



<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - Child Protection Policy &amp; Procedures</b>
<b>LENGTH OF DOCUMENT:</b>	<b>33 pages</b>

## NOTES

- Note 1:** In this procedures document, the phrase “member of staff” is used to mean both paid employed workers and volunteers who work for Active Communities Network. These procedures are mandatory for all members of staff.
- Note 2:** This document recognises that the majority of direct work undertaken by Active Communities Network Limited (A.C.N.) relates to young people, though there may be contact with younger children – e.g. siblings. The language of child protection uses the term “child/ren”. This document uses both interchangeably. Where either “children” or “young people” are used in the text, both are meant.
- Note 3:** These procedures exist alongside the Code of Conduct for adults working with young people and it is important that they are read and understood together. Always carry the Code of Conduct with you to remind you of A. C.N. policy and of A.C.N. expectations of you.

## Index

Paragraphs		Page
1- 3	<b>Section 1 Policy statement</b>	3
4-7	The Children's Acts <i>Safeguarding and child protection procedures</i>	3-4
8-87	<b>Section 2 Safeguarding and child protection procedures</b>	4-19
8-17	Role of Active Communities Network	4-5
18-22	Working in partnership	5-6
23-24	Purpose of child protection procedures	6
25-35	Definitions of abuse	6-9
36-55	The impact of abuse and neglect	9-11
56-63	Recognition of child abuse	11-13
64-68	Responsibility to report concerns	13-14
69-72	Lines of reporting	14
	Flow chart for a project worker reporting a child protection concern	15
73	Role of the Project Child Protection Officer	16
74	Role of the Child Protection Advisor	16
75	Role of Prevention Services Management Team	16
76	Role of the Lead Child Protection Officer	16-17
77-81	Recording information	17-18
82-85	Issues of confidentiality	18
86-87	Enquiry process – flow diagram	18-19
88-90	<b>Section 3 Guidelines for responding to an allegation of abuse</b>	20
91-94	A child or young person discloses an abusive act or experience to you	20-21
95-97	Responding to allegations of abuse, inappropriate or dangerous behaviour made against a member of staff or volunteer	21
98	An allegation against another young person or peer of the child or young person	21-22
99-104	If the young person is a risk to children or another young person	22-23
105	<b>Conclusion</b>	23
Appendix 1	Useful references, resources and recommended legislation & guidance	24-27
Appendix 2	Indicators of abuse	28-30
Appendix 3	Website, online and mobile safety	31
Appendix 4	Safeguarding Children and Young People - Child Protection Policy and Procedures	32
Appendix 5	Sample for Reporting and Recording Crimes	33

## SECTION 1

### Policy statement

1. Active Communities Network Limited (A.C.N.) aims:

TO PROMOTE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INHABITANTS OF LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST OF ENGLAND (THE "AREA OF BENEFIT") WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, MARITAL OR CIVIL PARTNER STATUS, PREGNANCY OR MATERNITY, GENDER REASSIGNMENT, RACE, COLOUR, NATIONALITY, ETHNIC OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, POLITICAL OR SIMILAR BELIEFS RELIGION OR BELIEF, DISABILITY OR AGE, BY ASSOCIATING TOGETHER THE SAID INHABITANTS AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, VOLUNTARY AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS IN A COMMON EFFORT TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION AND TO PROVIDE FACILITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR RECREATION AND OTHER LEISURE TIME OCCUPATIONS WITH THE OBJECTS OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE SAID INHABITANTS AND WITH THE VIEW OF REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION AND BUILDING COMMUNITY COHESION.

