures.

Partnerships with Parents

It is important that the provision has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. However, the priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will/may have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined later in this policy.

Where possible staff should work with and share information with parents. Permission for liaison and information sharing with outside agencies should be sought unless it places the child at risk. In these cases it is preferable to seek advice from social care or make a child protection referral.

Guidance on Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by

someone often in a position of power. It is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but to act on any concerns and report these to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount.

Abuse might fall into the categories of:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Staff should respond appropriately to signs and symptoms in a child which gives them cause for concern.

These include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour or appearance.
- Frequent mood changes.
- Deterioration in their general well-being.
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse.
- Signs of neglect such as being unkempt.
- Comments children make which give cause for concern.
- Not wanting to go home.
- Seductive behaviour.
- A child who is quiet and withdrawn.
- A child who gives the impression of being unloved and unhappy.

More details on how to recognise signs of abuse are included in the staff handbook. Policy on Dealing with Suspected Abuse

All staff should refer concerns to the designated person as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- Consider the child's welfare as paramount.
- Believe the child and take them seriously.
- Remain calm and caring.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to them.
- Make notes of the conversation as soon as possible, using the child's own words.
- Explain what will happen next and who will be told.

Staff should not:

- Promise confidentiality.
- Postpone the discussion until a different time.
- Interpret what they have been told.
- Probe or ask leading questions.

Where the staff member suspects that a child is being abused they should:

- Immediately tell their line manager or the designated person for safeguarding and child protection about their concerns.
- Make factual notes of what has occurred, using the child's own words where relevant, and any action taken.
- The designated person will follow the procedure below.
- Where possible, they will discuss concerns with the child and their parents and obtain agreement to making a referral to children's social care unless this discussion would put the child at increased risk of significant harm.
- Seek professional advice if unsure about whether or not to talk to parents first.

- When a referral is made, agree what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. Inform the recipient of the referral what information has already been discussed with the child and their parents.
- If a telephone referral is made it must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours. Children's social care should acknowledge the written referral within one working day of receiving it, indicating the course of action chosen. If nothing has been heard back within three working days, contact children's social care again.
- Under no circumstances confront the abuser. There is a risk of forewarning the abuser and compromising any investigation or prosecution.

Confidentiality

Relevant information about the protection of children must be shared with the investigative agencies, but only on a "need to know" basis.

Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.