Guidance for writing child protection policy and procedures
Children and young people from every community can be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of their age, religion or ethnicity. In our work and contact with children we all have a responsibility to keep them safe from harm. Safeguarding is about trying to make sure that children do not get harmed, and knowing what to do if anyone in your group is worried about a child. Making sure your group has safeguards in place:

- Protects children and young people from harm and abuse
- Enables staff and volunteers to know what to do if they are worried
- Shows that your group is responsible

**Working Together 2006** sets out the arrangements for how all organisations and groups must work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This guidance derives from the [NSPCC Safe Communities Toolkit](https://www.nspcc.org.uk) and will assist you to formulate a child protection policy for your group. Further advice and assistance can be obtained from Stephanie Cole, Newcastle Community Volunteer Service, 0191 2327445 stephanie.cole@cvsnewcastle.org.uk NSPCC 020 7825 7422, Sharon Gill, Manager, Childcare Safeguarding Compliance Service, 0191 2774660 cscs@newcastle.gov.uk or Sue Kirkley, Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board Coordinator, 0191 2116470 susan.kirkley@newcastle.gov.uk
**Writing a policy statement**

A policy statement makes it clear to staff, parents and children what the group thinks about safeguarding, and what it will do to keep children safe. It should be no longer than one or two sides of A4 paper.

A policy statement sets out:

- What the group wishes to say about keeping children safe
- Why the group is taking these steps
- How in broad terms the group is going to meet this responsibility
- Who it applies and relates to e.g. all staff and volunteers, children up to 18 years old
- How the group will put the policy into action and how it links to other relevant policies and procedures e.g. taking photographs and videos, internet use, recruitment

The policy statement should also:

- Identify the group, it’s purpose and it’s function
- Recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- Briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy

Your group will also need an action plan that states how you will ensure that everyone, including children, is aware and has a full understanding of your safeguards. This needs to explain how you will tell everyone about the safeguards, including those with additional or special needs, or whose first language is not English.

**Writing process**

A child protection procedure sets out a detailed process that tells everyone what to do if they are concerned about a child’s wellbeing. It is very important to have clear instructions to ensure that there is a speedy and effective response for dealing with concerns about a child or young person.
Think about the ways in which concerns might be raised as this will help the procedures to work well. For instance:

- A child may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them, or what has happened to another child
- Someone else might report that a child has told them, or that they strongly believe that, a child has been or is being harmed in some way
- A child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child’s behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- The behaviour or attitude of one of the workers toward a child worries you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
- You witness worrying behaviour from one child to another

All children have the right to be protected

Children who have additional needs, or come from a different ethnic or cultural group, can easily become victims of discrimination and prejudice. Any discrimination is harmful to a child’s wellbeing, and may mean that they do not obtain the services they need to keep them safe. Your group needs to make sure that all children have the same protection. You and your staff know the children you work with, and must make sure any discrimination is challenged so that the children, including those with additional needs or those from different ethnic or cultural groups, find the services they need.

Where appropriate you will need to have the procedures written in different languages for anyone whose first language is not English, or in other formats for those with additional or special needs, for example Braille or large text.
When writing your procedures, use the sections below as headings and then write your own responses underneath them. The procedures must include:

- **Purpose and aim of the procedures**  Do they apply to everyone within the group? For example, they should include all those in contact with children, even if it isn't their main job to look after them – like the caretaker, for example.

- **A description of the different categories of abuse**  (page 37-38) Are physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect.

- **How to recognise the signs of abuse**  Give brief examples of the signs and indicators which might give you cause for concern.

- **How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse**  Include all details of who should tell whom, what the named person will do, and the actions to take, including contact numbers. It should be clear who staff, parents and children should talk to if they are worried.

- **How to respond to allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer**  Explain who should tell whom, and what action to take including contact numbers.

- **How to respond to a child telling you about abuse**  Include what to do and say.

- **How to respond to allegations of abuse against someone who is not working in the group**  This may be a parent or carer, another child, school teacher or anybody else.

- **How information will be recorded**  Include how information will be recorded and by whom, how long it will be kept and where it will be stored confidentially.
• **Confidentiality policy** The legal principal is that the “welfare of the child is paramount” means that taking action to safeguard the child is most important. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected, but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm, the child’s safety has to come first. So, legally, it is fine to share information if someone else is worried about the safety of a child. When a concern or worry is raised, not everyone needs to know about it. This respects the child’s, family’s and/or staff’s rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned. It is acceptable to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the group’s procedures.

• **Risk assessment** This is an important step in protecting your workers and your business, as well as complying with the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter in your workplace – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks, for example ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip, or cupboard drawers are kept closed to ensure people do not trip. For most, that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure your most valuable asset – your workforce – is protected.

• **Safe recruitment** Services or groups whose staff and volunteers work closely with children must have policies and procedures in place to deter those who are unsuitable to work with children. Common features might include:
  - **Criminal Records Bureau checks**
  - Candidates to confirm identity
  - Verifying authenticity of qualifications and references directly
  - Seeking a full employment history for prospective staff and reserving the right to approach any previous employer
  - Making appointments only after references and checks are obtained
  - Making all appointments to work with children subject to a probationary period
• **Training** Services and groups are responsible for ensuring that their staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and are skilled and confident.

• **Supervision and support** Safeguarding children entails making difficult and risky professional judgements and decisions. All staff and volunteers must have access to advice and support, from peers or managers.

• **A code of behaviour for everyone** It is a good idea to think about how you expect everyone to behave in your organisation. This includes staff, volunteers, parents and the children themselves. It is important that a code of behaviour reflects the child centred principles of the group. It should be made known to all children, young people and workers and, where possible, it should be prominently displayed, perhaps on a poster.

A code of contact and good practice should include positive statements about:
- Listening to children
- Valuing and respecting children as individuals
- Involving children in decision making as appropriate
- Encouraging and praising children
Sample policy statement

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, young people and their parents, carers and other agencies, is essential in promoting young people’s welfare

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive (groups name) services, including the children of adult members or users
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm

The policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students, or anyone working on behalf of (group name).

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
Sample code of behaviour

You must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person’s right to personal privacy
- Encourage children and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned
- Be aware that even physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within the organisation’s principles, procedures and guidance, and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of children or young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you
- Believe ‘it could never happen’
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another prudent approach