2. The development and implementation of these procedures are to be seen as an integral part of A.C.N.'s determination to provide high quality responsive services that meet our partners' and clients' needs.
3. A.C.N.'s approach to safeguarding and child protection is based on the principles recognised in UK legislation and in international agreements<sup>1</sup>. The welfare and protection of children is paramount whatever the circumstances. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partner status, and sexual orientation (the protected characteristics) have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse. We recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents, carers and other agencies

#### 4. The Children Acts (1989 and 2004)

- Promote the need to take account of the wishes of young people in accordance with their age and understanding.
- Define a child as being a person under the age of 18 years - these procedures thus apply to all young people under the age of 18 years.
- Places a duty on local authorities to "advise, assist and befriend" those who are under 21 years old and who, between the ages of 16 and 18, were looked after or accommodated.

5. The fact that a child is 16, living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or young offenders institution

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<sup>1</sup> The Children Act 1989, The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, The Children (Scotland) Act 1995, The Children Act 2004, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – ratified by the UK Government 1991, The Human Rights Act 1998, The Data Protection Act 1984 and 1998

does not change their status or their entitlement to services under the Children Act 1989.

6. It is important to recognise that A.C.N.'s staff are likely to work with young people who may be older than 18 years, but who are nonetheless vulnerable, and who may be (or have been) subject to abuse. This includes young people with mental health difficulties and disabled young people as well as those involved in illegal activities or who may be exhibiting challenging behaviour.
7. Any reports of abuse should be taken seriously and these procedures followed.

## **SECTION 2**

### **Safeguarding and child protection procedures**

#### ***Role of Active Communities Network Limited***

8. A.C.N. recognises that its' staff are not, and are not expected to be, specialists in working in child protection. However, these procedures form part of a wider initiative which aims to ensure that all organisations and individual members of the public are aware of the existence of child abuse and the impact it can have on the lives of children and young people.
9. Every Child Matters: Change for Children (HM Govt 2004) and Safeguarding Children: working together for positive outcomes (Welsh Assembly Govt 2004) promote a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19.
10. The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to achieve their full potential. These government frameworks include an outcome that children should be able to stay safe, live in a safe environment and be protected from harm.
11. This means that the organisations involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups – are teaming up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.
12. Staying safe is about helping address bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour, and protecting children who are at risk of abuse and neglect.
13. Such an approach is consistent with the organisational values and responsibilities of A.C.N. There is a responsibility on both organisations and individuals who work, directly and indirectly, with children and young people to safeguard and promote their welfare. Paramount within this is the need for protection from abuse.
14. A.C.N., particularly bearing in mind its organisational identity and approach to working with young people, aims to support and contribute to this wider initiative as much as possible.

#### ***Objectives***

15. In all its work, A.C.N. strives to ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential in order that they avoid the experience of disadvantage and social exclusion in adulthood. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined<sup>2</sup> as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

16. **Child Protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. A.C.N. stresses the importance of enabling children and young people to:

- Be as physically and mentally healthy as possible;
- Gain the maximum benefit possible from good-quality educational opportunities;
- Live in a safe environment and be protected from harm;
- Experience emotional well-being;
- Feel loved and valued, and be supported by a network of reliable and affectionate relationships;
- Become competent in looking after themselves and coping with everyday living;
- Have a positive image of themselves, and a secure sense of identity, including cultural and racial identity;
- Develop good interpersonal skills and confidence in social situations

17. All of the above may be irreparably damaged by abuse. In the context of A.C.N.'s work, it is important to note that the impact of abuse may lead to different forms of anti-social behaviour, including drug misuse, violence, prostitution and hate crime.

### ***Working in partnership***

18. All organisations need to work in partnership in order to effectively safeguard children and young people. Such partnerships depend crucially upon developing effective information sharing and understanding between voluntary organisations, and those agencies, such as Children's Social Care, which have statutory duties relating to child abuse.

19. The concept of partnership also involves working with parents wherever appropriate and, importantly, listening to what children and young people have to say.

20. A.C.N. frequently carries out its work with young people jointly with other organisations, agencies and individuals who may be contracted to provide particular services. It should be made clear that A.C.N. expects its child

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<sup>2</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government March 2015)

protection procedures to be followed by such contracted parties, except where there is an agreement to follow the procedures of the other party (e.g. if A.C.N. is working with a school, it can be mutually agreed to follow the child protection procedures of the school).

