



Dorset Safeguarding  
Children Board

## **DORSET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

This document is in three parts.

Part 1 sets the context and DSCB expectations of all organisations who work with children and young people (or parents/carers of children and young people) in relation to safeguarding.

Part 2 defines the organisational standards which the statutory members of DSCB are seeking to achieve. Whilst these standards are perhaps more readily achievable by larger organisations, any organisation who works with children may choose to adopt some, or all, of these standards, as appropriate, to their own context.

Part 3 provides guidance to all organisations about how to develop a Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures. It also provides a list of questions to help organisations evaluate whether their Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures are effective.

**DORSET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD  
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**PART 1**

**SAFEGUARDING EXPECTATIONS OF ORGANISATIONS**

All organisations who; work directly with children and young people or; work with the parents and carers of children and young people – should have a safeguarding policy in place. This should be a brief (1 or 2 page) statement which sets out:

- what the organisation wishes to convey regarding child protection and safeguarding children
- the organisation's values: valuing, listening to and respecting children
- how, in broad terms, the organisation is going to fulfil this responsibility
- who it applies and relates to (i.e. all staff and volunteers)
- a statement that confirms the need to apply the principles and ethos applicable to children and young people to vulnerable adults above the age of 18 years
- application of policy with cross-reference to other policies and procedures, which promote the child's safety and welfare
- cite national or international principles, legislation or guidance which underpin the policy.

In addition, all organisations (as above) should normally have policies and procedures relating to:

- *Child protection*  
A Child Protection Procedure should explain to everyone in the organisation how to recognise the signs of abuse and what to do if they have any concern or suspicion that a child may be at risk of harm.
- *Recruitment and selection:*  
Whilst the vast majority of people who want to work with children and young people are well-motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out those who are not suitable.
- *Induction, training and supervision:*  
Once recruited, all staff and volunteers should be well-informed, trained, supervised and supported, so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm or be misinterpreted and possibly lead to false allegations being made against them. Unless all staff have an awareness of child protection and the harm it can cause and how to act on concerns, policies and procedures, however good, will not be acted upon.
- *Safe practice:*  
This should provide guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people. A protective culture that puts children's interests first will help children feel confident that if they have concerns, someone will listen and take them seriously.

- *Complaints and representations:*  
In order to ensure an open and protective culture is developed, where children or staff feel able to express any concerns, it is important that the organisation has a clear complaints/representations procedure.
- *Whistle-blowing:*  
This may be developed separately or as part of your complaints/representations procedure. However, it is important that the organisation has well-publicised procedures for enabling staff and volunteers to express, in confidence, any concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour. Ignoring inappropriate behaviour may lead to the development of an unsafe culture.

Information and guidance about how to develop a Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures is available to all organisations from Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (See Part 3 *Developing a Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures – Guidance for Organisations*)

Organisations who are statutory members of the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board should expect to set the highest organisational standards to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Thus in addition to fulfilling the expectations of all organisations as detailed above), DSCB has also developed a set of safeguarding standards which the statutory member agencies are working towards achieving. (See Part 2 *Dorset Safeguarding Children Board – Safeguarding Standards*).

Achievement of these standards will enable the statutory member organisations of DSCB to be confident that they are fulfilling their responsibilities under s11 of the Children Act 2004. Moreover, the DSCB is able to monitor organisations compliance with s11 by audit against these standards.

**DORSET LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD  
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**PART 2**

**Safeguarding Standards**

Children and young people have a right to be safe and happy, and parents and carers have a right to believe that the agencies who come into contact with their children are safe.

In any contact with children and young people in Dorset, the agencies who are members of Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) will seek to:

- create safe environments
- prevent harm to children
- minimise any potential risk of harm to children
- respond appropriately to any concerns about children

In order to achieve these aims, DSCB is committed to a set of organisational standards<sup>1</sup> which safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and these are detailed below.

Safeguarding is defined as the actions taken to prevent harm/abuse happening to any child. Child protection is a part of safeguarding and refers to actions undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm or abuse.

---

<sup>1</sup> These standards have been developed using the NSPCC Firstcheck Guide (2006)

## **STANDARD 1 – Policy**

### **What?**

Any organisation providing services or activities for children and young people under the age of 18 should have a safeguarding policy. This is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children involved in activities from harm.

