



### **Newton Abbot Youth Council Statement:**

The Newton Abbot Youth Council is dedicated to creating a **safe space** where young people can gather, engage in social interactions, and hone their interpersonal and professional abilities. Integral to our mission is navigating the intricacies of youth council politics, ensuring that our efforts are inclusive, transparent, and reflective of the diverse perspectives within our community.

Our **core values** are: respect for people, equality, participation, valuing difference, empowerment, education, listening to others, and respect for property.

Here are the objectives guiding the Youth Council's work carried out by our dedicated staff and volunteers:

- Providing young people with accurate information in a non-judgmental manner, and guiding them to additional information sources when needed.
- Cultivating a sense of responsibility amongst young people.
- Empowering young people to have a voice and take action to create change in their community.
- Engaging young people in community projects within Newton Abbot and its surroundings, while encouraging the development of their own initiatives and ideas.
- Fostering the healthy growth and development of young people as they transition into adulthood.
- Promoting a variety of activities including literary, sports, cultural, recreational, and social events.
- Assisting young people in discovering and nurturing their latent potential and talents
- Collaborating with young people to ensure their safety and well-being.

We will provide activities that offer young people the opportunity to test ideas and enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and values to enjoy the **rights and responsibilities of adult citizenship**.

As an organisation, the Youth Council will:

- Act on information and safeguarding concerns as set out in our policies.

- Continue an ongoing programme of training to ensure our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to work with young people towards the above objectives.

Any concerns about young people should be referred to

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (Level 3): Carol Bunday

or The Youth Council Manager: (Level 5) Alex Gurpinar

### **Safeguarding training**

Level 2 Safeguarding training is mandatory for regular volunteers and staff.

Space Youth Services offer free access to Level 2 online training through Ihasco. You can contact Space directly or ask the Youth Council Manager to arrange a learning account with Space.

Alternatively you can attend a Zoom training session through VOYC, available here <https://voycdevon.org.uk/training-events>.

As a further alternative Child Protection e-learning is available through the NSPCC here <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/introduction-safeguarding-child-protection>



### **The Youth Council's Child Protection Statement**

All children and young people have an equal right to protection from harm or abuse, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, or religious belief. The prime responsibility of Newton Abbot CIC is to promote the welfare of and protect the young person.

**Accordingly, all staff, volunteers, management committee members, or anyone working on behalf of Newton Abbot CIC/ Newton Abbot Youth Council are expected to:**

- read, understand, and abide by this Policy
- attend training when it is offered
- follow the Child Protection Procedure and Guidance below if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

Newton Abbot CIC is committed to:

- valuing and listening to the young people with whom it works, and respecting their rights and feelings
- taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect young people from harm within a relationship of trust
- maintaining a safe and secure Youth Council premises and ensuring the safety of everyone involved through relevant policies and guidance, risk assessment, and ways of working, including the "open door" policy, the "no lone working" policy and the "no helpers with phones" policy
- recruiting employees and volunteers safely
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers, including this policy
- where necessary, sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

Any concerns about young people should be referred to  
The Designated Safeguarding Officer (Level 3): Carol Bunday  
Or The Youth Council Manager: (Level 5) Alex Gurpinar

You can also phone the Multi Agency Safeguarding hub directly on 0345 155 1071



## **Newton Abbot Youth Council**

### **Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for all staff and volunteers**

Safeguarding is about keeping young people safe while in our care. This means we must take every reasonable effort to reduce the risks of activities while at the Youth Council and make it a place that is both physically safe and that **feels safe**. It also includes Child Protection activities that are undertaken to protect specific children and young people who are at risk of significant harm outside the youth club.

Current guidance for school staff now states that all staff who work directly with children must read both Part One and Annex B of the statutory document, Keeping Children Safe in Education. (Latest version is dated September 2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Although the youth council is distinct from an academic environment, the guidance is relevant and sits alongside safeguarding training.

As workers in a youth setting, we also have wider safeguarding responsibilities which are set out below.

