



## **Safeguarding Children Policy**

Community By Nature (CBN) is committed to taking all steps so far as reasonably practicable to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people whether from crime, abuse or being drawn into terrorism, extremism and/or radicalisation type related activities.

This Policy is underpinned by Local Authority Safeguarding Boards Procedures, Children Act (1989/2000/2004), Protection of Children Act (1999), Young Person's Safety Act (1995), Disability Discrimination Act (1995/2004), UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child (1989) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006).

### **Introduction**

**This policy aims to provide CBN employees and volunteers with guidance on:**

- What is child abuse, the different types of child abuse and the signs of child abuse
- What to do and what not to do if you have concerns about a child's welfare or if a child shares concerns with you
- Referral procedures in line with local Safeguarding Children's Boards
- Safe recruitment and employment practice
- Useful contacts

These guidelines reflect Local Safe Guarding Boards procedures and should be followed in conjunction with these procedures.

What is child abuse?

**Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online.**

**Types of and signs of child abuse:**

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes:

- hitting with hands or objects
- slapping and punching, kicking
- shaking, throwing
- poisoning, burning and scalding
- biting and scratching
- breaking bones
- drowning.

If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Physical abuse signs include:

- bruises
- broken or fractured bones
- burns or scalds
- bite marks.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

Emotional abuse includes:

- humiliating or constantly criticising a child or making a child perform degrading acts
- threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names
- making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- blaming and scapegoating
- not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations
- exposing a child to upsetting events or situations, like domestic abuse or drug taking
- failing to promote a child's social development
- not allowing them to have friends
- persistently ignoring them
- being absent
- manipulating a child
- never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes
- never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect

Signs of emotional abuse

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. And a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child is acting.

As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. But children who are being emotionally abused might:

- seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
- struggle to control their emotions
- have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

## **Sexual abuse**

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.

Emotional and behavioural signs of sexual abuse

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Alcohol or drug misuse, self-harm.
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable and angry, or anything out of the ordinary.

Physical signs of sexual abuse

- Bruises.
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area.
- Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the on-going failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Types of neglect

Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. But broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect.

- Physical neglect  
A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.
- Educational neglect  
A parent/carer doesn't ensure their child is given an education.
- Emotional neglect  
A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- Medical neglect  
A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

#### Signs of neglect

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Children and young people who are neglected might have:

#### Poor appearance and hygiene

- being smelly or dirty, having unwashed clothes
- being hungry or not given money for food
- having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter
- having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants.

#### Health and development problems

- anaemia
- body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- medical or dental issues, regular illness or infections
- missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- not given the correct medicines
- poor language or social skills

- repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision and untreated injuries
- skin issues (sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies, ringworm)
- thin or swollen tummy
- tiredness
- weight or growth issues.

#### Housing and family issues

- living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- being left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of carer for other family members.

#### **Change in behaviour**

- becoming clingy, being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- becoming aggressive
- changes in eating habits
- displaying obsessive behaviour
- finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities, missing school
- showing signs of self-harm, using drugs or alcohol.

#### **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people. **Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse.** Domestic abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological.

## **Signs of domestic abuse**

It can be difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening and those carrying out the abuse can act very different when other people are around. Children and young people might also feel frightened and confused, keeping the abuse to themselves.

Signs that a child has witnessed domestic abuse can include:

- tantrums, aggression or bullying
- anti-social behaviour, like vandalism
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking
- bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
- eating disorders, drug or alcohol use
- problems in school or trouble learning, withdrawal.

## **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

### Signs of bullying

No single sign will indicate for certain that your child's being bullied, but watch out for:

- belongings getting 'lost' or damaged

- physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- not doing as well at school
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others.

### **Online abuse**

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones and it can happen anywhere online.

### **Signs of online abuse**

A child or young person experiencing abuse online might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

Some of the signs of online abuse are similar to other abuse types including cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

### **Criminal Exploitation and Gangs**

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. Often they are encouraged to join 'street gangs' where crime and violence

is integral to the group's identity or 'organised criminal gangs' where for most crime is their occupation.

