



The Nidderdale Plus Partnership Company No 5331403; Registered charity number: 1163998

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

Nidderdale Plus 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 Nidderdale Plus Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in respect of child protection or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The DSL 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 emotions.

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE**

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to the DSL, 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 DSL, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Trustee ('deputy DSL'). 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 DSL, 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 DSL 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 DSL 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 DSL will:

1. Contact the Social Services or Police Child Protection Team directly. The DSL will not speak to the parents.
2. Under no circumstances should the DSL, 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 DSL 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 DSL.
3. Once a child has talked about abuse, the DSL 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 DSL 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:**

In the first instance, employees and volunteers should report to the DSL any matters of concern regarding child protection. However, in urgent situations when the DSL or deputy DSL is not available, if you have a concern about a child or young person, or urgently need 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](mailto: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.

### **Building Awareness of County Lines**

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

Children and young people may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime. County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.

Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime agency, 2019). Young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

Dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines” are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police. Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact young people to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

Nidderdale Plus employees and volunteers should be aware of warning signs that may indicate that a child is a victim of County Lines. The NSPCC has put together some information to help anyone who works or volunteers with children and young people to recognise the signs that a child might be being exploited by a county lines gang and understand what action to take to help keep children safe. The link is here: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines>.

<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	Helen Flynn
<b>Tel no during office hours</b>	01423 714953
<b>Mobile (outside office hours)</b>	07789 173011
<b>Deputy DSL</b>	Jackie Kerr
<b>Mobile</b>	07778 783695

**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**

**Reviewed and updated 15 November 2022**