### **Why?**

A safeguarding policy makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children and young people. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously.

### **Criteria**

- 1.1 The organisation has a safeguarding policy.
- 1.2 The policy is written in a clear and easily understood format for staff, volunteers, children and parents.
- 1.3 The policy is publicised, promoted and distributed to relevant audiences.
- 1.4 The policy is approved and endorsed by the relevant management body (e.g. board of trustees, chief executives, senior management board or committee).
- 1.5 The policy is mandatory for staff and volunteers.
- 1.6 The policy is reviewed every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

### **Essential inclusions**

- All children and young people have a right to protection
- The welfare of children and young people is paramount
- Identity of the organisation
- Who the policy applies to.

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- A copy of the safeguarding policy
- Circulation list to show distribution
- Examples of ways in which the policy was promoted
- A signed statement of approval of policy or excerpt from the minutes of relevant meeting to show approval
- Written evidence of process and timetable for review.

## **STANDARD 2 – Procedures and systems**

### **What?**

Procedures provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances. They clarify roles and responsibilities and lines of communication. Systems for recording information and for dealing with complaints are also needed to ensure implementation and compliance.

### **Why?**

Procedures help to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child's safety or welfare. They also help an organisation to comply with and implement legislation and guidance.

### **Criteria**

- 2.1 There are clear and unambiguous procedures in place in respect of child protection, which provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- 2.2 The child protection procedures are available to all (including children and young people and their parents/carers) and actively promoted on joining the organisation. Consideration is given to language, different ways of communicating and ease of use.
- 2.3 There is a designated person/s<sup>2</sup> with a clearly defined role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, appropriate to the level at which he/she operates.
- 2.4 There is a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these securely in compliance with relevant legislation.
- 2.5 Child protection procedures are consistent with Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole LSCB safeguarding procedures.
- 2.6 There is a process for dealing with complaints by parents/carers and by young people about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children, with clear time-scales for resolving the complaint.
- 2.7 There is guidance on confidentiality and information sharing which clearly states that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.
- 2.8 There is a named senior officer and a senior manager(s), as required by statutory guidance, in relation to managing allegations against people who work with children.

---

<sup>2</sup> Designated person/s. All organisations should have a named person/s who is/are responsible for the implementation of the child protection policy and procedures. This role should reflect the nature and structure of the organisation and should have sufficient seniority and support to carry out the role.

**Essential inclusions**

- Responding to a child who says either s/he or another child is being abused
- Responding to allegations against a member of staff/volunteer or another young person
- Responding to concerns about a child's welfare where there is no specific disclosure or allegation
- Contact details for local children's services and police, including out of hours contacts
- Use of video and photography at events
- Use of internet chat rooms and other web-based or mobile phone services
- Who the procedures apply to
- Definitions of abuse
- Particular vulnerability of some groups of children, including disabled children

**Ways of providing evidence**

- A copy of the child protection procedures
- A flow chart/process map
- The name and responsibilities of designated person/s at different levels within the organisation
- An example of recording forms

## **STANDARD 3 – Prevention**

### **What?**

Measures to help minimise the possibility of children and young people being abused by those in a position of trust.

### **Why?**

Some people who work in or who seek to work in organisations that provide activities for children in a paid or voluntary capacity, pose a risk to children and young people. It is possible to minimise the risks and to prevent abuse by putting safeguards in place.

### **Criteria**

- 3.1 There are rigorous policies and procedures for recruiting staff and volunteers who have contact with children and for assessing their suitability to work with children.
- 3.2 All those who have contact with children are subject to safeguarding checks as required by legislation and guidance, and these are properly recorded.
- 3.3 There are well-publicised ways in which staff and volunteers can raise concerns, confidentially if necessary, about unacceptable behaviour by other staff or volunteers.
- 3.4 There are well-publicised ways in which children can raise concerns, confidentially if necessary, about unacceptable behaviour by other children.
- 3.5 An assessment of risk to children of any activities or services provided, and the environment in which they take place, is made and actions taken to minimise any risks.
- 3.5 A safeguarding plan and guidance are in place in relation to transporting children or taking them away on visits or trips.
- 3.6 Where there is direct responsibility for running/providing activities, operating standards are set out to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times.

