



St Andrew's Community Network

Safeguarding Children Policy

Summary

This Policy identifies the overall responsibility of the trustees and operational staff for ensuring the safety, health, wellbeing, reduction of risks, safeguarding and protection of children with whom St Andrew's Community Network engages in its operational activities.

This Policy identifies the responsibilities and obligations of staff to take immediate action where any concern regarding the safety, protection and wellbeing of children is noted.

This policy defines children as being between the ages of 0-17.

This Policy identifies the requirements of St. Andrew's Community Network to work proactively with external authorities in the interests of protecting any children that St Andrew's Community Network engages with during its operational activities.

This policy is underpinned by the policies and procedures devised by Liverpool Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (<https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/scp>) and the principles and guidance detailed in the following Government documents:

- ["Working together to Safeguard Children"](#) (2018)
- ["Keeping Children Safe in Education"](#) (2022)
- ["What to do if you are worried about a child being abused: advice for practitioners"](#) (2015)

Introduction

It is the Intention of St. Andrew's Community Network through this policy to ensure the safety, wellbeing, safeguarding, protection and reduction of risks of harm to children with whom the organisation engages across its operational activities. The management of health, safety and wellbeing in relation to child beneficiaries is a key management task in St. Andrew's Community Network.

This policy should be read alongside all other St Andrew's Community Network policies and procedures.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers of St Andrew's Community Network.

Equality Statement

St Andrew's Community Network will proactively promote an environment that treats all people with dignity and respect and provides equality of opportunity to people regardless of gender, age, religious belief, caring responsibilities,

racial/ethnic origins, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. We believe that every person should have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential. St Andrew's Community Network aims to nurture an environment of equality and of opportunity in employment & volunteering. Interviews for employment and voluntary work will take place in accordance with the equal opportunities policy.

It is our intention, as individuals, to take positive action to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment on the matters specified above in dealings with others outside of our own organisation and throughout our sphere of influence, as far as it lies within our power.

1. Designation of Responsibilities

The CEO will arrange to take all reasonable measures to ensure the risks of harm to children are minimised in accordance with best practice. They will ensure all relevant staff and volunteers undergo an enhanced DBS check and further disclosures will be sought every 3 years.

The relevant staff and volunteers are:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Money Advice Team Members

St. Andrew's Community Network will arrange to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of the child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with local services.

In accordance with best practice St. Andrew's Community Network has a Senior Leader taking lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with other staff and working alongside other agencies, to be known as the Designated Person. All staff will be made aware of this role.

The Designated Person is the CEO.

In their absence the Designated Person is the Volunteer Coordinator.

St. Andrew's Community Network is aware of the responsibilities which the organisation and its staff have with regard to the protection of children from abuse and from inappropriate and inadequate care and is committed to responding in all cases where there is concern.

St Andrew's Community Network will ensure that appropriate and relevant training will be provided.

What Is Child Abuse?

Types of Abuse, Effects and Signs of Abuse

The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not have the support to cope with that abuse.

Do not think that you could never be placed in the position of reporting child abuse.

The generic term 'child abuse' is used to describe various ways in which children are harmed or mistreated. There are many different ways in which children can be harmed, all with a common factor that the child feels undervalued and worthless.

Abuse can happen anywhere, but research indicates that the perpetrators of such abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child.

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.

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 or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

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:

- Telling a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
- Serious bullying
- Causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Domestic Violence

The Government, in the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, defines domestic violence as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are, or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexual orientation'.

Family members includes mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.

- Domestic violence may teach children to use violence
- Violence can affect children in serious and long-lasting ways
- Where there is domestic violence there is often child abuse
- Children will often blame themselves for domestic violence
- Alcohol misuse is very common contributing factor when violence occurs in families
- Pregnant women are more vulnerable to domestic violence

Children, who witness, intervene or hear incidents are affected in many ways. What can be guaranteed is that children do hear, they do see and they are aware of abuse in the family. Children will learn how to behave from examples parents set for them. Domestic violence teaches children negative things about relationships and how to deal with people. For instance:

- It can teach them that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict
- They learn how to keep secrets.
- They learn to mistrust those close to them and that children are responsible and to blame for violence, especially if violence erupts after an argument about the children

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It occurs where anyone under the age of 18 is persuaded, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for, amongst other things, money, drugs/alcohol, gifts, affection or status.

