

## **Safeguarding Children Policy**

### **Child Protection Statement**

- North Halifax Partnership (NHP) believes that children must be protected from harm at all times.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm, including on-line. We strive to embed the voice of the child in all our work.
- We want children who use or have contact with NHP to enjoy what we have to offer in safety.
- We want parents who use or attend any activities provided by NHP or its staff to be supported to care for their children in a way that promotes their child's health and well-being and keeps them safe.
- NHP will achieve this by an effective child protection procedure and following national guidance, (What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused) Keeping Children Safe In Education and the local procedures of the Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)
- If we discover or suspect a child is suffering harm we will notify Calderdale Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) or Calderdale Emergency Duty Team (out of hours), or the Police in order that they can be protected if necessary.
- All staff, volunteers and Trustees are responsible for safeguarding children and we foster professional curiosity and challenge in our safeguarding practice.
- We will review our child protection policy and working practices annually to make sure they are still relevant and effective.
- NHP are committed to policies and actions to ensure that those who are employed in paid or voluntary capacity and the people it serves are not discriminated on the basis of disability, race, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender.
- We will work with the police and other agencies to identify and report cases of suspected extremism in line with the PREVENT agenda and ensure that families

and young people are supported appropriately; existing safeguarding procedures will still apply.

- All staff and volunteer appointments are subject to pre-employment enhanced disclosure DBS checks to confirm suitability for working with children and vulnerable adults

## **Policy**

### **1 General**

- 1.1 This policy is to be used in conjunction with the policies and procedures of Calderdale Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP)
- 1.2 This safeguarding policy and working practices related to safeguarding apply to all staff, volunteers and users of NHP and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises, who must follow this policy and all related working practices and processes. Wherever the word staff is used in this policy (or related working practices) it applies to paid staff, sessional and temporary staff and volunteers.
- 1.3 This policy refers throughout to NHP staff. All staff should be aware of this policy and are bound by it. Safeguarding responsibilities are made clear on all job descriptions.
- 1.4 This policy is supplemented by the NHP Safeguarding working practice. The Designated Safeguarding Person/ Area Safeguarding Lead for NHP is the Senior Family Support Manager, who is supported by a named Safeguarding Lead in each Family hub or Team. These staff are available to support other NHP staff and board members if the need arises. Full details of these staff and their contact details are displayed on the staff notice boards at all bases. Named people are appropriately trained and this training is updated regularly.
- 1.5 The NHP duty of care extends to contracted or voluntary services provided for or on behalf of the NHP. Managers are responsible for ensuring that any such services which they contact have provision to safeguard the welfare of children.

### **2 In the Event of Concerns about a child**

- 2.1 Full details about how to deal with any concerns are held in the working practices which are attached to this policy. However, as a general principle:

- 2.2 Where any member of the staff is concerned about a child's welfare including peer on peer abuse, they should discuss this with their Line Manager and agree who will discuss the issues with the relevant named person with lead responsibility for Safeguarding as described in 1.4 above
- 2.3 Subsequent to the initial discussion, the Line Manager and the named person will be responsible for deciding how to proceed in accordance with the CSCP procedure.
- 2.4 Irrespective of any further action being taken, at the earliest possible opportunity all concerns must be clearly recorded with the name of the child, date, nature of concern, with whom the concern has been discussed and any discussion which has taken place with the parent/carer, where it is appropriate for such a discussion to take place.
- 2.5 All subsequent concerns and discussions must be clearly and accurately recorded until such time as the concern is deemed to be unfounded or a referral is made to the appropriate professional agency.
- 2.6 Where possible, parent/carers must also sign and date written information. All written records must be kept with regards to confidentiality. However parents/carers must be made aware written records are being kept and may be shared with other relevant professionals on a "need to know" basis.
- 2.7 Staff should understand that additional barriers may exist when recognising the signs of abuse and neglect of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 2.8 Where the nature of the concern is such that following the initial discussion, or following monitoring and observation of the concern, the named person concludes the child is deemed to be at risk of harm, the Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity in accordance with CSCP procedure.
- 2.9 For full details of how to refer to Calderdale MAST please see guidance in the Working Practices relating to Safeguarding or Staff Safeguarding notice boards for procedure and relevant telephone numbers.

### **3 Resolving multi-agency professional disagreements and escalation**

- 3.1 NHP recognises that when working in the arena of safeguarding children and young people, it is inevitable that at times there will be professional disagreement between agencies. However we are committed to ensure such differences do not affect the outcomes for children and young people. To that end we follow the process set out in CSCP document *Resolving Multi-Agency Professional Disagreements and Escalation* .

