

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

This organisation recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse and takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people (under 18 years).

We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Maintain good links with statutory child care authorities.

THE POLICY

Nidderdale Plus recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, Nidderdale Plus has adopted the policy contained in this document (hereafter “the policy”). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to and responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers of Nidderdale Plus. We also recognise the need to build constructive links with the child care agencies. These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the North Yorkshire Area Child Protection Procedures. They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training.

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of the organisation and who come directly into contact with children using our services. The policy also includes any young person (under 18) who may be working with us, for example, in a Duke of Edinburgh capacity or as a student placement. Every individual has a responsibility to inform the designated person in respect of child protection or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The designated person must decide if the concerns should be communicated to social services or the police.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger. 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 carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

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 the children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the need of another person. It may involve causing children frequently

to feel frightened or in danger, other exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts.

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

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm, or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness, to a child's basic emotion.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to the Partnership Manager, ('designated person') who is nominated by Nidderdale Plus to act on their behalf in referring allegations of suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Partnership Manager, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Trustees ('deputy designated person'). If it is an emergency, and the designated persons cannot be contacted, then social services or the police should be contacted at the numbers given below.
2. If the suspicions relate to the designated person, then the deputy or social services should be contacted.
3. Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone, other than those named above.
4. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies, although we would hope that an individual would use the procedure outlined above. However, if you feel that the organisation has not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is open to you to contact the child protection agencies direct.

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT

If a child has an injury which may be a non-accidental injury, or symptoms of neglect and a referral is to be made then:

1. The designated person should contact social services. If there has been a deliberate injury or where there are concerns about the child's safety the child's parents should not be contacted before first consulting with social services.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it should be sought immediately. The designated person should inform the doctor of any suspicion of abuse.
3. If a referral is being made without the parent's knowledge and non-urgent medical treatment is required, social services should be informed. Otherwise, speak to the parent/carer and suggest medical attention be sought for the child.
4. If appropriate the parent/carer should be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department prior to a referral being made. If they fail to do so in situations of real concern the designated person will contact social services directly for advice.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations of sexual abuse the designated person will:

1. Contact the Social Services or Police Child Protection Team directly. The designated person will not speak to the parents.
2. Under no circumstances should the designated person, or any other member of the organisation, attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated person is to collect the exact details of the allegations or suspicion and to provide this information to the child protection agencies that will investigate the matter under the Children Act 1989.

WHAT TO DO ONCE A CHILD HAS TALKED TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE

1. Make a note immediately of what the child has said, writing down exactly what the child has said, write down what you said in reply, when they said it and what was happening immediately beforehand. Record dates and times of the events and when the record was made. Keep all notes secure.
2. Report your discussion as soon as possible to the designated person.
3. Once a child has talked about abuse the designated person must consider if it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On a rare occasion it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact social services and/or the police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.
4. All records must be passed to the Partnership Manager to deal with and store in appropriate locked storage.
5. Allegations against staff or volunteers will be investigated. Where there are concerns that a child has been put in danger of abuse or has suffered abuse owing to the actions of a member of staff or volunteer social services or the police will be contacted. Details of any allegation which has not resulted in a referral will be kept securely in the same way as described in 4 above.

NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE SERVICES:

If you have a concern about a child or young person, or wish to make a referral to the Children & Families Service, please contact the customer resolution centre during office hours by phoning 01609 780780

Or by emailing Children&families@northyorks.gov.uk

For evenings, weekends and bank holidays, please contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01609 780780.

POLICE:

In an emergency, always ring 999. You should call 101 to report crime and concerns that do not require an emergency response.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the trustees on an annual basis. A copy is available in our office and to our partner organisations, as required.

Signed.....Chair, Board of Trustees

Date.....

Nidderdale Limited

Company number: 09780213

is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Nidderdale Plus Partnership