### **Essential inclusions**

- Application of recruitment policy to all those in contact with children
- At least two appropriate references are taken up for all staff and volunteers who have contact with children, and evidence of identity and any relevant qualifications are seen

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- A copy of the recruitment policy and procedure
- Examples of application, reference and declaration forms
- A copy of 'whistle-blowing' scheme and publicity about the scheme
- An example of child welfare plan for transporting children or taking them on trips
- Registration with or access to Criminal Records Bureau



## **STANDARD 4 – Codes of practice and behaviour**

### **What?**

Codes of practice describe acceptable standards of behaviour and promote good practice.

### **Why?**

Involvement with children should be carried out in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. Standards of behaviour for all set a clear benchmark of what is acceptable. They can help minimise opportunities for abuse and help to prevent unfounded allegations.

### **Criteria**

- 4.1 There is a well publicised code of behaviour to which all staff and volunteers comply.
- 4.2 The organisation provides guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children and young people, including those adults responsible for children in residential care or caring for disabled children.
- 4.3 There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour by children towards other children.
- 4.4 There are processes for dealing with behaviour that is unacceptable.
- 4.5 All disciplinary measures/sanctions are non-violent and do not involve humiliating children and young people.
- 4.6 Managers and senior staff promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals.
- 4.7 The consequences of breaching the code are clear and linked to organisational disciplinary and grievance procedures.

### **Essential inclusions**

- Codes of practice for adults and for children
- Discrimination, prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language in relation to any of the following are not acceptable - race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political persuasion
- Where relevant, there are guidelines on intimate care of disabled children or young people, that promote personal privacy and dignity and ensure safe care
- Clear policy and procedures on the use of physical restraint

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- A copy of the codes of conduct for adult-child behaviour
- Guidance on physical contact
- Recorded evidence of all disciplinary and grievance action

## **STANDARD 5 – Equality and inclusion**

### **What?**

Measures to ensure the need to be protected from abuse applies to all children and young people.

### **Why?**

Abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious belief and political persuasion. Some children, such as disabled children, are particularly vulnerable due to communication differences and dependency on adult carers. Prejudice and discrimination can prevent some children getting the help they need. Organisations should take steps to combat discrimination and actively include all children and young people in their safeguarding measures.

### **Criteria**

- 5.1 The safeguarding policy makes it clear that all children have equal rights to protection.
- 5.2 The child protection 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 or disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture.
- 5.3 Codes of conduct/behaviour include statements about the responsibility of adults and children to treat one another with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness.
- 5.4 Codes of conduct/behaviour make it clear that discriminatory, offensive and violent behaviour are unacceptable and that complaints will be acted upon.
- 5.5 Processes for dealing with complaints are fair and open to challenge through an appeals process.

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- An equality policy/statement
- Copies of excerpts from relevant policies, procedures and codes of behaviour
- Examples of how training programmes address issues of equality and child protection
- A copy of the complaints and appeals procedures

## **STANDARD 6 – Communication**

### **What?**

Ways of informing, consulting and listening to all relevant parties about how children involved in the organisation are to be safeguarded.

### **Why?**

Policies and procedures are only effective if adults and children are aware of them, have some ownership of them and have the opportunity to express their views on how they are working.

### **Criteria**

- 6.1 Information about the organisation's commitment to safeguard children and young people is openly displayed and available to all.
- 6.2 Children and young people are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse.
- 6.3 Children and young people and their families are involved in service delivery, design and evaluation.
- 6.4 Information for young people and for parents is made available, about where to go for help in relation to child abuse.
- 6.5 Information provided is in a format and language that can be easily understood by all service users.
- 6.6 Everyone in the organisation knows who the designated person for child protection is, and how to contact them.
- 6.7 Contact details for the local children's services, police and emergency medical help and children's help lines are readily available.

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- Information leaflets are provided for children and their parents or carers in an appropriate range of languages and formats
- Examples of information products are prominently displayed
- Processes for young people's views to be heard and acted upon are publicised

## **STANDARD 7 – Education and training**

### **What?**

Opportunities to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to adequately safeguard children.