Specific risks are addressed in our Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Policy. There are some basic ways of working that help to keep the Youth Council safe and feeling safe for all, these are:

- All Staff and Adult Volunteers are aware of the range of risks, their responsibilities around health and safety, wellbeing and safeguarding- including bullying , peer on peer abuse and online/phone safety.
- All Staff and Adult volunteers will have completed level 2 safeguarding as a minimum and have DBS clearance.
- Maintaining an open door policy (leave doors open throughout sessions).
- Avoid lone working.
- All staff and helper personal phones to be put away during session hours.
- Adherence to the Code of Conduct by adults, and the behaviour agreement by young people.
- All staff and volunteers are confident that their ways of working are backed up by the organisation.
- Adult workers, volunteers and visitors use separate toilet facilities to young people during The Youth Council session hours.
- All staff and volunteers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

The safeguarding responsibilities in any child protection concerns is : **Use TED technique Tell me- Explain- Describe**

- To listen to young people when they have something to communicate, including non-verbal communication.
- To support young people and NOT to investigate concerns.
- To keep records of any concerns – including recording when a situation improves.
- To share information with the Youth Council Manager or Safeguarding Officer.

Once concerns about a child's welfare are identified, the Early Help Assessment (EHA) are the standardised frameworks used to identify additional needs and decide how those needs may be met. <http://www.dcfp.org.uk/early-help/>

Anyone who completes a EHA should ensure the process is not done in isolation and that the family and other agencies also contribute. Once completed, it can help you decide if a child and their family have additional needs which require input from Children's Social Care or another appropriate agency..

As a member of staff or regular volunteer you will have attended, or will be going to attend, Level 2 Safeguarding training so that you are aware of potential indicators of concern, and you will know what to do should you spot possible indications of a young person at risk, or a young person tells you about something which has happened to them (a disclosure).

Disclosures are rare, but they do occur. However, you are more likely to notice an indication that something might have happened, or might be happening, from the appearance of a young person or a change in their behaviour or language. You might also be told about a situation by another person.

In any case where you suspect that a young person is at risk, you have a duty to apply your training and Youth Council Confidentiality policy.

### **What happens next?**

The Safeguarding lead will make a decision about what to do next based on training, statutory guidance and possibly advice from relevant authorities.

Any information you have about the personal lives of young people and their families must stay absolutely confidential. Think "need to know". We cannot stress enough, that it is an abuse of your position to disclose such information to others, including colleagues at the youth council, except the Youth Council Manager and/or the Safeguarding Officer. It is their role to decide if the whole situation, or information about some aspects of it, should be shared further.

It is NOT the role of Newton Abbot CIC to investigate allegations or concerns.

In the worst case, asking questions or allowing your concern to affect your behaviour could worsen a situation for a young person or invalidate any future criminal investigation.

If you would like to know more about the policy basis of safeguarding action by the Youth Council Manager or Safeguarding Officer, please read the Newton About CIC Level 3 Safeguarding Procedure (also in the Child Protection folder).

If you believe that the situation is not being handled correctly, it is hoped that in the first instance you discuss this with the Youth Council Manager, or a Safeguarding Officer. However, everyone has the right to inform the Early Response Team or MASH of safeguarding concerns. The contact information is

at the end of the Guidance – What to do if you have concerns or there is a disclosure.

### **Child Protection – Guidance for all staff and volunteers: Definitions and indicators**

You will never be left to deal with anything yourself, and you will be supported if you do have a child protection concern.

#### **Definition of Child Protection**

Child Protection is defined as: “A part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children: the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are at the risk of suffering, significant harm.”

#### **Definition of significant harm**

There are no absolute criteria for significant harm, but when deciding on whether to share information, you should consider:

- Are there any physical injuries?
- Is there a pattern of behaviour, or a combination of ongoing events?
- Was there a single traumatic event, for example an assault or poisoning?
- Is the suspected perpetrator in a position of trust?
- If significant harm is suspected, talk to the Safeguarding Lead or contact MASH.
- If in doubt, talk to the Safeguarding Lead or contact MASH.

### Signs of abuse in children

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of their parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver
- Bruising on an immobile baby



### Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child...

- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behaviour for their age
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted infection, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### Areas of concern

- Physical injuries caused by violence (domestic abuse, or outside the home)
- Emotional abuse or coercive control
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect (can link to accidental injuries, emotional and health problems)
- Child on child abuse, which may involve any of the other areas of concern
- Online bullying or harassment, or access to inappropriate material or images, may also be linked to extremism
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Extremism – religious, political, environmental, racially motivated
- An individual in a position of trust who is behaving in such a way as to cause a concern
- Fabricated or induced illness, formerly known as Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy – this is rare but very harmful to affected children
- Child trafficking
- Forced Marriage
- Self Harm

A new offence of controlling and coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship was brought into law under the Serious Crime Act (2015). The government is committed to supporting the police to bring offenders to justice.