21. A.C.N. also acknowledges that the process of recognising and acting upon suspicions or disclosures of abuse is complex and anxiety provoking and it is important to stress that early professional consultation may be helpful for any staff member who becomes involved. More details on who can provide this support, both internal and external to A.C.N., is set out later in this policy.

22. These procedures should be used when you have any cause for concern that a child or young person is being, is suspected of being, or has been in the past, subject to abuse.

### **23. Purpose of protection procedures**

- To ensure that all children and young people who are receiving services from A.C.N. or who are in contact with the organisation for any reason are protected from all forms of abuse.
- To acknowledge that all staff members of A.C.N. have a responsibility to act where there is cause for concern about children's safety and well being.
- To promote best practice and a positive organisational culture which encourages the promotion of the welfare of children and young people and ensures their safety.
- To ensure A.C.N. encourages working together with children, young people, their parents, guardians, carers, and advocates as much as possible, in situations where there is cause for concern.
- To provide all members of staff with mandatory procedures they should adopt in any situation where there is cause to be concerned that a child or young person has experienced or is at risk of some form of abuse.

24. These procedures will also:

- Be compatible with other A.C.N. policies e.g. employment of ex-offenders as staff, equal opportunities policy, Disclosure and Barring Service policy, disciplinary policy and procedure, Positive Handling Policy etc.;
- Clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of A.C.N. and other agencies, especially those with statutory responsibility in relation to child abuse;
- Promote awareness that the young people who are in contact with A.C.N. may have experienced a range of types of abuse and that this may have had significant impact on their current behaviour.

### **Definitions of abuse**

25. It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government March 2010) and *Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004* (National Assembly for Wales 2005).

26. These categories of abuse are those generally used by Children's Social Care Departments, the NSPCC and the Police.

## Physical abuse

27. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.<sup>3</sup>

## Emotional abuse

28. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or 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), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.<sup>4</sup> (N.B. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 section 120 extended the definition of significant harm so that actually witnessing violence may constitute harm).

## Sexual abuse

29. 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. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g., rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.<sup>5</sup>

## Neglect

30. 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 occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal

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<sup>3</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government March 2015)

<sup>4</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government March 2015)

<sup>5</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government March 2015)

substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food and 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 adequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.<sup>6</sup>

31. In addition to the official categories of abuse, A.C.N. recognises that safeguarding young people also needs to be considered in relation to oppressive behaviour. It should be remembered that expressions of oppressive behaviour, such as racism, can take the form of physical, emotional or even sexual abuse and, in institutional settings, can also be linked with neglect. Bullying, whether based on cultural difference, gender, sexuality, disability or other factors (such as physical size) can constitute abuse perpetrated by members of a young person's peer group. A.C.N. commitment to eradicating hate crime and gang violence are also important in this context.

### **Complex (Organised or Multiple) Abuse**

32. Complex (organised or multiple) abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to gain access to children for abuse. Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. Complex abuse includes sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse. The culture of an organisation is crucial in addressing any form of institutional abuse. The values, attitudes and practice can either challenge or collude with abuse by an individual or group of workers.

33. It is important for A.C.N. staff to recognise that young people they are working with may have experienced complex abuse within an institution or organisation they are or were having contact with. The dynamics of complex abuse can be intensified by factors of social and geographical isolation, unequal power relationships and strong pressure to maintain secrecy. Such abuse is extremely damaging to the child or young person and it must be recognised that abusers may deliberately target organisations, which care for children, or provide services to young people.

### **Secondary abuse**

34. This description refers to what happens when abuse has been recognised and the response to the child or young person by a member of staff or an

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<sup>6</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government March 2015)

organisation is, of itself, abusive or in some way compounds the previous experience of abuse. Following these procedures will help ensure that best practice is adhered to and the child's experience of disclosing abuse is a positive one.