### **Why?**

Everyone in contact with children has a role to play in their protection. They can only do so confidently and effectively if they are aware and have the necessary understanding and skills. Organisations providing activities for children have a responsibility to provide training and development opportunities for staff and volunteers.

### **Criteria**

- 7.1 There is an induction process for all staff and volunteers that includes familiarisation with the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures.
- 7.2 All staff and volunteers are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.
- 7.3 A staff development programme is in place.
- 7.4 Staff and volunteers with special responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children have training to enable them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge, and have regular opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding.
- 7.5 Training is provided to those responsible for dealing with complaints and disciplinary processes in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people.
- 7.6 Training and written guidance on safe recruitment practice is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- A copy of training plans and/or programmes
- Records of course attendance
- Induction documentation/guidance
- Details of take up and use of distance learning materials
- Course evaluations

## **STANDARD 8 – Access to advice and support**

### **What?**

Arrangements are made to provide essential information and support to those responsible for safeguarding children. Children and young people who are being abused are assisted to get help.

### **Why?**

Child abuse is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Organisations have a duty to ensure advice and support is in place to help people to play their part in protecting children. Children need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often they do not know where to turn for help and usually find it difficult to talk.

### **Criteria**

- 8.1 Children and young people are provided with information on where to go to for help and advice, particularly in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying, or significant difficulties at home.
- 8.2 Designated child protection staff have access to specialist advice, training, support and information.
- 8.3 There is an awareness of the structure and role of Dorset LSCB and agency representation.
- 8.4 There are arrangements for providing regular supervision and support to staff and volunteers, particularly during and following an incident or allegations of abuse or a complaint.

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- Copies of information for children about sources of support are prominently displayed
- Information about training, advice and support for staff and volunteers
- Lists of contacts for specialist advice and information

## **STANDARD 9 – Implementation, monitoring and evaluation**

### **What?**

Action taken to ensure the organisation's intentions in relation to safeguarding children are happening and to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

### **Why?**

Policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across, and in all parts of, the organisation. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside the organisation, including children, parents and carers, can help to improve the effectiveness of any actions taken.

### **Criteria**

- 9.1 There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to safeguard children, who is responsible for what actions and when these will be completed.
- 9.2 The resources essential for implementing the plan are made available.
- 9.3 Policies and practices are reviewed at stated intervals, ideally at least every three years, and revised in the light of changing needs, changes in legislation and guidance and organisational experience.
- 9.4 Processes/mechanisms are in place to consult children and young people and parents as part of the review of safeguarding practices.
- 9.5 All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored.
- 9.6 All allegations against people who work with children are investigated, monitored and recorded in line with Appendix 5 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006.
- 9.7 Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policy and procedures and with recruitment and selection policy and procedures.
- 9.8 The effectiveness of the safeguarding measures are evaluated.

### **Ways of providing evidence**

- A copy of the safeguarding plan
- Date planned for review indicating who is responsible to initiate this
- Anonymised summary of the number of incidents of concern and the number of complaints
- Anonymised summary of feedback consultation with children and young people, parents and carers.

**DORSET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD  
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**PART 3**

**DEVELOPING A SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CHILD PROTECTION  
PROCEDURES  
GUIDANCE FOR ORGANISATIONS**

The Children Act 2004, section 11, has introduced the requirement for statutory agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. For the purposes of this guidance safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development; and
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;

and undertaking that role so as to enable these children to have optimum life chances.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This term refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of the ill-treatment may include the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development.

When Children's Services become aware of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, they have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether any action is required.

The pan-Dorset Inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures give details about how such enquiries are conducted. These procedures are available on the [Dorset For You](#)<sup>3</sup> website.

Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

The Planning, Policy and Procedures group of Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) has therefore produced this guidance to assist agencies in developing their own safeguarding policy and child protection procedures.

