

WORCESTERSHIRE PARENT AND CARERS' COMMUNITY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S POLICY STATEMENT

Worcestershire Parent and Carers' Community (WPCC) believes 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. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Children Acts, Equality Act, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Child Sexual Exploitation)

WPCC recognises that:

- The emotional, physical and mental welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religion or 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 child/young people's welfare.

WPCC will work in accordance with Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Guidelines for Safeguarding Children. In order to safeguard everyone involved in WPCC we have developed the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People's Statement
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children Procedures
- Health and Safety and Risk Assessment Policy
- Safe Recruitment, Induction and Safe Working Practices
- Members' Agreement
- Complaints Procedure
- Resolving Problems – Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
- Management of Allegations against Staff and Volunteers
- Equal Opportunities
- Prevent Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Our policies apply to all workers and volunteers including trustees. They can be accessed via our website or on request.

A vulnerable child or young person is under 18 years of age and is someone who might be unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or serious exploitation because of a physical or mental disability, age or illness.

A vulnerable adult refers to a person aged 18 years or over who might be unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or serious exploitation because of a physical or mental disability, age or illness.

This is likely to mean that they will not have the mental capacity to understand or to express any discomfort or awareness of what is being asked of them or being done to them.

For young people aged 16 years and over, all safeguarding decisions must take account of their ability to give informed consent and to comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Duties of Trustees

The trustees will carry out this policy by ensuring that:

- All trustees have a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check as appropriate or provide copies of one done through other means (e.g. required for work). It should be valid for 3 years
 - At each event organised by the group, where children are present, all other volunteers' names will be written in a notebook.
 - Trustees are responsible for ensuring that all involved with WPCC are aware of and comply with our policies and procedures.
 - The trustees understand that they have a **legal responsibility for reporting** all concerns, suspicions and allegations of abuse to the designated person (currently Lesley Ann Smallman) responsible for child protection or to the Social Care Access Centre.
 - All trustees understand the need to listen to any allegations of abuse made by a child no matter how inconvenient, without asking leading questions.
 - Trustees understand the need for confidentiality.
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- All trustees receive a copy of this policy. It is available to view by anyone else on request.

Safe Recruitment, Induction and Safe Working Practices

WPCC is committed to a fair and consistent approach to the recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers. It is our policy to recruit the best person for the job regardless of ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability religion or belief. The WPCC Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedure will be observed throughout the recruitment and selection process. We will seek to establish a workforce which reflects the communities we serve. Where appropriate, we will take positive action to achieve this.

For all paid staff, WPCC will

- (a) Produce a written statement specifying the duties of the post together with any qualifications, training, experience, skills and general knowledge required, including safeguarding responsibilities.
- (b) Have received a completed application form (which includes details of their previous experience, relevant qualifications and training) and a signed declaration confirming that the person's health will not prevent them from undertaking their role.
- (c) Have taken every reasonable step to ensure that the person is medically fit to undertake the duties of the post.
- (d) Have held an interview at which there were at least two interviewers and for which there is a written record.
- (e) Have received and verified at least two written references prior to commencement, at least one of which is a professional reference from the last employer.
- (f) Have received an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, prior to undertaking any role which involves direct access to service users or information about service users.
- (g) Provide a written statement of particulars of employment together with all other information required by employment statutes.
- (h) Use all reasonable endeavours to ensure staff are suitably trained, instructed and supervised to carry out their duties.
- (i) Use all reasonable endeavours to ensure staff are suitably trained, instructed and informed about relevant health and safety issues.
- (j) Provide an induction session dealing with safeguarding issues and ongoing training for staff and volunteers. This will include the dissemination of policy and procedure reviews and to check that they are being adhered to.
- (k) Have in place a suitable management structure to make arrangements for supervision, training, maintaining sickness and leave records, arranging sickness and leave cover and undertaking other day to day employer functions.
- (l) Retain the person's record for a minimum of two years following his/her departure and ensure that the record includes their start and end dates, date of birth and last known address.

Safeguarding and Protecting Children Procedures

WPC believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and their safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation.

Definition of Abuse: To misuse power for a bad purpose. Where someone developmentally older or stronger distresses, harms or neglects another weaker or younger person.