Consent is irrelevant, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them.

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and may occur online.

2. Indications that a child may be being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or emotions such as becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexual explicit behaviour, sexually explicit talk inappropriate to the child's age
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Uncharacteristic eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts
- The child may become withdrawn, introverted and depressed and have low self esteem and lack of confidence

3. The Designated Person(s)

The Designated Person is the CEO

The Designated Person's responsibilities are:

- To be responsible for ensuring that effective communication and liaison with social services and other agencies takes place, as appropriate, in the event of staff having child protection concerns about a company beneficiary
- To ensure this policy and associated procedures are implemented and followed correctly
- To ensure staff (and all other St. Andrew's Community Network stakeholders) have an understanding of Safeguarding, the signs of child abuse and the organisation's responsibilities.
- To make staff and volunteers aware of the procedures of Liverpool Local Safeguarding Children Partnership available at <https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/scp>
- To support and advise staff in their approach and response to child protection issues

- To provide specialist input to the planning of content and delivery of any St. Andrew's Community Network personal, social, health and education programme of work with respect to child protection issues
- To maintain their knowledge and awareness of the issues, policies and practice of child protection, e.g. regular attendance at relevant training courses.

4. Listening to Children

Some staff will have a particular contribution to make in listening to children who have been through the experience of abuse. It is important that this work is not undertaken at a time when it may impact on any legal processes through which the child may be involved and that it does not clash with any therapeutic interventions provided by other agencies. All staff will be made aware that if they are chosen by a child to hear a disclosure, **THEY NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT** of the guidance given in the Memorandum of Good Practice (Criminal Justice Act 1991).

The following guidance acts as a framework for any staff responses:

- Be accessible and receptive, listen carefully and ask open questions to clarify issues, e.g. who, what, when, where, how
- Take it seriously!
- Reassure the child they are right to talk about it
- Reassure the child it was not their fault
- Negotiate getting help, e.g. prepare them for the fact that you must involve others
- Explain that you cannot personally protect them – but will support them in telling the right people to make sure it doesn't happen again • Report all suspicions or disclosures immediately
- Make precise records of what was said – immediately using the child's own words and including the questions you asked – keep your hand-written notes

Refrain from:

- Jumping to conclusions or make promises you cannot keep
- Trying to get the child to disclose – let the child talk and ask only the questions you need to know to ensure immediate safety
- Speculating or accusing anybody
- Asking any leading questions, e.g. was it Daddy/Mummy? etc, or any questions requiring a YES/NO answer

If a child shares worrying or sensitive information with you, do not;

- Promise to keep secrets.
- Hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the Designated Person or refer to social care via the phone numbers cited above.

5. Procedure (a flow chart detailing this process is included as Annex 1)

In the event of a member of staff, or volunteer having a child protection concern about a young beneficiary, he/she will immediately and record accurately the events giving rise to the concern and immediately inform the Designated Person. The action to be subsequently taken will be in line with Liverpool LSCB's procedures and this guidance will be followed scrupulously.

If a member of staff or volunteer feels that a concern should be acted upon and the designated person does not agree, then they have a right to refer direct to Careline (01512333700). If this is the case, the referrer should inform the Designated Person of their intended action.

If a child discloses abuse it must not be investigated further by any member of this organisation. It is enough to listen to child, reassure him/her that they have done the right thing and explain that you need to pass the information on to someone else to keep them safe. Asking further questions of the child could prejudice police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse.

If you think a child has suffered sexual abuse, you must call the police immediately.

If you think a child has suffered severe harm (e.g. physical assault) caused by another person you must call the police immediately. If medical attention is required, this must always take priority over any other action.

If you think a child may be in need of protection to prevent significant harm occurring, you must refer the matter to Careline.