---

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/n/1/Pan\\_Dorset\\_inter\\_agency\\_procedures\\_2006.pdf](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/n/1/Pan_Dorset_inter_agency_procedures_2006.pdf)

## **A SAFEGUARDING POLICY/PROCEDURES**

### **i) A safeguarding policy statement**

This should set out:

- what the organisation wishes to convey regarding child protection and safeguarding children
- the organisation's values: valuing, listening to and respecting children
- how, in broad terms, the organisation is going to fulfil this responsibility
- who it applies and relates to (i.e. all staff and volunteers)
- a statement that confirms the need to apply the principles and ethos applicable to children and young people to vulnerable adults above the age of 18 years
- application of policy with cross-reference to other policies and procedures, which promote the child's safety and welfare
- cite national or international principles, legislation or guidance which underpin the policy.

A policy statement should normally be no longer than one or two sides of A4. A sample policy statement is attached at Appendix 1.

### **ii) Cross reference with safeguarding procedures**

Your safeguarding procedures should normally include the following procedures:

- *Child protection* (see below)
- *Recruitment and selection:*  
Whilst the vast majority of people who want to work with children and young people are well-motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out those who are not suitable.
- *Induction, training and supervision:*  
Once recruited, all staff and volunteers should be well-informed, trained, supervised and supported, so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm or be misinterpreted and possibly lead to false allegations being made against them. Unless all staff have an awareness of child protection and the harm it can cause and how to act on concerns, policies and procedures, however good, will not be acted upon.
- *Safe practice:*  
This should provide guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people. A protective culture that puts children's interests first will help children feel confident that if they have concerns, someone will listen and take them seriously.
- *Complaints and representations:*  
In order to ensure an open and protective culture is developed, where children or staff feel able to express any concerns, it is important that the organisation has a clear complaints/representations procedure.



- *Whistle-blowing:*  
This may be developed separately or as part of your complaints/representations procedure. However, it is important that the organisation has well-publicised procedures for enabling staff and volunteers to express, in confidence, any concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour. Ignoring inappropriate behaviour may lead to the development of an unsafe culture.

### iii) Child Protection Procedures

**It is very important that there are procedures in place to ensure a speedy and effective response for dealing with concerns about the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children or their neglect.**

Under no circumstances should anyone within the organisation begin to carry out an investigation into suspicions or concerns about a child. This is the role of the statutory services and any concerns or worries should be passed to the organisation's designated child protection person.

Procedures need to take account of the various ways in which somebody in the organisation may become aware of the actual or likely occurrence of abuse. These include:

- a child might tell them;
- 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 them that it is likely that she or he is being abused;
- something in the behaviour of one of the workers or a young person, or in the way the worker or young person relates to a child, alerts them or makes them feel uncomfortable in some way;
- observing one child abusing another.

The layout of the procedures should reflect how they are intended to be used, ie as a user-friendly, practical and informative document. The content should, at a minimum, include:

- purpose and aim of the procedures. Are they mandatory, i.e. do they apply to everyone in the organisation?
- what is child abuse?
  - identification of different categories of abuse - see Appendix 2
- recognition of abuse:
  - signs and indicators which might give rise to concerns
  - how abuse might come to a worker's attention - see Appendix 2
- responding to signs or suspicions of abuse:
  - lines of responsibility
  - designated person role
  - actions to be taken, including contact phone numbers - see Appendix 6

- responding to allegations of abuse against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer:
  - lines of responsibility
  - actions to be taken, including contact phone numbers
- responding to a child disclosing abuse:
  - staff should be made aware of the importance of: listening, accepting, reassuring, explaining, acting immediately, recording, getting support – see appendix 3
- responding to allegations of abuse against someone not working in the organisation:
  - this may be a parent or carer, service user, another child or anybody else
- recording information:
  - what information should be recorded and by whom
  - time-scales for passing on information
- legislation / guidance - see Appendix 4
- confidentiality policy:
  - the legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount means that the considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations in the organisation, should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated. See Appendix 5

### **The designated person**

It is good practice for all organisations, however small, to identify at least one person to be responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse. Everyone in the organisation should know who this is, what their role is and how to contact them. The designated person should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated. The designated person should know how, and to whom, to make a referral to Children's Services if appropriate and should be familiar with the pan-Dorset Inter-agency Safeguarding procedures.

