



Wiltshire Service Users Network

Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

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A General Policy Statement

Wiltshire Service Users' Network (WSUN) has a legal duty to ensure that it functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Throughout this statement of policy and procedures, reference is made to "children and young people". This term is used to mean "those under the age of 18". WSUN recognises that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

The Management Committee is committed to ensuring that the organisation:

- Provides a safe environment for children and young people
- Identifies children and young people who are or appear to be at risk of harm, neglect or abuse
- Takes appropriate action to see that children and young people are kept safe from harm

In pursuit of these aims, the Management Committee will approve and annually review its child protection policy and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people.
- Providing procedures for reporting concerns
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- The safe recruitment of staff

The organisation has nominated the Chief Executive Officer (Louise Rendle) as lead person with special responsibility for child protection issues. They will undertake appropriate training as required by the Management Committee.

Staff working with children will receive appropriate training to familiarise them with child protection issues and their responsibilities to comply with organisation's procedures for the protection of children, with refresher training at least every 3 years.

The Management Committee will receive from the designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection an annual update.

Looked After Children

All staff are committed to doing all they can to help to enable "looked after" children and young people to achieve and reach their full potential through the support we offer.

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken into the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.

The Nature of Child Abuse

Abuse is always characterised by the maltreatment of a child. Abuse can be physical or psychological/emotional. Neglect is also a form of abuse that exposes a child to directly or indirectly to harm. Failing to act to prevent harm is also a form of neglect. Children may be abused within their family or by people they know in connection with their family. They can also be abused in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

The Management Committee recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

i) Emotional abuse

All child abuse will contain elements of emotional or psychological abuse. This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause continuing adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over-control, preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying through social media), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Abuse through social media can be emotionally debilitating to young victims and often takes the form of intimidation (cyber-bullying) of young people to respond or perform an act for the gratification of others. Cyber-bullying often includes inducing young people to share information or photos that can humiliate young people and, in some cases, lead to physical or sexual abuse.

Children and young people can be direct victims/survivors of coercive control and they can experience it in much the same ways as adults do – feeling confused and afraid, living constrained lives, and being entrapped and harmed by the perpetrator. Coercive control can harm children and young people emotionally/psychologically, physically, socially, and educationally.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-statutory-guidance-framework/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-statutory-guidance-framework-accessible>

ii) Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

iii) Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse related to cultural norms (such as Female Genital Mutilation - [Female genital mutilation \(FGM\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)) is a form of physical abuse to children. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. (Munchausen by proxy syndrome (MBPS))

iv) Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Abusive activities may involve physical contact but may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or producing, sexual images. Abusive interactions encourage children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways by "grooming" a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

v) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse of children and young people under 18 and involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'Something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. CSE can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main

by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

vi) Radicalisation

Radicalisation can involve extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences which can lead to poor outcomes for children and young people. Children can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which originate from a variety of sources and media, including via the internet. There may be times when children may reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language.

The Governments Prevent agenda covers this and sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs, and physical and sexual exploitation. The duty helps to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are supported as they would be under safeguarding processes.

[Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101422/prevent-duty-guidance-guidance-for-specified-authorities-in-england-and-wales.pdf)
[Gangs – A Safeguarding Response - Safeguarding Hub](#)

vii) Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in County Lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

This is not an exhaustive list. We need to be mindful that abuse may happen face to face or through other channels such as social media and the internet.

B Designated Staff with Responsibility for Safeguarding

The designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection issues is the Chief Executive Officer.

The CEO has the lead responsibility for raising and maintaining awareness within the organisation of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for children and young people.

The CEO has received appropriate training and will keep up to date with developments in child protection issues. They will also have responsibility for ensuring that new staff and volunteers are aware of the existing safeguarding policy.

The CEO will be the main contact point for arising issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available. In the event of the CEO being absent, the Management Committee Chair or the Management Committee nominated safeguarding lead will deputise.

C Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns

If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible abuse, the staff member must:

- listen carefully and stay calm.
- reassure the child that by telling the child has done the right thing.
- note the main points carefully.
- make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and any questions you asked.
- inform the child that the information must be shared with other responsible adults, but that only those that need to know about it will be told.
- tell the child who needs to be told.

Staff members must not:

- interview the child, but only question the child using open ended questions and without pressure to achieve clarity in what the child is telling you.
- lead the child in the answers that they may give.
- investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the CEO.

When abuse is disclosed or suspected staff should make contact with the CEO (safeguarding lead) or the chair of the Network who will then contact the Wiltshire Council Safeguarding Team to request advice about appropriate action. The Safeguarding lead or the Chair and the worker will discuss will happen next.

If it is believed that a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm or injury, or you believe a criminal offence has been committed, call the police on 999.

The CEO/Chair will contact the Local Authority to report the concern and seek advice:

Wiltshire:

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

Tel: 0300 456 0108.

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service: 0300 456 0100 (5.30pm - 9.00am).

Bath and North East Somerset:

Children's Social Work Services on 01225 39 61 11 or

01225 47 79 29 (weekdays, 8.30am to 5pm, except Fridays when we're closed from 4.30pm)

For urgent out of hours assistance call the Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team 01454 615165.

In the event that the Safeguarding Lead or the Chair is unavailable, the worker will contact the appropriate agency themselves immediately and within the same working day as the disclosure. The information that will be needed includes - why the worker is concerned, the details of the child or young person, if they're getting help from any organisation, and who may be carrying out the abuse. The worker will inform a manager of their action as soon as possible.

Brief, factual information about disclosures or events that are causing concern must be recorded as soon as possible. These must be confidential to workers and the appropriate outside agency involved. The WSUN Safeguarding Lead is the Chief Executive who should be informed of the action.

Volunteers should be informed of this policy. They will be expected to follow the same steps.

D. Regulated Activity and obtaining Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, an individual working unsupervised with children is considered to be engaged in regulated Activity and must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which will involve a check of the children's barred list, in order to perform their duties.

An individual working in a directly and permanently supervised position is not considered to be engaged in regulated activity but must still have an enhanced DBS disclosure check.

Note that applications for a DBS enhanced check can only be submitted where the applicant is aged 16 or over at the time of making the application.

E. Duty to refer to the DBS (Now Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS))

The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 both make it mandatory to refer anyone known to pose a threat of harm to a child or vulnerable people to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This means that the designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding must not knowingly employ anyone who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults; this includes anyone who is believed to have committed a relevant offence while at work or who has a record of such conduct.

The organisation has a legal duty to refer an employee or volunteer who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults to the DBS, failure to do so can result in a fine and/or up to 5 years' imprisonment. There must be sufficient and solid evidence that the employee or volunteer poses a risk of harm before they can be referred to the DBS. The DBS will not consider evidence based on rumour or unsubstantiated reports. The employer should also inform the police and other relevant authorities if they believe a breach has occurred.

Referral forms can be downloaded from the government website.

[Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

F. Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff.

The procedures apply to all staff, management committee and volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

Because of their frequent contact with children and young people, staff may have allegations of child abuse made against them. Wiltshire Service Users' Network recognises that an allegation of child abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation

may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and those investigations are thorough, comprehensive and not subject to delay.

The Organisation recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

G. Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Wiltshire Service Users' Network has established recruitment and selection procedures. These have been reviewed in order to ensure that they take account of the following:

- They apply to staff and volunteers who may work with children.
- The post or role is clearly defined.
- The key selection criteria for the post or role are identified.
- Vacancies should be advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- Professional and character references are always required.
- Previous employment history is verified.
- Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure/List 99 checks are completed
- The use of a variety of selection techniques (e.g. qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).

Further information, including the Local Authority Safeguarding policies and procedures can be found on the South West Child Protection Procedures website.

[Welcome to the South West Child Protection Procedures \(trixonline.co.uk\)](http://trixonline.co.uk)