It is a form of domestic abuse where perpetrators subject spouses, partners, children and young people and other family members to serious psychological and emotional torment but stop short of violence. Coercive or controlling behaviour does not relate to a single incident. It is a purposeful pattern of incidents that occur over time in order to exert power, control or coercion over another.

**Identifying young people who may benefit from intervention or Early Help assessments.** Some warning signs are:

- Injuries, marks or scars – attempting to conceal them
- Becoming secretive or withdrawn
- Hostility or disruptive behaviour
- Changes in appearance – dirty clothes – poor hygiene – tiredness
- Changes in appearance – new clothes
- Use of inappropriate language or gestures
- Expressions of despair
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Non attendance at school or appointments



- Regularly coming home late or going missing
- Having money, mobile phones, jewellery or other items without a plausible explanation for having them
- Health or sexual health symptoms
- Mentioning something that has happened or that someone did, but which the young person or child is not allowed to talk about
- Flinching or shying away from being touched by others
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Unusual interactions between a child or young person and parent\carer
- A young person or child attempting to avoid a parent\carer
- A parent or carer being dismissive of a reasonable concern
- Unusual interactions between a young person and a parent or family member.
- Unusual interactions between a young person and person of trust.
- Unusual interactions amongst peers.

## Contextual safeguarding

Children and young people can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including:

- Exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines
- Trafficking
- The influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered.

### Risk factors

- Domestic abuse
- Parental mental ill health
- Parental alcohol or substance abuse
- Young people in care or who are fostered
- Young people missing from education
- Young people with disabilities

## Alcohol and drugs

There are many different reasons why people take drugs, including prescription medicines and illegal drugs, or drink alcohol. It often starts as a way of taking the edge off a problem or difficult situation, but the reasons can become more complex as time goes on.

People use drugs and alcohol to:

- Avoid feeling bored
- Fit in with peers
- Have more self-confidence
- Forget about problems
- Relax and feel good

Unfortunately, once choice gives way to dependency, people will often pay for drugs or alcohol before necessities like food.

## What is domestic abuse?



Domestic abuse, also known as domestic violence, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse, and intimate partner violence, is a pattern of behaviour which involves the abuse by one person against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating or within the family.

**Domestic abuse has a significant adverse impact on children in the household, even if they are not directly physically harmed.**

Children living in households where domestic abuse is happening are identified as 'at risk' under the Adoption and Children Act 2002. This extends the legal definition of harming children to include harm suffered by seeing or hearing ill treatment of others.

Sources of further information:

<http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/workers-volunteers/what-is-child-abuse/>

[http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/training\\_and\\_awareness/Pages/assessing\\_injuries\\_and\\_concerns.asp](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/training_and_awareness/Pages/assessing_injuries_and_concerns.asp)

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<http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/documents/2015/03/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused.pdf>

## Child Protection - Guidance for all staff and volunteers: what to do if you have a Child Protection concern or there is a disclosure

### Managing a child protection disclosure



Children speak to adults when they feel safe. A child may tell you about an incident at any time, and it is important that they feel listened to and valued.

Disclosure can be direct or indirect. Mostly likely a disclosure will be indirect, which can mean the child does not share the details of the abuse without being prompted, or does so in a roundabout way.

An example of this is, "Sometimes my step-dad keeps me up at night". Or a disclosure may be disguised, for example, "I have a cousin who is being abused". Another child may even tell you "My friend told me ...." It's really important to remember that a child can tell you something through hints or gestures or the way they are acting (a non-verbal disclosure).

The thought of anything having happened to a child or young person will come as a shock and is very upsetting. However, if you are concerned, or if a child/young person says something to you, it is important to listen and, as difficult as this may be, not to show shock or upset.

- In the case that you have noticed a change in the appearance, behaviour or language of a young person that could be an indicator of a safeguarding concern, you should initially draw the attention of the Youth Council Manager to the indicator. She will ask you to make a written record. The Youth Council Manager will liaise with the Safeguarding Officer to take a decision about what action to take.