If you are unsure of what to do seek advice from the Designated Person. Careline will provide advice on all Safeguarding matters.

Before discussing your concerns with parents / carers, please refer to the Section entitled "Parents" below.

If concerns arise out of hours and you are particularly concerned about a situation being left until the next day, you should speak with the Children's Service's emergency duty team (EDT) they can be contacted on the careline number below 24hrs 7 days a week.

Careline - 01512333700

6. Recording and confidentiality

All details of concern need to be carefully recorded. It is particularly important to be specific about the nature of concerns, and if describing specific incidents detail the time and date these were observed.

All records and witness statements relating to child protection concerns and cases will remain confidential except where to do so would impede an investigation. Due regard should be paid to GDPR policies when dealing with any records relating to child protection. Access will only be via the Board of Directors and the Designated Person(s). Information will be shared with other agencies who have a need to know, in accordance with Liverpool LSCB procedures and government guidance.

7. Parents

It is good practice to discuss concerns with the parent and seek their agreement for a referral to Children's Services. However, there will be exceptional cases where seeking such agreement will be inappropriate as it may either by delay or the behavioural response it prompts, increase any risk of significant harm, or jeopardise any enquiry.

The parent's response to seeking such agreement should be recorded and subsequently relayed when the referral is made.

8. Recruitment of Staff/Volunteers

Since November 2002, all staff and volunteers having substantial (often described as '*direct*' or '*unsupervised*') access to children must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for any record of convictions or cautions prior to commencing employment or voluntary work. All staff and volunteers having any form of direct or unsupervised contact with children must undergo an Enhanced DBS check prior to commencing employment or voluntary work.

To protect young people, all staff, volunteers, sessional workers and students working with children and young people will be vetted regarding scheduled offences, sexual offences and drug related offences. If the worker does not agree to this, they will not be allowed to have any access to children or young people.

All references and if appropriate, DBS check, will be received and reviewed prior to commencing a post.

9. Appropriate Behaviour

Employees and volunteers will:

- Remember they are a role model and provide an example for those they work with to follow.
- Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may be easily misinterpreted and so leave all parties vulnerable.

- Be alert to any potential harm to children.
- Respect all children's right to privacy.
- Provide opportunities for children to discuss any concerns they may have.
- Speak to their line-manager/designated safeguarding representative if concerned about the safety or welfare of a child or if they suspect a child is developing or has developed an infatuation with them or has inappropriate feelings towards any member of staff or volunteer.

Employees and volunteers will not:

- Arrange to see or communicate with children in circumstances unconnected with their work. This includes the use of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Be left alone for substantial periods of time with any child, except where one-to-one work is necessary; in which case, they should inform another staff member where they are going, with whom and for how long.
- Permit abusive behaviour towards children by others or engage in it themselves.
- Show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with an individual. Nor should they get drawn into inappropriate, attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. crushes).
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which could be misunderstood.
- Do anything which might undermine a good reputation for providing a safe environment.

Any member of staff/volunteer will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedures should they act in an unsuitable way with or towards children and young people.

10. Staff Support

The stress on staff involved in any aspect of child protection work is considerable and St Andrew's Community Network will ensure that staff are properly supported. The board of trustees and the Designated Person(s) are responsible for ensuring that support from outside the St. Andrew's Community Network is sought wherever appropriate.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trustees are ultimately accountable for this Safeguarding Policy in accordance with local procedures and the policy is made available to interested stakeholders.

There is a recognised need for St Andrew's Community Network to implement ongoing monitoring of this policy:

- Knowledge of the system by all staff, and volunteers
- Awareness of key issues by children and parents/relatives
- The use of cross-agency procedures
- Training and operational delivery

- The nature of and responses by St Andrew's Community Network to incidents

The Designated Person and other relevant members of staff will together provide an annual update to the Board of Trustees regarding the implementation and review of this Policy.

If you do not understand or support this policy, then you should contact the Designated Person straight away. Failure to observe this Policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Date: September 2024
Reviewed By: Trustees
Due for Review: September 2025

St Andrew's Community Network

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Appendix One

Key Contacts:

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