Children can be abused:

- In a family
- In an institutional setting
- Within their community
- By those known to them
- By a stranger
- By an adult or adults
- By another child or young person
- By a group of children or young people

There are four **categories** of abuse

1. **Physical** – actual or likely physical injury or failure to prevent injury- this 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
2. **Sexual** – actual or likely sexual exploitation or failure to prevent sexual exploitation. It 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. It 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 or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
3. **Emotional** – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.
It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate etc. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectation being imposed on children e.g. Interactions beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
It may involve serious bullying causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children
Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, though it may also occur alone

4. **Neglect** – persistent or severe failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, or failure to carry out important aspects of care. This includes physical and psychological needs, likely to result in 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, clothing and shelter. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs and how to recognise

It is important to learn to recognise actual physical abuse as well as changes in behaviour which can indicate physical abuse. This is also relevant to emotional and sexual abuse where the changes in behaviour can be strong indicators of the abuse as well as the physical evidence

Workers and volunteers must take special care to help safeguard and the welfare of children and young people who may be living in particularly stressful circumstances. This includes:

- living in poverty
- where there is domestic violence
- where a parent has a mental illness
- where a parent is misusing drugs or alcohol
- where a parent has a learning difficulty
- that face racism and other forms of social isolation
- living in areas with a lot of crime, poor housing and high unemployment

Children and young people with a disability are particularly vulnerable and may find it more difficult to recognise and report abuse. Their disability may mean that:

- Their life experiences are limited, creating difficulty recognising inappropriate behaviour;

- They are afraid of challenging people, concerned that they will anger an authority figure or get into trouble;

- Communication difficulties make it hard to report abuse;

- They may not be able physically to leave an abusive situation;

- They receive intimate physical care and therefore the abuse may seem

“normal”;

Their self-esteem and self-image are poor, they might not be aware to whom they can report abuse

Authority figures are unwilling to believe that anyone would abuse a disabled child or young person

If you have any worries or concerns about a child and their family, you have two options:

Immediate threat to child’s safety

(a) Worcestershire Family Front Door on 01905 822666

Or

(b) The Police

Other more general concerns about a child, e.g. welfare, care, safety

Contact Lesley Ann Smallman (Safeguarding Trustee) or Sue Evans (Parent Carer rep) by calling 07955 760488

Or the WPCCC office 01905 748278

WPCCC may need to share your concerns with Children’s Services

Record your concerns and actions

As part of this early enquiry stage, liaison will take place between Children’s Services and WPCCC staff and the concerned person. The Services will gather information and establish the nature of the situation – if appropriate the child and family may be visited. A decision on whether further action is necessary will be based on evidence presented.

If a referral is made, then there is a legal right to access information documented in accordance with our procedures.

If there is evidence of abuse, a Strategy Meeting will follow and you may be involved in the on-going investigation or Case Conference

If there are no grounds for a formal investigation, social workers involved will offer help or advice in the situation.

WPCCC agrees to work in accordance with the requirements of the Disclosure & Barring Service for reporting staff and volunteers deemed unsuitable for working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Child Sexual Exploitation

If you are worried that a child or young person is at risk or is being abused you can contact the Family Front Door on 01905 822666 or out of office hours call the Children's Services Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01905 768020. You can report it online to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOP). Or you can call the NSPCC 24-hour helpline on 0808 800 5000 for expert advice and support. If a child is at immediate risk call 999, or call the police on 101 if you think a crime has been committed. Children and young people can call Childline free on 0800 1111 where trained counsellors are available 24 hours a day, every day.

What to do if a disclosure is made to you -

IF

- A child/young person tells you that they **have been** abused or
- A child/young person tells you that they **are being** abused, or
- You **suspect** or
- **Witness** abuse, or

THEN YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING

DO – listen calmly.

DO – believe what they tell you.

DO – tell them they were right to tell you.

DO – tell the child it is not their fault (if reported by child).

DO – explain it is your responsibility to tell someone in authority because we need to keep the child safe. (It's your legal responsibility).

DON'T ask lots of questions, that is the responsibility of a trained social worker.

DON'T ask questions that are leading, e.g. Did Daddy / Mummy do that?

DON'T make promises to keep secrets

DON'T let the child think you doubt what they have said. It takes enormous courage for a child to talk to an adult about abuse.

DON'T say things that may make the child feel responsible, e.g. why didn't you say anything before?

DO KEEP CALM - DON'T PANIC Follow this procedure for reporting.
Acting in haste can be counterproductive.

DO – report it to the Designated Person but nobody else.

DO - make detailed written notes as soon as possible within 24 hours. Try to write down the actual words used.

DO - Sign them, include time and date, who was present and what was said.

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing within 48 hours.

**The Designated Persons for WPC are Lesley Ann Smallman or Sue Evans.
They can be contacted by calling 07955 760488 or the WPC office landline 01905 748278.**

Addendum

The COVID-19 pandemic precautions are in accordance with government and public health guidance and are detailed in separate risk assessments which cover the office base and any short break activities.

Sources of further information

The Department of Health website contains a practical guide to the law relating to child protection, specifically The Protection of Children Act 1999.

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) Interagency Child Protection procedures for Safeguarding Children and Young Solutions Worcestershire (formerly Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services) Guidance for workers, volunteers, management committee members and trustees in voluntary and community sector organisations working with children and young people, both of which can be accessed via the WSCB website at www.worcestershiresafeguarding.org.uk

Worcestershire County Council's Adult Protection Policy and Procedures, which can be accessed via the Council's website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingadults

Disclosure & Barring Service

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about

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Approved November 2019
Policy under continuous review