- In the case that a young person (or anyone else) says something to you about a Safeguarding issue:
- If it is more than a few words, find somewhere at the club that allows confidential discussion. Remember to apply “open doors” and “no lone working” policies. If possible tell the Youth Council Manager (or nominated worker) that you are having a chat with a young person beforehand.
- Please try to ensure you are not overheard
- Allow the young person to do the talking and allow them to finish. Vulnerable people tend to say things gradually over a period of time.

An initial disclosure to you is often a young person’s way of testing your response. So remain calm, and respond with kindness and acceptance. Don’t challenge, confront, or criticise the information even if the information seems unlikely or there are obvious errors. Be prepared to think the unthinkable, if that is what the young person appears to be telling you.

- Listen to the young person and ask open questions only. For example, don’t question in a way that will introduce new words, phrases, or concepts into their minds, don’t “correct” or influence their information. Beware of asking leading questions (see below).
- It’s your role to listen to and support young people; it is the role of other agencies to carry out investigation should it be required.
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing by coming to you, that you believe them and that they are not in trouble.
- Remember sometimes accurate timescales or dates will be difficult to pin-point.
- Try to get the message across that talking is OK and any feelings they expresses, such as confusion, anger or sadness are normal. The young person’s recovery from their experiences largely depends on the sensitivity to the discloser and the support that is given.
- Gently explain to the young person that you cannot keep alleged abuse secret and what they have said needs to be shared by you with another trusted adult. But you respect their right to privacy and it will not be mentioned casually or with anyone who doesn’t need to know. As appropriate, honestly explain the consequences of sharing and not sharing the information. The exception to this is in the case that it might endanger the young person.
- It is good practice to obtain a young person’s consent before sharing information about them. Where they withhold consent, you need to consider if they are Fraser competent, that is, are they able to understand the consequences of their decision? You will need to consider in relation to the potential risk of harm to them or others. If in doubt, you should talk to the Safeguarding Lead or contact the MASH consultation line.

- Write down what the young person has told you in **their own words**. Doing so during the conversation can be reassuring for the young person that you have heard them, that what they have said is important, and you are taking it seriously. However there will be situations in which it is not appropriate. You will need to judge whether or not you can take detailed notes, whether it would be ok to make some brief notes of the main points or particular phrases. You could ask the young person whether they are ok with you using a phone to record your conversation to help you can write about it later.
- It is important to note down what was said to you as soon as possible, in the young person's own words or gestures where possible. Also note down what you said and the date and time. You could also describe their appearance factually, or any marked physical differences between how the young person usually looks.
- Separately, you should also describe their appearance factually, or any marked physical differences between how the young person usually looks and how they presented at the time. Injuries you can see, such as bruises, should be noted on a body outline (do not ask young people to remove clothes).

Staff and volunteers have a duty to immediately inform the Youth Council Manager or Safeguarding Officer of any issue related to child protection which comes to their notice. If you are unable to, or the child is in immediate danger, you need to report direct to MASH or the police. Anyone who makes a MASH referral will need to complete a contact form within 48 hours. Nobody is expected to handle problems by themselves.

- You also have a duty to maintain confidentiality. Think “need to know” basis – the minimum information is shared to keep young people safe.

## Consent from young people

The Children Act 1989 advises that everyone should seek and take seriously the views of young people.

However, it can be difficult to gain a child's consent to refer your concerns about them to MASH/Childrens' Social Services. This should not delay you in making a referral.

### A few don'ts

- Don't pressure young people to continue, ask them for more details than they are ready to give or ask them to repeat the same things over and over.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't question in a way that will introduce new words, phrases, or concepts into their minds,

don't "correct" or influence their information, for example by asking leading questions.

- Don't investigate by asking specific or leading questions or initiating further conversations with the young person or with other people; it is the role of other agencies to carry out investigation should it be required.
- Don't agree not to tell anyone else. (see The Youth Council's confidentiality policy)
- Don't promise "that everything will be alright". Instead be clear that the young person has done the right thing by telling you and that you will need to talk to the Youth Council Manager who will know who to ask for help.
- When you are making your written record, DO NOT try to explain what has happened beyond what was presented by the young person. Be aware that you must not be influenced by your own feelings or thoughts about what was said or any other evidence you have seen. This is important!