### **Signs of criminal exploitation**

- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent.
- Being isolated or withdrawn.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Using new slang words.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited they're given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused.

Signs may include:

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations.
- Sharp changes in mood or character, being secretive.
- Having money or things they can't or won't explain.
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.

### **Grooming**

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. Children and young people can be groomed online, in person or both – by a stranger or someone they know. This could be a family member, a friend or someone who has targeted them – like a teacher, faith group leader or sports coach

Signs of grooming

It can be difficult to tell if a child is being groomed – the signs aren't always obvious and may be hidden. Older children might behave in a way that seems to be "normal" teenage behaviour, masking underlying problems.

Some of the signs you might see include:

- being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online
- having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- underage drinking or drug taking
- spending more or less time online or on their devices

- being upset, withdrawn or distressed
- sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age
- spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.

### **Child trafficking**

Trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for sexual exploitation, committing crimes (theft, working on cannabis farms, moving drugs) domestic slavery, forced labour in factories or agriculture, benefit fraud, forced marriage.

Trafficked children experience many types of abuse and neglect. Traffickers use physical, sexual and emotional abuse as a form of control. Children and young people are also likely to be physically and emotionally neglected and may be sexually exploited.

### Signs of Trafficking

It may not be obvious that a child has been trafficked but you might notice unusual or unexpected things. They might:

- rarely leave their house or have no time for playing
- be orphaned or living apart from their family, live in low-standard accommodation
- be unsure which country, city or town they're in
- can't or are reluctant to share personal information or where they live, not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- have no access to their parents or guardians
- be seen in inappropriate places like brothels or factories
- have money or things you wouldn't expect them to
- have injuries from workplace accidents
- give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children.

## **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names.

Signs of FGM include:

- Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting.
- Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet.
- Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed.
- Acting differently after an absence from school or college.
- Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations.
- Asking for help – though they might not be explicit about the problem because they're scared or embarrassed.

## **Safeguarding Responsibilities**

CBNs Operations Manager - Dave Tinsley is the nominated Safeguarding Children lead. His contact number is 07894149245

He has a responsibility to ensure:

- CBN has clear up to date procedures in place to safeguard children & young people which include the Prevent Agenda
- That all staff are aware of this Safeguarding Policy and procedures through their induction training
- All staff access on going Safeguarding Children Training to ensure they remain up to date on Safeguarding Procedures.

All employees/volunteers have a responsibility to ensure they:

- Fully understand CBNs safeguarding policy and procedures
- Remain vigilant to possible signs and symptoms of abuse at all times.
- Report any concerns they have about the welfare of a child/young person to CBN's Operations Manager
- In the absence of the Operations Manager, any concerns should be reported to the CEO.

Employees/volunteers may become concerned about a child/young person through the recognition of possible signs and symptoms of abuse or through child/young person making a disclosure. In the case of a disclosure employees/volunteers have a duty to ensure they:

- Do not make judgements about whether the child/young person is telling the truth.
- Do not make comments about what you have been told, the child/young person does not need to know what you think, but does need your support.
- Do not ask the child/young person to repeat the story
- Do not ask leading questions

**Any CBN employee or volunteer who has concerns about the safety/welfare of a child/young person whether through a disclosure or the recognition of possible signs and symptoms of abuse has a duty to report it - on the same day that the disclosure is made/you become concerned.**

### **The Referral Procedure**

Having reported your concerns to CBN's Operations Manager, Dave Tinsley - Lead Safeguarding Officer, employees/volunteer have a responsibility to ensure they:

- Record all concerns on an incident report sheet. You must add the date, time and your signature. The lead Safeguarding Officer will also sign the incident report sheet
- Clearly document the nature of the disclosure/identified signs and symptoms, write what you have seen, or what was said and by whom, how things progressed, and any other factual details you feel relevant, using the incident sheet provided. A separate sheet should be used for each incident
- Do not discuss the disclosure with anyone else other than the designated person/s
- Return records to the Lead Safeguarding Officer immediately, who will make sure they are stored securely.
- If advice is required prior to making a referral the Lead Safeguarding Officer will consult the contact centre in Sefton 0345 140 0845 or Liverpools' Careline: 0151 233 3700 in Liverpool.