## **SAMPLE POLICY STATEMENT**

*(Organisation)* believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that :

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive *(Organisation's)* services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of *(Organisation)*.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

## **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

### **Definitions / categories**

#### **What are abuse and neglect?**

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2005).

1. Physical abuse

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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 causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploration 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.

3. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

4. Neglect

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. 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 provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate care-takers, 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.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment.

### **Recognising child abuse - signs and indicators**

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. You do, however, have a responsibility to act if you have a concern about a child's welfare or safety.

The following information is not designed to turn you into an expert but it will help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

#### 1. Physical abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury. A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse include:

- bruising in children who are not independently mobile
- bruising in babies
- bruises that are seen away from bony prominences
- bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
- multiple bruises in clusters
- multiple bruises of uniform shape
- bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks or fingertips
- although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness should be seen promptly by a doctor.

Other physical signs of abuse may include:

- cigarette burns
- adult bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- running away from home.

## 2. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour, e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self harm
- fear of parents being approached regarding their behaviour.

## 3. Sexual abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers.

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts

- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

#### 4. Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or smelly
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.

The above list is not meant to be definitive but as a guide to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc.

**RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF ABUSE**

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- 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 to continue at her/his own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they 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 what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible - note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated
- Contact your designated person

**REMEMBER:**

**It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.**



## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards, which are designed to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The following material relates to revised legislation and guidance within England. The main legislation is cited and the main principles or purposes described.

### **The Children Act 1989**

This Act legislates for children in England and Wales.

The intention of the legislation is to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm.

The key principles of this Act are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Wherever possible, children should be brought up and cared for within their own families
- All interventions must take into account the race, ethnicity and culture of children
- Children with disabilities must be provided with services to promote their achievement
- Agencies must work in partnership with parents.

It shall be the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area.

**Section 17** states that local authorities have a duty to safeguard the welfare of children who are in need and they must promote the upbringing of such children by their families. Local authorities must provide a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

**Section 47** places a duty on local authority social services departments to make inquiries where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their area is likely to be or is suffering significant harm. This is the section that authorises children's social services to investigate concerns about child abuse.

In addition to social services/social work departments/health boards, only the police and (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland), the NSPCC have the legal right and responsibility to investigate concerns about child abuse.

### **The Children Act 2004**

This Act legislates for children in England and Wales and underpins a national framework of change for children and young people. Its implementation should be part of a wider process of change for children and young people focussed on five key outcomes of wellbeing for children: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing.

*Every Child Matters: Change for Children* sets out the national framework in England for local change programmes. *The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* is useful further reading and also applies to Wales.

**Section 10** establishes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children's well-being, defined by reference to the five outcomes and a duty on key partners to take part in those arrangements. It also provides a new power to allow pooling of resources in support of these arrangements.

**Section 11** creates a duty for the key agencies who work with children to put in place arrangements to make sure that they take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**Section 12** allows further secondary legislation and statutory guidance to be made with respect to setting up databases or indexes that contain basic information about children and young people, to help professionals in working together.

**Sections 13-16** require that local authorities set up statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards and that the key partners take part.

**Section 17** establishes a single Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to replace a range of current statutory planning.

**Sections 18 and 19** require local authorities to put in place a director of children's services and lead member for children's services to be responsible for, as a minimum, education and children's social service functions. Local authorities have discretion to add other relevant functions, for instance leisure or housing, to the role if they feel it is appropriate.

**Sections 20-24** require an integrated inspection framework to be established by the relevant inspectorates to inform future inspections of all services for children.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998 AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (RATIFIED BY THE UK GOVERNMENT IN 1991)

This legislation identifies the rights of adults and children, including children's right to be protected from harm, and reflects principles that are recognised in UK legislation and international agreements.

