



NoOffence!

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. All NoOffence! CIC staff and volunteers working directly or indirectly with children and young people will be made aware of this policy.
- 1.2. This policy sets out what action will be taken in various circumstances in order to reassure parents, carers and funders that all possible steps will be taken to protect children involved in any aspect of the organisation's work.

2. Policy Specifics

- 2.1. This policy acknowledges that:
 - 2.1.1. Child abuse exists and can present itself in any of its forms, physical, emotional, neglect or sexual, alone or in combination
 - 2.1.2. Children may be abused and/or neglected by their parents, carers, guardians or other trusted adults as well as by strangers
 - 2.1.3. Abuse may be perpetrated by individuals, groups or networks of individuals
 - 2.1.4. Children may also be abused by other children
- 2.2. Children and young persons under the age of 18 of all races, religions and cultures, with or without disabilities, from any model of family life have an equal right to protection from abuse.
- 2.3. The Children Act 1989 places 2 specific duties on agencies to co-operate in the interests of vulnerable children:
 - 2.3.1. Section 27 provides that a Local Authority may request help from:
 - 2.3.1.1. Any Local Authority
 - 2.3.1.2. Any local education authority
 - 2.3.1.3. Any housing authority
 - 2.3.1.4. Any health authority, Special Health Authority or National Health Service Trust; and
 - 2.3.1.5. Any person authorised by the secretary of state



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2.3.2. In exercising the Local Authority functions under Part 3 of the Act. This part places a duty on Local Authorities to provide support and services for children in need; including children looked after by the Local Authority and those in secure accommodation. The authority whose help is requested in these circumstances has a duty to comply with the request, provided it is compatible with its other duties and functions.

2.3.3. Section 47 of the act places a duty on:

2.3.3.1. Any Local Authority; any local education authority

2.3.3.2. Any housing authority; any health authority

2.3.3.3. Special Health Authority or National Health Service Trust

2.3.3.4. Any person authorised by the secretary of state to help a Local Authority with its inquires in cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

3. Abuse

3.1. The definitions of abuse outlined below are taken from 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Department of Health 1999.

3.2. 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 a stranger.

4. Categories of Abuse

4.1. Physical Abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.



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- 4.2. Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- 4.3. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production or, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- 4.4. Neglect is 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- 4.5. Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.
- 4.6. Note: Children whose situations do not currently fit the above categories may also be at significant risk of harm. This could include situations where another child in the household has been harmed or the household contains a known child abuser.



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5. Key Issues in Identifying Child Abuse

5.1. Child abuse can take place in a number of different settings, of which the following are examples:

- 5.1.1. It is likely to occur most commonly where the young person knows the individual/s and is trusted. This can be a parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative, or friend of the child or of the family.
- 5.1.2. The abuser is sometimes someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker or church/mosque worker/leader.
- 5.1.3. The abuser is sometimes a paedophile or other person who sets out to join organisations to obtain access to children.

5.2. Although NoOffence! CIC does not directly work with children and young people, it has a responsibility to act if abuse comes to light and, as far as possible, to protect children from the possibility of being abused. For the purposes of this policy a child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 years of age.

5.3. All members of NoOffence! CIC have access to this policy and are required to make known any issues/suspensions to the Chief Executive of NoOffence! CIC, swift and appropriate action will then be taken.

5.4. It is the responsibility the NoOffence! CIC Advisory Board to appoint a designated Child Protection person to oversee the implementation of this policy. A deputy will also be appointed. These positions would be held for a one-year term and then be reviewed by the Advisory Board when and as appropriate.

Child Protection Employee: Sue Clifford

Deputy: Richard Rowley

Contact Number: 01777 717186

6. Procedures for Responding to Allegations/Concerns of Abuse

6.1. All concerns about the welfare of a child or concerns that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering abuse or neglect should be referred to the Social Services who will seek to clarify the nature of the concern and whether immediate action is needed to make them safe from harm.