- If it is decided that immediate action is required, the Manager/Lead Safeguarding Officer will telephone:

**Seftons Contact Centre 0345 140 0845**

**Sefton's Emergency Duty Team** for emergency action, referrals or advice out of hours (Mon – Thurs from 5.30pm, Fri from 4pm and weekends) the Manager/ Lead Safeguarding Officer will contact Sefton's Emergency Duty Team on 0151 934 3555 (Sefton)

**Liverpools Careline:** 0151 233 3700 (Liverpool) Telephone lines are open 24/7. You will then be asked to follow up your call by submitting an online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). To make a referral on line please go to [www.liverpool.gov.uk/referrals](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/referrals)

**If you think a child is in immediate danger then you should call the police – on 999 in an emergency**

- It is important to have as much information as possible including the child's name (correct spelling), date of birth, address, home telephone number/ alternative contact number, family structure, ethnicity, religion, GP, school, etc
- In the absence of the Lead Safeguarding Officer, any member of staff/volunteer has the responsibility for making an immediate referral if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- In all circumstances all persons who make a referral must complete an online referral form: The Child Referral form - cited on Sefton Councils Website (Sefton) or MARF online form: [www.liverpool.gov.uk/referrals](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/referrals) (Liverpool)
- In the case of a disclosure, explain to the child/young person what is happening, who you are speaking to and why.
- Parents should be informed that a referral is being made unless this could put the child/young person at further risk of harm
- Do not make judgements or assessments, but give clear information regarding the child / young person, what they have said and/or reasons for the concerns.

### Safe Recruitment & Employment

All newly recruited CBN employees will undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check prior to any unsupervised work with children.

CBN implement the following checks on recruitment of new personnel:

- 2 References – These should be taken up before any position is offered. References will be checked both orally and in writing.
- Disclosure and Barring Service check - Consent will always be gained before taking up a check. However, if a person refuses to be checked it is unlikely that the position will be offered. This will be renewed every three years.

Employees/ volunteers will not supervise children or young people alone until the Disclosure and Barring Service check has been completed and a satisfactory response has been received.

- Employees/volunteers must confirm proof of identity and residence and confirm proof of qualifications
- All new staff/volunteers will be informed of Safeguarding policies and procedures as part of their induction

CBN fully implements and endorses 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' (DCFS, 2009). This document provides practice guidance and clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children and young people.

All employees and volunteers are given a copy of this document to read during their induction. All employees and volunteers sign to say that they have understood and will implement this guidance.

Please be aware that the child/young person will always be believed, therefore, should an allegation be made against a member of staff or a volunteer appropriate and immediate action will be taken.

CBN will deal with any allegation made against staff or volunteers in line with Local Safe Guarding Board Procedures. Any allegation against staff or volunteers must be reported as soon as possible to the CEO who will record the incident and contact the appropriate Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO) the same day.

A full and fair investigation will be carried out in conjunction with LADO until this situation has been resolved and appropriate action taken.

Always remember to adhere to the guidance outlined within the Guidance for safer working practice document referenced above to ensure your own safe practice.

### **Useful Contacts**

NSPCC Child Protection Help line for advice and support of you are concerned about a child: **0808 800 5000**

For advice and support for under 18's who have a safeguarding concern: **0800 111**

Childline: **0800 1111**

Policy written by Kate Jameson, CEO

Signed: *K. Jameson*

Reviewed by Dave Tinsley – Operations Manager

Signed: *D. Tinsley*

Approved by Jim Brett Chair on behalf of Management Committee

Signed: *Jim Brett* Date 04.01.22

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