### *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

➤ What is it?	The Convention is a set of minimum standards - the bottom line - in protecting children's rights. It is a binding international treaty which the British government signed at the United Nations, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the Convention.
➤ Who is a child?	In the Convention 'a child' means anyone who is under 18 years of age.
➤ What rights do children have?	<p>There are many rights written into the Convention which include, for example, rights relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children having a say in their education</li> <li>• protection of the environment in which children live</li> <li>• reasonable standards of living</li> <li>• protection from violence, abuse and exploitation</li> <li>• protection for children cared for away from home and for children with disabilities</li> <li>• children being able to use their own language, enjoy their own culture and practice their own religion</li> <li>• reasonable standards of health and development</li> <li>• children suspected of committing a crime and children convicted of crimes.</li> </ul> <p>In the preamble, Articles 5, 10 and 18 of the Convention it describes the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of its members, especially children. States are expected to respect that parents have the primary responsibility for providing care and guidance for children but States are expected to provide material assistance and support programmes where necessary.</p>

The main points:

Each point in the Convention is called an article. There are 4 articles which are especially important for children:

➤ <b>Article 2</b>	<p><b>No discrimination</b> The Government must make sure that children get equal rights and protection irrespective of their race, gender, religion, nationality, political opinion, ability or developing sexuality.</p> <p>The Government has agreed to do everything it can to protect children from all forms of discrimination.</p>
--------------------	---

➤ <b>Article 3</b>	<p><b>Acting in the Child's Best Interests</b>  The Government has also agreed that, in all decisions concerning children, adults should put the child's best interests first. This includes decisions in courts, in schools, in hospitals, in care or in custody. Even in parliament, the child's best interests should be the prime consideration.</p>
➤ <b>Article 4</b>	<p><b>Making it Happen</b>  The Government has promised to make laws and change policies and procedures to give children these rights.</p>
➤ <b>Article 12</b>	<p><b>The Child's Right to Express an Opinion</b>  Children should have the right to a say in all decisions affecting them, for example, in court, in school and in hospital. Their opinions should be given more weight depending on their age and maturity.</p> <p><b>Are these all legal rights?</b>  Since the Government has ratified the Convention, no law or administrative action should contradict it. A committee at the United Nations checks up on whether governments are keeping their promises. Current legislation in the UK does not make all these rights available to children.</p>

### **Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA) and The Police Act 1997**

These Acts provide the route by which employers can check whether a potential or actual employee has criminal offences against children or whether there is a reason for that person to be considered unsuitable to work with children.

Sometimes a person may have hurt or abused a child but there is not enough criminal evidence for them to be convicted of an offence. However, the investigation may have indicated that the adult is of sufficient risk or concern that they should not work with children. The Police Act 1997 makes provision for the establishment and use of the Criminal Records Bureau and was designed to improve access to information about potential employees seeking work with children and young people.

The legislation builds the framework for identifying those people considered to be unsuitable to work with children by including their names on the PoCA/PoCSA and Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 99 Lists, and the Disqualified from Working with Children List (DWCL) held by the Scottish Executive. There are differences in the requirements for statutory child-care organisations and other organisations that care for children. The provisions of these statutes are not mandatory for the latter group but there is an expectation that they will take advantage of the scheme to ensure they provide a comparable level of safety for children in their care. Thus non-statutory organisations need to have processes in place if they have dismissed, would have dismissed or re-deployed, any person on the basis of misconduct towards children. Part of this process would be referral to the disqualification lists in each UK country, as well as checking against them when proposing to appoint people to child care positions.

**Schedule 1 offender** was the term used (under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933) to describe anyone convicted of an offence against a child. The presence of a 'schedule 1 offender' usually triggered an assessment of risk by social services. A review of this term and the convictions it relates to has taken place and guidance states that the term Schedule 1 offender is no longer helpful and should be discontinued. It should be replaced by the term 'Risk to Children' for those persons who have been identified as posing an ongoing risk to a child.

### **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)**

The Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service for England and Wales allows organisations recruiting individuals to work with children and vulnerable adults, the opportunity to vet these individuals. The CRB provides information about spent and unspent criminal convictions, checks against the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children and provides relevant information from local police authorities. It acts as a one-stop-shop for organisations, checking police records.

Only certain positions covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act Exceptions Order 1975, qualify for a CRB check. These are known as regulated positions. They include posts, whether paid or voluntary, involving regular, unsupervised work and/or contact with children and young people.

