

# Safeguarding Policy

## Purpose and AimS

The purpose of PowerWood CIC safeguarding policy is to provide a secure framework in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those children/young people who attend our activities. The policy aims to ensure that:

- All children are safe and protected from harm.
- Other elements of provision and policies are in place to enable children to feel safe and adopt safe practices.
- Staff, children, directors, visitors, volunteers and parents are aware of the expected behaviours and our legal responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our children.

## Ethos

Safeguarding in PowerWood CIC is considered everyone's responsibility and as such we aim to create the safest environment within which every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. PowerWood CIC recognizes the contribution it can make in ensuring that all children who use our services will be listened to and appropriate action taken. We will do this by working in partnership with other agencies, and seeking to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and other colleagues to develop and provide activities and opportunities that will help to equip our children with the skills they need.

'Children' or 'Young People' refers to individuals under 18 years. This safeguarding policy is also relevant to concerns about vulnerable adults, who are in long term medical or social care.

As an organisation that offers support to families, in many situations we will be offering direct support to families, helping them to overcome the challenges they face. However it is important for staff and volunteers to recognise the difference between these issues, and cases of abuse that must be recorded and referred.

Some behaviours, often considered extreme, can be normal for the individuals we work with, and are an expression of their sense of emotional, intellectual or physical overwhelm. If 'abnormal' behaviour raises concerns, we will be considering whether anything has changed for that particular child and if we have to look at the situation from another perspective.

## Responsibilities and expectations

PowerWood CIC has a board of directors whose legal responsibility it is to make sure that we have an effective safeguarding policy and procedures in place and monitors that we comply with them.

### **The board should also ensure the following**

- The safeguarding policy is made available to parents and carers if requested.
- All staff and volunteers are properly checked to make sure they are safe to work with the children who attend our activities.
- We have procedures for handling allegations of abuse made against members of staff or volunteers.
- Safe and appropriate use of cameras, mobile phones, technology and online equipment
- A Safeguarding Designated Officer (SDO) is appointed, who has lead responsibility for dealing with all safeguarding issues. The Safeguarding Designated Officer is Simone de Hoogh. If she is not available then contact the Deputy Safeguarding Designated officer Abigail Coles.

### **The responsibilities for the Safeguarding Designated Officer (SDO) are**

- Ensure that all safeguarding issues raised are effectively responded to, recorded and when appropriate are referred to the appropriate agency.
- Be responsible for arranging safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers who work with the children and young people.

- Ensuring the acceptable, safe use and storage of all camera technology, images, and mobile phones through the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the appropriate policies and procedures.

All Child Protection concerns need to be acted on immediately. If you are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you must tell the Safeguarding Designated Officer.

The SDO should aim to inform parents as much as possible if they are planning to pass on concerns.

All Adults, including the SDO, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to the relevant agency including MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) – Social Care, or the Police.

Where a disclosure is made to a visiting staff member from a different agency, e.g. Early Years Consultants, Health Visitors, it is the responsibility of that agency staff to formally report the referral to the PowerWood SDO in the first instance. Any records made should be kept securely on the Child's Protection file.

## Code of behaviour

### **Attitudes**

#### ***Staff and volunteers should:***

- Treat children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always listen to what a child or young person is saying.
- Value each child and young person.
- Recognise the unique contribution each individual can make.
- Encourage and praising each child or young person for their efforts.

***Staff and volunteers should endeavour to:***

- Provide an example, which we would wish others to follow.
- Use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy.

**One to one contact**

***Staff and volunteers should:***

- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts
- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- Work in open and shared space, avoiding being left alone with one child.

***Staff and volunteers should never***

- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind
- Threaten, punish or humiliate a child or young person
- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a

child or young person has limited mobility, personal care issues should be handled by a parent or authorised carer.

- Ignore a situation where a child is likely to come to harm.
- Draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Allow ourselves to be drawn into inappropriate situations such as tantrums or crushes.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun.