## **4 Working with children subject to a Child Protection Plan**

- 4.1 Staff maybe involved in work with children subject to a Child Protection Plan. All such referrals to staff should have a named contact within Children's Social Care Services .
- 4.2 Staff working with children subject to a Child Protection Plan need to be aware of this named contact and should feedback any concerns to this person or the duty Social Worker. In addition it is important to attend relevant meetings with Care Services. Staff must ensure all information is shared and recorded.
- 4.3 Staff are responsible for ensuring they are aware of the Child Protection Plan for children on their caseload and to work towards its objectives.
- 4.4 All staff working with children subject to a Child Protection Plan will have access to supervision by an appropriate person, usually their Line Manager. Decisions in such cases will be recorded on the clients file (by the member of staff) and in supervision by their Manager.

## **5 Low Level Concerns**

NHP strives to create a culture in which all safeguarding concerns and allegations about adults ( including those that do not meet the harm threshold) are shared responsibly, with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately.

**For full details and procedure see NHP Low Level concerns Policy**

## **6 DBS**

- 6.1 All staff and volunteers will have had a full and enhanced disclosure check through the Disclosure and Barring Service which is regularly updated. Any staff convicted of a criminal offence must inform their Line Manager immediately.
- 6.2 People who are dismissed for serious misconduct will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service. See <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/dbs-barred-lists> for details)

## **7 Records**

- 7.1 Entries in files should be clear, concise and differentiate between fact and supposition. Where necessary, training in case recording will be provided. Files must be kept up to date at all times. Files should be audited regularly and checked in supervision.

## **8 Training**

- 8.1 All staff will receive basic safeguarding training as and when necessary. Further training will be undertaken by staff allocated to safeguarding children work. Members of staff and their Line Managers are responsible for ensuring they periodically update their training as part of the appraisal process. This is more fully detailed in the working practice which supplements this policy. Staff with management responsibility should also be inducted into the recruitment process which includes safer working practices; relevant training will be offered as needed.

## **9 Use of mobile phones, cameras and laptops**

- 9.1 All staff should be aware of the potential for allegations around the misuse of images kept electronically. This is fully explained in the working practice for the use of mobile phones, cameras and laptops. Failure to comply with this could result in disciplinary action.

## **9. In the event of Concerns about other members of staff**

- 10.1 If a staff member raises a concern about another staff member's work with children, or allegations regarding a member of staff's behaviour these will be dealt with as 'concerns against a member of staff'.
- 9.2 Full and accurate written records will be made of the allegation, and where practical written statements will be obtained from the member of staff who the allegation is made against, and any witnesses.
- 9.3 Where the concern is considered to be of such serious nature that children could be, or are, being put at risk, a senior manager will consider removing the member of staff from contact with children. This will usually mean removing the member of staff from their usual duties, this could be through allocating alternative duties, or suspension from work. (Refer to the disciplinary policy). Until the results of any investigation are known, this is a suspension without prejudice, as with any other suspension under the disciplinary procedure.

- 9.4 Where the concern is considered to be of such serious nature that children could be, or are, being put at risk, the DSL should be informed immediately. The DSL will decide if LADO and/or Ofsted should be informed. The LADO should be informed as soon as possible, and no later than within 1 working day from when the concern is raised. The DSL should seek advice from LADO before any decision to investigate the matter further, however this should not prevent immediate steps being taken where necessary to ensure the safety of children. It is recommended that HR advice is sought at an early stage.
- 9.5 Advice should be sought from the LADO, the police and/or Children's Social Care Services about how much information should be disclosed to the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- 9.6 All staff should be aware an Allegations Management Meeting may be convened. The potential outcomes of this meeting could be:
- A safeguarding enquiry (usually undertaken by Care Services)
  - A criminal investigation (by the police)
  - A disciplinary investigation will commence, in accordance with NHP disciplinary procedures
- 9.7 Where the matter is referred to external agencies NHP will be guided by those agencies on whether suspension is appropriate and how the allegations will be managed.
- 9.8 Where the matter is referred to a disciplinary investigation, subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, an investigating officer will be appointed. This will be a manager who will be sufficiently trained in safeguarding matters. The member of staff subject to the allegations will, as soon as possible, be informed of the nature of the allegation(s). In line with the disciplinary procedure, they will have the opportunity to provide information relevant to the investigation. The member of staff will be made aware that the allegations are being considered under the safeguarding policy as 'concerns against a member of staff'.
- 9.9 Where a decision is made to refer the matter to a disciplinary hearing, the member of staff will be informed of the possible outcomes in the letter inviting them to the disciplinary hearing. (e.g. disciplinary sanction, dismissal and/or referral to the DBS or regulatory body). The arrangements for the formal stages of disciplinary procedures are outlined in the disciplinary policy.