35. All forms of abuse have extremely serious effects on young people and the next section looks at this in more detail.

### **The impact of abuse and neglect**

36. A.C.N. is likely to be working with significant numbers of young people who are being or who have been in the past subject to abuse. Such young people may be currently exhibiting difficult or challenging behaviour (for example, criminal or violent behaviour). It is important to remember that current or past abuse can contribute to such behaviour and this possibility should always be recognised.

37. Sustained abuse, whether physical, emotional or sexual can have major long term effects on all aspects of a young person's health, development and well-being. There is likely to be a deep and lasting impact on self-image and self-esteem. Difficulties may be apparent with, for example, forming and sustaining relationships, including with their own children, and with maintaining employment. It is important to recognise that the negative impact of emotional abuse (for example from within the family) on a young person's self-esteem can also be compounded if the child is also experiencing prejudice or discrimination.

38. The impact of emotional abuse and neglect have tended to be relatively overlooked but it is now generally recognised that sustained emotional abuse and neglect have extremely deep and long lasting effects.

39. Child abuse affects children in various ways. It can have short-term and long-term effects. Individual children will react differently to abusive behaviour due to a variety of factors including:

- The age and developmental stage of a child;
- The context in which the abuse happened;
- The frequency of the abusive behaviour;
- The nature of the adult/child relationships;
- The support and treatment which the child and his/her family received post abuse;
- The impact of interventions;
- The way in which professionals respond.

40. Here are some examples of the different effects which child abuse can cause:

- Temporary or permanent disability;
- Educational problems e.g. difficulty concentrating, under-achieving;
- Behavioural problems, e.g. aggression or withdrawal;
- Developmental delays e.g. not achieving anticipated milestones;
- Drug and alcohol problems;

- Mental ill health e.g. depression, suicide, self-harming;
- Difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships;
- Difficulties in parenting own children safely and appropriately;
- In extreme cases, death following abuse.

### **Physical abuse**

41. Physical abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or, at the extreme, death.
42. Harm may be caused to children both by the abuse itself and by the abuse taking place in a wider family or institutional context of conflict and aggression, including inappropriate or inexpert use of physical restraint.
43. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour in children, emotional and behavioural problems and educational difficulties. Violence is pervasive and the physical abuse of children frequently coexists with domestic violence.

### **Emotional abuse**

44. Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy.
45. Underlying emotional abuse may be as important, if not more so, than other more visible forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child. Domestic violence is abusive in itself. Adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse.

### **Sexual abuse**

46. Disturbed behaviour – including self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, depression and a loss of self-esteem – have all been linked to sexual abuse.
47. Its adverse effects may endure into adulthood. The severity of impact on a child is believed to increase the longer the abuse continues, the more extensive the abuse, and the older the child.
48. A number of features of sexual abuse have also been linked with severity of impact, including the relationship of the abuser to the child, the extent of premeditation, the degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements.
49. A child's ability to cope with the experience of sexual abuse, once recognised or disclosed, is strengthened by the support of a non-abusive adult carer who believes the child, helps the child understand the abuse, and is able to offer help and protection.

50. The reactions of practitioners also have an impact on the child's ability to cope with what has happened, and his or her feelings of self worth. (See also *Child Sexual Abuse: Informing Practice from Research*, 1999).
51. A proportion of adults who sexually abuse children have themselves been sexually abused as children. They may also have been exposed as children to domestic violence and discontinuity of care. However, it would be quite wrong to suggest that most children who are sexually abused inevitably go on to become abusers themselves.

## **Neglect**

52. Severe neglect of young children has an adverse effect on children's ability to form attachments and is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development.
53. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress.
54. Neglected children may also experience low self-esteem, feelings of being unloved and isolated.
55. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death. The impact of neglect varies depending on how long children have been neglected, the children's age, and the multiplicity of neglectful behaviours children have been experiencing.