## **Relationships**

- Staff and volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within PowerWood or the work of PowerWood.
- Young volunteers under 18 are asked to refrain from intimate relationships with participants of their own age, whilst in a volunteering situation.

## **Recognising concerns, signs and indicators of abuse**

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, but also includes such things as child safety, bullying, racist abuse and harassment, intimate care and internet safety etc.

The witnessing of abuse can have a damaging affect on those who are party to it, as well as the child subjected to the actual abuse, and in itself will have a significant impact on the health and emotional well-being of the child.

Abuse can take place in any family, institution or community setting, by telephone or on the internet.

Abuse can often be difficult to recognise as children may behave differently or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their family circumstances change. However, it is important to know the indicators of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further.

## **Physical Abuse**

This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, punching, kicking, scalding, burning, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention through fabricated or induced illness. This was previously known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional Abuse is where a child's need for love, security, recognition and praise is not met. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else such as in Domestic Violence or Domestic Abuse. A parent, carer or authority figure is considered emotionally abusive when they are consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining toward a child or other family member. It can also occur when children are prevented from having social contact with others or if inappropriate expectations are placed upon them.

## **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. This may include physical contact both penetrative and non-penetrative, or viewing pornographic material including through the use of the internet. Indicators of sexual abuse include: allegations or disclosures, genital soreness, injuries or disclosure, sexually transmitted diseases, inappropriate sexualized behaviour including words, play or drawing. Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of abuse of which involves children (male and female, of different ethnic origins and of different ages) receiving something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) in exchange for sexual activity. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which can significantly harm their health and development. Neglect can include inadequate supervision (being left alone for long periods of time), lack of stimulation, social contact or education, lack of appropriate food, shelter, appropriate clothing for conditions and medical attention and treatment when necessary.

## **What to do if you are concerned**

If a child makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse against an adult, another child, or young person, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret.
- Inform your Safeguarding Designated Officer as soon as possible.
- Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which you must sign, date and record your position using the safeguarding record log forms.

If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you should report your concerns to the Safeguarding Designated Officer. Where those concerns relate to the Safeguarding Designated Officer however, this should be reported to the board of directors.

## **Managing Allegations**

We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working or may come into contact with children and young

people. They can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults.

Allegations are made for a variety of reasons:

- Abuse has actually taken place.
- Something has happened to the child that reminds them of a past event, causing the child to misinterpret your language or your actions.
- A child may make an allegation as an expression of anger with an adult, to attempt revenge.
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust whether they be members of staff or volunteers this should be brought to the immediate attention of the SDO who will advise the Chair of the board. In the case of the allegation being made against the SDO this will be brought to the immediate attention of the Chair of the board. The SDO/Chair will need to discuss with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) the nature of the allegations made against the adult, in order for the appropriate action to be taken. This may constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion depending on the allegation being made.

The Chair will need to:

- Refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)\* immediately and follow up in writing within 48 hours. Consider safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are away from the alleged abuser.
- Contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO.
- Consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation.
- Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation if this is deemed necessary.
- Act on any decision made in any strategy meeting.
- Advise the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations being founded.



## Training

All members of staff and volunteers will have access to safeguarding training at least every three years in line with Devon Safeguarding Children's Board (DSCB). We will also, as part of our induction, issue information in relation to our Safeguarding policy and any policy related to safeguarding and promoting our children/young people's welfare to all newly appointed staff and volunteers. Our Safeguarding Designated Officer will undertake further safeguarding training, Group 3 DSCB Multi-agency Safeguarding course or Group 3 Refresher Courses. This will be undertaken at least every three years which updates their awareness and understanding of the impact of the wide agenda of safeguarding issues. This will support both the SDO to be able to better undertake their role and support staff and volunteers in ensuring our safeguarding arrangements are robust and achieving better outcomes for children.

Our safeguarding arrangements are reported on an annual basis to our board of directors and our Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, in order to keep it updated in line with local and national guidance/legislation.