- 9.10 It is recognised this could be a difficult time for the member of staff and as soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the person who is the subject of the allegation should be advised to contact their union or professional association. A support manager should be allocated to be the point of contact for the member of staff subject to the allegations. This manager will ensure that appropriate support is offered via occupational health or the Health Assured scheme. It is important that the member of staff is:
- treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved;
  - kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process;
  - if suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace.
- 9.11 Where the parent raised the allegation regarding the member of staff protocols for updating the parents on the matter can be found in the West Yorkshire SCB procedures:  
[https://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/p\\_alleg\\_staff.html](https://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/p_alleg_staff.html)
- 9.12 If the member of staff resigns during the disciplinary process every effort should be made to reach a conclusion, even if:
- The individual refuses to cooperate, having been given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations;
  - It may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person's period of notice expires before the process is complete.
  - This would usually mean that a post-employment disciplinary hearing is convened, and the member of staff is invited to respond to the allegations.
- 9.13 If the member of staff resigns during the disciplinary process and a conclusion has been reached, the member of staff should be informed what the contents of their reference will be, in light of the conclusions made. They should also be informed of any post-employment referral to the DBS (or other agency)
- 9.14 Under no circumstances should a settlement agreement be used to make arrangements for the employee to leave their employment. A settlement agreement which prevents the employer from making a DBS referral when the criteria are met for so doing would likely result in a criminal offence being committed for failure to comply with the duty to refer. The organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service to consider whether to add the individual to the barred list. This applies irrespective of whether a referral has been made to local authority children's social care and/or the designated officer or team of officers. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.

9.15 Under no circumstances should the contents of a reference be agreed to support the employee to leave their employment. A reference that omits information, or does not reflect the true facts about the person's suitability to work in regulated employment, should not be agreed. (Whether or not a settlement agreement is used).

9.16 Further information can be found:  
[https://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/p\\_alleg\\_staff.html](https://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/p_alleg_staff.html) or seek the advice of a senior manager or Calderdale Council's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) by email [ladoadmin@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:ladoadmin@calderdale.gov.uk)

## **11 Responsibilities of all staff in group activities and/or group setting**

11.1 All staff have a responsibility to safeguard children, young adults, and vulnerable adults in group settings or activities. All staff need to ensure that visitors and guests to a group are always escorted. Staff should not allow friends or family members to access the group or activities unless the line manager has sanctioned that visit.

11.2 All staff must discuss with their line manager any unexpected or uninvited visitor who joins a group with no justification or rational explanation.

## **12 Whistle Blowing Policy**

11.1 NHP has a positive commitment and open approach to whistle blowing. For full details and procedure see NHP Whistle Blowing Policy.

## **13 Reporting serious incidents to the Charities Commission**

13.1 NHP Trustees are responsible for reporting serious incidents to the Charities Commission, in line with 2018 guidance "How to report a Serious Incident in Your Charity". The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for providing advice and support to the Trustees in respect of this duty.

13.2 The reporting of serious incidents to the Charities Commission is additional to reporting and information sharing with local services and other agencies including OFSTED. It is the responsibility of the NHP Area Safeguarding Lead, and the Chief Executive Officer to ensure Trustees are apprised of incidents which may need to be reported to the Charities Commission.

## **14 Responsibilities of all staff – personal circumstances**

14.1 As outlined in this policy all staff have a responsibility to safeguard children. To this end all employees are expected to discuss with their line manager

or a safeguarding lead any changes in their personal circumstances which could put children at risk of harm. This includes bringing to the employer's attention any information which could prevent them working with children, or a personal or family relationship that could put children at risk of harm.

<b>Working practices associated with this policy</b>	<b>Applies to</b>
Child death notification procedure	NHP Family Hub Staff
Still birth notification and procedure	NHP Family Hub Staff
Removal of family files	NHP Family Hub Staff
DBS and other disclosures	All NHP Staff
Managing Allegations against NHP Staff	All NHP Staff
Working Practice relating to photos	All NHP Staff
Safeguarding Children	All NHP Staff
Low level concerns policy	All NHP staff
Recruitment and Selection	All NHP Staff
see also Staff use of ICT Policy, Data Protection Policy, and Information sharing working practice (Data protection)	