CRB checks must be undertaken by those organisations with statutory obligations under the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Education Act 1996 or the Education Reform Act 1988. It is only a recommendation that voluntary organisations carry out similar CRB checks. However, it is a criminal offence to employ someone who has relevant convictions and is the subject of a Disqualification Order under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (see above) to work with children in a regulated position. Within Wales the Criminal Records Unit provides a free service for checking volunteers seeking to work with children or young people.

A voluntary organisation should seek to establish whether it has an Umbrella Body or Registered Body through which it may apply for checks. These are permitted to ask exempted questions and apply for Standard and Enhanced Disclosures. The CRB service is currently reviewing its practice following the Inquiry by Sir Michael Bichard, into the storage, disclosure and sharing of information prior to the Soham tragedy (2004).

### **The Post-Bichard Vetting Scheme**

An important recommendation from the Inquiry proposed the development of a registration scheme covering all those who work with children and vulnerable adults. The scheme would be administered by a central body and with appropriate appeals mechanisms, and would confirm that there is no known reason why an individual should not work with children (or vulnerable adults). All disclosures for work with children (and vulnerable adults) would be at enhanced level, and this and other recommendations are currently being considered. It is recommended that you seek information directly from the CRB Disclosure website or helpline for the specific needs of your organisation.

[www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

### **Education Act 2002**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to

safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Section 175 also applies to independent sector schools.

### **Interagency Safeguarding Procedures**

[http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/n/1/Pan\\_Dorset\\_inter\\_agency\\_procedures\\_2006.pdf](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/n/1/Pan_Dorset_inter_agency_procedures_2006.pdf)

### **Working Together to Safeguard Children DfES 2006**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether/>

### **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused DoH/DfES 2003**

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/06/13/03/04061303.pdf>

**CONFIDENTIALITY / INFORMATION SHARING**

Dorset DSCB has adopted the guidance contained in Appendix 2 of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' summary in respect of information sharing.

This is contained in the Local Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures available at:

[http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/n/1/Pan\\_Dorset\\_inter\\_agency\\_procedures\\_2006.pdf](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/media/pdf/n/1/Pan_Dorset_inter_agency_procedures_2006.pdf)

**USEFUL CONTACTS**

Dorset Children's Services - Social Care. Ask for the Children's Duty Officer:

Weymouth & Portland:

Jubilee Retail Park  
Jubilee Close  
DT4 7BG  
Tel: 01305 760139

Bridport:

The Grove  
Rax Lane  
Bridport  
DT9 3AJ  
Tel: 01308 422234

Ferndown:

Penny's Walk  
BH22 9JY  
Tel: 01202 877445

North Dorset:

Bath Road  
Sturminster Newton  
DT10 1DR  
Tel: 01258 472652

Christchurch:

Loring Road  
Christchurch  
BH23 2GZ  
Tel: 01202 474106

*This version of "Developing a safeguarding policy and child protection procedures" issued May 2007.*



**QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

**1. Safeguarding Policy**

- Does it make clear that the welfare of the child is paramount?
- Does it demonstrate a commitment to equality and to working in partnership with children, young people, their parents and carers and other agencies?
- Is it clear to whom the policy applies?
- Does it briefly refer to the organisation's procedures which help to safeguard and promote the welfare of children? (e.g. Child Protection, Recruitment and Selection, Induction, Training and Supervision, Safe Practice)

**2. Child Protection Procedure**

- Is the purpose and aim of the procedures clear?  
(e.g. to whom do they apply?)
- Do the procedures explain what abuse is and how to recognise the signs and symptoms?
- Is it clear what an individual should do if:
  - a child discloses abuse?
  - there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party disclosure of concern or abuse?
  - there is an allegation against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer?
  - the individual has a concern or suspicion that a child may be at risk of harm?
- Is the designated person with responsibility for child protection clearly identified?
- Is it clear who will record what and where any record will be kept?
- If separate procedures do not exist (in the following areas), are they covered in the child protection procedure where appropriate?
  - Recruitment and Selection
  - Induction, training and supervision

- Safe Practice
- Complaints and Representations
- Whistle Blowing

and finally.....

Are they clear, easy to understand and practical and how will your organisation make sure that there is an awareness of, and commitment to, the policy and procedures?