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- 6.2. Where there is a clear allegation or strong suspicion or evidence of abuse, there must be no delay in making a referral to the statutory agencies.
- 6.3. Where there is no clear evidence or allegation but suspicion exists that abuse may have occurred, a preliminary consultation with the designated child protection employee, should take place without delay. If the designated officer is absent at this time then preliminary consultation should take place with the child protection deputy.
- 6.4. Where the level of risk remains unclear consultation should be sought from Social Services as to whether a referral is appropriate.
- 6.5. At the end of any discussion about a child, the referrer and Social Services should be clear about who will be taking what action or that no further action will be taken. The decision will be recorded by Social Services and the professional referrer.
- 6.6. Concerns should be discussed with the parent or carer and, where possible their agreement should be sought before making referrals to Social Services **unless this places a child at increased risk of significant harm.** For example, in cases where the allegation of abuse is of a sexual nature, which must involve a referral directly to the relevant Social Services department or Police Child Protection Team.
- 6.7. Social Services should decide on the next course of action within 24 hours. On the basis of available evidence they have a responsibility to address whether there are concerns about both the child's health and development, or actual and/or potential harm which justify further inquiries, assessment or intervention.
- 6.8. You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those named in the above points.
- 6.9. Under no circumstances attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of abuse. It is the task of Social Services to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.



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- 6.10. Referrals may lead to:
 - 6.10.1. No further action
 - 6.10.2. Directly to the provision of services or other help and/or
 - 6.10.3. A fuller assessment of the needs and circumstances of the child which may in turn lead to child protection inquiries
 - 6.10.4. Emergency action to safeguard the child
 - 6.10.5. Child protection inquiries being undertaken

7. Seeking Expert Advice

- 7.1. If concerns regarding the welfare of a child come to light, and it is unclear if they should be referred to Social Services the designated Child Protection employee, may discuss the situation with a Child Protection Co-ordinator/ Advisor from the relevant Local Authority area.
- 7.2. Alternatively, the NSPCC also offer child protection advice via their hotline 0808 800 5000

8. Allegations against Staff

- 8.1. Any complaint against a member of staff must be made to the Chief Executive/ Chair of the Advisory Board who will seek the advice of Social Services and/or the police on how to proceed with investigations.
- 8.2. In accordance with NoOffence! CIC's Disciplinary Procedure, the complaint will be treated as gross misconduct.
- 8.3. The member of staff involved will be suspended from duty during investigation of the complaint.
- 8.4. Whilst other members of staff should show due courtesy and respect the confidentiality of colleagues, the needs, welfare and protection of children will at all times be paramount.
- 8.5. If the Chief Executive or Chair of the Advisory Board is informed of a complaint by the authorities the Chief Executive/ Chair will meet with the authorities in order to be acquainted with the details and agree appropriate action.



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9. Complaints Procedure

- 9.1. NoOffence! CIC is committed to continual improvement of its services and facilities. It recognises that complaints are an important tool for addressing problems and will endeavour to ensure that all complaints are investigated and acted upon fairly.
- 9.2. Complaints can be raised with any member of staff, either verbally or in writing. The member of staff will either respond or refer the complaint to a more senior member of staff for investigation. Following investigation, a response will be made in writing setting out the nature of the complaint, the outcome of the investigation and any proposed actions as a result of the complaint.
- 9.3. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response the person dealing with it should refer the complaint to the Chief Executive.
- 9.4. Any complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the Chief Executive will be referred to the Advisory Board whose decision will be final.

10. Useful Links

- 10.1. NSPCC – <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- 10.2. CEOP – <http://ceop.police.uk/>
- 10.3. Safe Network - <http://www.safenetwork.org.uk>

11. Review

- 11.1. The policy will be reviewed in January 2016 by the Chief Executive. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, contractual arrangements, good practice or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Approved by: Chief Executive, 5th January 2015

Review date: January 2016