### So, what information will MASH or the police need to help them do their work?

#### Why you are making the referral

Be as clear as possible about your reason for the referral – if you have seen an injured child, include a description of any injuries that you have seen.

If you have been made aware of information by a child about an allegation, you need to record all discussions with the child or others. It is also useful to include details of any witnesses.

Include any relevant dates, times and places of alleged incidents.

It's important to be as precise as you can.

### So, what information will MASH or the police need to help them do their work?

**Click or tap each heading for more information.**

#### Personal details

- Full name and date of birth of the child, carers and any other family members
- Child's full address and telephone number
- Daytime address and contact numbers for parents or carers
- Child's ethnic origin, religion or culture (if known) – this can be very useful for various reasons (such as if there is a need for an interpreter)
- Remember to give as much information as you can, including a chronology

## Additional actions since the allegation

Are you aware of any actions that have been taken by any professional since the allegations were made by the child?

Is there any **immediate or impending** danger to the child? (What has the child described?)

If you are aware of any information in relation to **previous concerns** about the child, or relevant background information, you need to make sure you also provide this.

If the child or family previously were involved with Children's Social Care (and had a designated Social Worker), then state this on the form. If a previous referral has been made to MASH, then it's also worth mentioning this too.

If you have concerns about any child you are working with, first consult your Manager or your Designated Safeguarding Lead and discuss your concerns, then agree what will happen next. You, your Manager or your Designated Safeguarding Lead may decide to seek further advice from the MASH Consultation Line on 0345 155 1071.

## Disclosures or concerns about staff or volunteers at the youth club

This is difficult to talk about, but it is vital that we ensure that young people are safe. Any concern you have should be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead or Youth Council Manager. This includes minor worries. If you feel unable to discuss with someone from the team or Newton Abbot CIC you also have the option to contact the Devon County Council LADO. If you need to contact Devon's LADO, please consider all the guidance for organisations first. Their website states:

For **any** requests for advice, please complete the [notification form](#) or telephone [01392 384964](tel:01392384964) or email [childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk) for a notification form.

## What if the disclosure is about a colleague?

Local authorities have a designated officer, or team of officers (either as part of multi-agency arrangements or otherwise), who are involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children.

The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) will be a qualified Social Worker and provide advice and guidance to employers and organisations. Any allegation should be reported immediately to your Line Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (refer to your policy and procedures for further details). Your Line Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead should speak to the LADO or complete the LADO referral form.

## **‘Low level’ concerns**

We have seen the process around what to do about concerns which meet the criteria for further involvement, but what about those that do not meet these criteria?

**All** concerns about adults who work with children should be passed to the designated lead and all who work within your organisation should be aware of your responsibilities with regard to this.

Research suggests that concerns in this context should not be limited to safeguarding concerns but could be related to behaviour that does not meet professional standards as offenders often started with lesser boundary violations before graduating to abusing children.

Key to this is recording – such information should be retained centrally so that any patterns can be identified, however there are regulations around what can be recorded and who has access to this which have to be followed.

More information can be found in [Developing and implementing a low level concerns policy](#) (Farrer & Co. – 2020)

## Summary - What should you do if you have concerns or receive an allegation?

Make sure the children are safeguarded – do you need to speak to the Police / Social Care first about the children’s immediate safety?

Write down what has been said and record the circumstances in which the allegation was made.

Report the matter to the lead person in your organisation – if there is no lead then liaise direct with the LADO. Information the LADO will need includes names, dates of birth, addresses and any information about previous concerns.

As with any safeguarding referral, **do not:**

- ask leading questions.
- make assumptions.
- offer alternative explanations.
- promise confidentiality.

**Doing nothing is not an option**

### Contact information

Newton Abbot Youth Council Manger is: Alex Gurpinar

Ask for a confidential chat during session times or contact through Newton abbot youth council Facebook or Instagram social account or email address [youthcouncil@newtonabbotcic.org.uk](mailto:youthcouncil@newtonabbotcic.org.uk)

Newton Abbot Youth Council Designated Safeguarding Officer is: Carol Bunday

For Early Help - Phone 0345 155 1071 and ask for the Early Help Service. Out of hours phone number 0845 6000 388. This can be used by Designated Safeguarding leads for information, for referral or by parents who would like to seek help. Early Help can signpost to sources of further support and if necessary can refer to other services such as the Targeted Family Support Programme.

[earlyhelpsecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpsecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)

For Devon MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), in an emergency phone 0345 155 1071 and ask for MASH. PO Box 723, Exeter, EX1 9QS [mashsecure@devon.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gov.uk)

In the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer the information needs to be passed to the LADO.

Devon Local Area Designated Officer: 01392 384964 to be contacted in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer



[form - DCC Services Portal \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk)

NSPCC 24 hour National Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Children and Family Health Devon, including single access 03300245321

Integrated Children's Services, including the Early Response team: 01803 763500

Children and Families Team: 01392 384900 (care support for children with disabilities)

## Legislation and Guidance

Children Act 1989 & 2004, Education Act 2002, UN Rights of the Child  
Sexual Offences Act 2003, Equality Act 2010, Serious Crime Act 2015  
Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidelines 2018

## Youth Council Child Protection Procedure for the Safeguarding Officer (Group 5)

### Reference:

\*Information sharing flowchart

\*Threshold tool

\*Only if a Youth Council worker is involved, the Code of Conduct and LADO flowchart (below)

### Receiving information about a concern from another person

If a staff member or volunteer notices a cause for concern, or a young person tells them about something which has happened to them, they should have a conversation with you about this as soon as is practicable. You may also receive information from a member of the public.

- Before the conversation, ensure that it cannot be overheard.
- Stay calm.
- Be prepared to calm the person down and remind them of their training, if applicable.
- If a disclosure has taken place, find out how the young person is and where they are at the moment. Are they safe?
- Ask the person to write down the observation or conversation. If you use a Sensitive Data form it will prompt for necessary information.
- If the person had a prior relationship with or knowledge of any of the people who are involved in the situation this must also be noted down.
- Support the person to record **the exact words and gestures** of the young person. Ask them to sign and date the record when they finish.
- If applicable, do not discuss your own understanding about the situation.
- Once the written record is finished, thank the person, and let them know that they have done the right thing. You may need to arrange a follow up interview with them to offer further support.
- Remind the person of the Confidentiality Policy, if it is applicable to them. If they are a member of the public ask them to keep the sensitive information they know private.

## Summary - what should the lead person for safeguarding do?

**If in doubt notify the LADO using the notification form**

Confirm the children are safeguarded.

Obtain a written account from the person to whom the allegation was made, details of the child involved, the alleged perpetrator, potential witnesses and any decisions made with rationale.

Refer to the LADO within one working day of the allegation being made using notification form – this will form the basis of initial advice given by the LADO.

The fact that an allegation has been made and referred to the LADO should be recorded. The details of alleged perpetrator and allegation should NOT be recorded on the child's record.

As with any safeguarding referral, **do not:**

- Investigate the allegation
- Interview the child
- Interview the subject
- Interview potential witnesses.

### Acting on the information

- Use your training, and the Threshold Tool to make a decision about what further action is required. A copy of the Threshold Tool is with this Policy and spare copies of the checklist are available for use when making decisions. File checklists in the Sensitive Data folder with other notes on the case.
- Physical evidence, first hand witness information, and 'gut feelings' are different types of evidence and you need to differentiate between them. They can all count towards a decision to share information (Group 5 Safeguarding, VOYC, 2023).
- "If in doubt, MASH it" (Group 5 Safeguarding, VOYC, 2023).
- Share information in a manner that is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure. Whenever possible and safe to do so obtain consent from the young person / family. Keep a record of what organisations or individuals you have shared information with and why.
- In case of physical injury and where emergency medical treatment is necessary this should be arranged immediately. If abuse is suspected the Senior Youth Worker or Designated Safeguarding Officer should advise any attending medical staff. If the child or young person is in immediate danger phone 999.

