



Services for Children, Families and Wellbeing

CHILDREN IN CARE /Children's Homes

Child Protection

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CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE

Service Policy

- 1) Trafford Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection/Child in Need Procedures apply to all residential staff working with look children in care living at the Children's Homes.
- 2) The Procedures are applicable to all settings where there may be child protection issues.
- 3) The following guides are aimed at making the Procedures effective in Children's Homes. Staff should use these guides in conjunction with the Trafford Safeguarding Board Child Protection Child in Need Procedures.
- 4) This Guide should be held in all Children's Homes.
- 5) Managers and the Training Section should ensure all staff in Children's Homes are provided with Safeguarding and Child Protection training.

Introduction

- 1) The Children Act 2004 required each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Trafford LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organizations in Trafford will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the locality, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they each do.
- 2) All children living in Children's homes are entitled to the same standard of care and protection from harm as they would receive from any reasonable parent
- 3) All allegations of abuse of children by professionals, staff member or any other person will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with the Child Protection Child in Need Procedures
- 4) The Children Act Legislation places a specific duty on agencies to co-operate in the interests of children in need of protection.
- 5) When information suggests a child is or may be suffering significant harm a Core Assessment should always be completed.

Concept of Significant Harm

Ill treatment (including sexual and emotional abuse) or impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral).

Where the question of whether the harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

General Principles

- 1) The welfare of the child is paramount and the child's welfare will be safeguarded and protected at all times.
- 2) Children Act legislation and guidance will be adhered to at all times.
- 3) The home will work together with other agencies appropriate to the welfare of the child.
- 4) A child will be seen within his / her full range of needs and not merely as an object of concern.
- 5) No worker is to work alone or in isolation regarding child protection issues or investigation.
- 6) Recordings of any child protection matters must be clear and accurate in matters of fact and non-judgmental. Within the children's home a separate book is to be available to record child protection matters.
- 7) Confidentiality must be observed and sensitive matters of child protection should be shared on a need to know basis.

Recognition of Child Abuse

- 1) Child abuse encompasses a wide range of possible activities including physically inflicted injuries accidental through parental neglect and physical abuse without visible indicators.
- 2) Abuse to children is not always as obvious as a bruise or slap mark.
- 3) Child abuse is a rejection of the child by those who care for that child and this can manifest itself in different ways.
- 4) It is important that all residential staff working in children's homes are aware of the indicators of abuse.
- 5) All staff must be aware of the risk of sexual exploitation and actively promote safety when working with vulnerable young people
- 6) It is important that all staff working in children's homes are offered appropriate training in child protection.

Action to be taken by residential staff who suspect child abuse

- 1) Any member of staff (including ancillary) that suspects a child has been subjected to harm should immediately discuss their concern with the Registered Manager of the home or Senior Assistant in their absence.
- 2) Staff working at the home should be fully aware of the LSCB Procedures and be provided with appropriate training.
- 3) The child's Social Worker should be informed specifying the exact nature of any concern and what evidence there may be to support the concern. This information should be recorded at the home in the relevant Log Books

- 4) The Manager of the home must contact the Trafford LADO regarding all child protection concerns.
- 5) Residential staff will work in partnership with other services to achieve the best service to the child with the interests of the child as the first and foremost consideration. This may include participation in formal protection systems such as Case Conferences, Criminal Proceedings, and on-going Core Group participation in the Child Protection Plan.
- 6) Residential staff must be informed that any investigation of child sexual abuse and serious physical abuse must only be carried out by those social workers and police officers specifically trained according to the Practice, Home Office and Department of Health 1992. Any member of staff working at the home would **not** undertake this.
- 7) Residential staff will be expected to attend and contribute Case Conferences when appropriate.

Professional Abuse

- 1) A professional relationship is defined as the involvement of any person acting on behalf of an agency in a position of trust in relationship to the child, young person or family
- 2) This policy applies to paid employees including those working in children's homes.
- 3) The LSCB expects each agency to appoint a Senior Manager as its lead for all referrals of possible abuse by its employees. The Designated Professional for children's homes is the Head of Children's Services (if necessary through EDT).
- 4) Any investigation of an allegation or suspicion of abuse by a professional involves three related but independent strands:-
 - i) The child protection enquirers
 - ii) A police investigation into possible criminal offence
 - iii) Disciplinary procedures, where it appears that the allegation may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct on the part of the staff.
- 5) It is essential that the common facts of the alleged abuse are applied independently in each strand of the investigation. The fact that a prosecution is not possible does not mean that action in relation to safeguarding children or employee discipline is not necessary or feasible.

Recognition

All staff working in children's homes must be alert to the possibility that a child might be harmed by a professional colleague.

Referral

When an allegation has been made or it is suspected that an employee has harmed or ill treated a child, the Senior Nominated Officer must be notified immediately, even if it is out of office hours. Often the referral is discussed with the manager of the home who will report immediately to the Senior Nominated Officer. If he/she is not available another Senior Manager must be informed and take the following action:

- 1) The referrer, usually the manager of the home, should record the time, place and details of the allegation or suspicion and give these to the Senior Nominated Officer. The allegation may refer to a current situation or to a historical situation.
- 2) The manager of the home should seek advice from the Child Protection Officer and should not carry out further investigation without advice.
- 3) Care should be taken to reassure the child that they are right to report the matter and that they are not to blame for the alleged incident. The child should be advised that their statements will be taken seriously but cannot be kept confidential, as it may be necessary to report the matter to another professional for the matters to be investigated.
- 4) The child should be informed of the process and offered the support of a trusted adult.
- 5) The child must not be interviewed by staff on duty, if the child needs to be formally interviewed this will be conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Good Practice and the Criminal Justice Act 1991.
- 6) The member of staff against whom an allegation has been made must not be informed at this stage.

Initial Response

- 1) If the Senior Nominated Officer is of the opinion that a child may have been or may be in the future significantly harmed based on the information given in the referral, then they must make a referral to the Safeguarding Unit and the Public Protection Investigation Unit (PPIU).
- 2) The relevant Service Manager in consultation with the team manager should ensure the child's immediate safety and that of other relevant children if appropriate.

Process

- 1) The member of staff against an allegation has been made is usually suspended from work until such time that the child protection enquiries are completed.
- 2) Each child protection enquiry should be carried out according to the set out in the strategy meeting and in accordance with the LSCB Procedures.

Working with Sexually Active Young People Under the Age of 16

Refer to Trafford Safeguarding Procedures Part B

Protocol for responding to children involved in prostitution

The following guidance is based on protocol jointly published by the Home Office and Department of Health:

- 1) Recognise the problem
- 2) Treat the child primarily as a victim of abuse
- 3) Safeguard the children involved and promote their welfare
- 4) Provide children with strategies to leave prostitution
- 5) Investigate and prosecute those who coerce, exploit and abuse children

When working with children involved in prostitution it is important that a multi-disciplinary approach is adopted and an open exchange of information, co-ordinated action and provision of services is encouraged between the Police, Social Services, Health, Education and the voluntary agencies.

Unclear Situations

Some situations are unclear and staff are advised to inform the Manager or Senior Assistant within the home, the Safeguarding Unit, the Duty and Investigation Team or out of hours Emergency Duty Team.

Training

Managers are to ensure that all staff working in children's homes have access to appropriate child protection training.