We will include our Safeguarding Policy on our website and will post copies of our policy at activities.

## Useful Contacts

### **Our main contact for sharing concerns is:**

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 155 1071

email: [mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)

MASH Consultation Line 0345 155 1071 (ask for Consultation Line)

### **Other contacts:**

Devon Safeguarding Childrens Board [www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org](http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org)

South West Child Protection Procedures [www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)

Devon Early Years and Childcare Service [www.devon.gov.uk/eys](http://www.devon.gov.uk/eys)

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency [www.ceop.org.uk](http://www.ceop.org.uk)

NSPCC Safe (Safe Activities for Everyone) Network [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk)

CYPS area contact numbers:

(9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am – 4pm Friday)

Early Help co-ordination centre 0345 155 1071 (ask for Early Help)

Out of hours for CYPS (Social Care):

5pm -9am and at weekends and public holidays, please contact:

Emergency Duty Service 0845 6000 388 (low-rate call)

Police Central Referral Unit: 0845 605 116

EYCS Consultation Service:

**If you have concerns about a child but are unsure whether to make a Social Care referral, you can talk it through with:**

Sue Bolt - Locality Manager for South West Devon 01392 383000

Nikki Phillips – Locality Manager for Exeter, East and Mid Devon 01392 383000

Melissa Filby – Locality Manager for Northern Devon 01392 383000

DSCB

Head of Safeguarding: 01392 386091

DSCB Office: Christina Ashforth 01392 383000

**\*Child Protection Chairs and Local Authority Designated Officers for managing allegations against staff:**

Allegations against staff Referral Co-ordinator 01392 384964

Devon’s Domestic Abuse Helpline 0345 155 1074

For families who are based outside of Devon, there will be equivalent safeguarding boards based at their own local authorities. If in doubt, contact Devon MASH first for advice.

## Current Safeguarding Issues

### **Sexually Active under Eighteen years old**

It is acknowledged by those working with young people that most young people under the age of 18 will have an interest in sex and sexual relationships. Intimate relationships between young people are not inherently abusive, but in some case guidance needs to be offered to help young people recognise the difference between safe and healthy relationships and abusive ones, for example where there is a power imbalance, or a young person feel pressured. Abusive relationships between young people should be treated as a safeguarding concern.

### **Safeguarding Disabled Children**

Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes as non-disabled children.

Disabled children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater risks and 'created vulnerability' as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/ or communication impairment. PowerWood CIC will ensure that our disabled children are listened to and responded to appropriately where they have concerns regarding abuse.

### **Trafficked Children**

Child trafficking involves moving children across or within national or international borders for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation includes children being used for sex work, domestic work, restaurant/ sweatshop, drug dealing, shoplifting and benefit fraud.

## **Domestic Abuse**

The Government defines domestic abuse 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 sexuality”.

If children are members of a household where abuse is taking place, this should be raised as a safeguarding concern. Domestic Abuse is a criminal offence and concerns should be passed on to Police.

## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than a:

- Parent.
- Person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility.
- Close relative.
- Local Authority.

for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at PowerWood CIC to inform the Local Authority via MASH where we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

## **Child Exploitation and Online Safety**

Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites. For further information, see our Online Safety Policy.

## **Cultural issues**

Some members of our communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law of England. PowerWood CIC does not condone practices that are illegal and which are harmful to children. Concerns that any of these forms of abuse have taken place will be passed on to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. Examples of particular practices are:

- **Forced Marriage**

PowerWood CIC does not support the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent.

- **Under-age Marriage**

In England, a young person cannot legally marry until they are 16 years old (without the consent of their parents or carers) nor have sexual relationships.

- **Female Genital mutilation**

This is against the law, yet for some communities it is considered a religious act and cultural requirement. It is illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised.

- **Ritualistic Abuse**

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children), and may use physical or psychological violence to get rid of the possessing spirit.

- **Honour Based Violence**

Honour based violence is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.