In a situation where indicators are uncertain but not serious, the situation is fairly stable AND there is

no evidence of risk of immediate serious harm (Level 1 and Level 2), good practice would be:

- if appropriate and possible, talk to the young person and if possible obtain permission to discuss with parents/guardians. If the young person does not give permission you will need to let them know that you need to speak with their guardians anyway.
- Arrange a meeting with the parents or guardians as discreetly as possible (see the Confidentiality Policy for guidance)
- Support the parents to get in touch with Devon Early Help or other support, or obtain their permission to do so. Online support is available from, for example Kooth, Family Lives, Relate, themix.org, and Turn2Us. Young people over the age of 11 may be referred to a Space\* one-to-one worker. Turn2Us and Citizen's Advice Bureaux may be very helpful if specific advice is needed regarding income, benefits, housing or debt.
- Keep a record of the situation over time, including improvements.
- Where physical injury or neglect is suspected (Level2/3) but falls short of the need for emergency treatment:
  - Has consent to share information been obtained from the person who disclosed information, and if not, is it possible to do so? See the information sharing flowchart.
  - A conversation should be arranged with the parents or carers about the situation, **but see the exceptions below**. The adult that the young person originally disclosed to, or the Youth Work Manager, should quietly let the young person know that someone is going to speak with the parent/guardian.
- The designated Safeguarding Officer or Youth Work Manager will arrange a discussion with the parent or carer and as appropriate, it should be suggested that the parent or carer be supported to self-refer to the Early Help team, and/or seek medical attention, and/or seek support from other professionals, including those who might be already working with the family. The online support above may be appropriate, as may be the one-to-one worker through Space\*. Other sources of support to be considered may include Splitz (Devon Domestic Abuse Support Services), Young Devon and Teignbridge Council.
- If the parent/carer is unwilling to seek support, then you need to consider the best interests of the young person. If the Threshold tool is indicating Level 2/3 you should speak with an advisor at MASH. 0345 155 1071 or email [earlyhelpsecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelpsecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)
- If it is not an emergency but the Threshold Tool indicates needs at Level 3 or above, the situation may require the involvement of social care agencies, contact MASH via email or by phone. Phone 0345 155 1071 and ask for MASH or email [mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk) or out of hours phone 0845 6000 388.
  - The consent of the young person and their parent/s should be sought beforehand unless it is not safe to do so.
- If the child is at risk of harm or needs accommodation, it is an emergency and a MASH enquiry can be made by phone on the above numbers.
  - The young person's consent should be sought beforehand unless it is not safe to do so.
- It is good practice to inform parents that contact has been made to Early Help or MASH, but see the exceptions below:
  - In the case of deliberate injury where parents may be suspected.
  - In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse.
  - In the event of allegations or suspicions of FGM

- In these cases, contact should be made to MASH with no discussion with parent/guardians or anyone else.
- If the concern is an allegation involving a member of staff or volunteer, get in touch with the Local Area Designated Officer as set out in the Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedures. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/child-protection/managing-allegations-against-adults-working-with-children>

**Guidelines of information sharing** from <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/early-help/early-help-information-for-workers/a-guide-to-information-sharing/>

Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You **must still share information without consent if there is good reason to do so, such as where a child may be at risk**. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual still might not expect information to be shared.

Information when it is shared must be: necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure. Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

Keep a record of your decision and the reasons and justification for it. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

### **What happens next**

Emergency MASH enquiries by phone – the information will be passed to a manager who will get back to you within an hour. You will still be asked to fill in a form and email it back within 2 days.

It is good practice to give a factsheet to parents in the event that a MASH enquiry is raised. There are copies of the factsheet in the Child Protection folder.

A strategy meeting will follow a new MASH enquiry. Within 15 working days a decision will be made about whether the case is moved forward.

If you believe that the correct decision has not been made by statutory services, see the Youth Council's Professional Differences Escalation Policy, there is a copy in the Child Protection Folder. See <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/policies-and-procedures/case-resolution-protocol-and-escalation-procedures/>

### **References and statutory guidance**

Updated links for workers and Early Help details (recommended if seeking further information) <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/early-help/early-help-information-for-workers/>

The Children Act 1989 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>)

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/11>)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

<http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/writing-child-protection-policy.html>

About the Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-in-devon/>

Devon County: details on making a MASH enquiry for professionals <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/making-a-mash-contact/>

Inter-agency guide Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Care Act 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted/data.htm>

SEND code of practice 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

The Threshold Tool / Level of need <https://www.devonscp.org.uk/training-and-resources/levels-of-need/ion-framework/>

Training  
<https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/policies-and-procedures/>

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