## **Recognition of child abuse**

56. As somebody who works with children and young people you may become concerned that one of them is being, or has been, abused. Abuse can occur through the infliction of harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, including extended family, or in an institutional or community setting by those known to the child and trusted by him/her. More rarely, a stranger is responsible. They may be abused by a lone adult, by a number of people or by their peers. Though they may have severe long-term consequences, emotional abuse and neglect are often the hardest to recognise. It is important to recognise that some children and young people develop an apparent level of resilience, in that they seem able to cope with what is happening to them - this does not make their abuse acceptable and there may be unforeseeable future consequences.
57. A concern may come to your notice through a number of ways:
- A young person may communicate directly about the abuse s/he has experienced or is currently experiencing. S/he may have chosen to tell you quite deliberately as an adult s/he trusts;
  - A third party, perhaps another young person, family member or colleague shares their concerns with you; or

- You may become concerned through your own observations - you may notice one (or more) of the following and become concerned. Remember that recognition of child abuse does not usually involve a one-off event, but rather becomes apparent over a period of time. It may be an accumulation of concerns which, when looked at together, suggest a pattern of abuse.

### **Injuries**

- A bruise or injury which is unusual e.g. on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- Injuries which require but have not received medical attention;
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- Repetitive injuries.

### **Behaviour or symptoms**

- Unexplained changes in behaviour, either over a period of time or suddenly;
- Aggressive or violent behaviour, including verbal aggression;
- Quiet, withdrawn behaviour which may indicate tiredness and/or depression;
- Running away or non-attendance at projects or activities;
- Involvement in prostitution;
- A child being the subject of an allegation made by another person;
- A child appearing not to trust or being wary of certain people, especially where there was a previous good relationship;
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge and/or sexually inappropriate behaviour; such as excessive or public masturbation
- Pregnancy;
- Sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Emotional & social**

- A child being unable to make friends or discouraged from socialising with others;
- A child having impaired development;
- A child becoming unusually dirty or unkempt;
- Changes to eating patterns or fluctuations in weight;
- Disturbed sleeping pattern e.g. nightmares, bedwetting;
- Self-harm or attempts to self-harm;
- A child has not been seen for a period of time or there are regular unexplained absences.

58. Many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time in their lives for reasons other than the occurrence of abuse. For example, a death in the family (including that of a well-loved pet), parental separation, the birth of a sibling, the illness or disability of a parent can occasion physical or emotional changes in a child or young person and affect their behaviour.

59. These lists are not exhaustive, and there may be other behaviours, which indicate unhappiness and stress. If you think there is something wrong and you do not know the reason/s why, then you should always consider the possibility of abuse.
60. Sometimes all you have to go on is an uneasy feeling that something is not quite right and you may find it impossible to describe the reasons why. In such a situation, it is important to check out your feelings and concerns with your Line Manager or designated Child Protection Officer as very often such feelings may be communicating something important.
61. Forms of oppression such as racism or discrimination based on sexuality or disability, and which may be prevalent amongst peers in the school setting or in the street, can also impact on a child's or young person's behaviour. Some behaviour (e.g. obsessional hand washing) may be indicators of abuse or they may be connected to a particular form of disability, such as autism.
62. It is important to give careful consideration to all of the available information and factors involved. Try and always establish the context of particular incidents and avoid making judgements on the basis of stereotypes.
63. It is always a good idea to consult if you have any reason to be concerned, even if you do not think that child abuse is occurring or has occurred. There may be other reasons why the welfare of the child is not being promoted and it may be that some action is still required.

### **Responsibility to report concerns**

64. It is not the responsibility of A.C.N. to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. It is the responsibility of staff at A.C.N. to act if there is cause for concern, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect a child.

65. In other words, staff at A.C.N. **do not** investigate.

**You do**, however, need to make the judgement "***if this incident or situation were true, is this cause for concern?***"

**You do not** make the judgement as to whether the allegation is true or not.

**You do not** make a decision as to whether this child or young person should be believed.

If you consider that there is cause for concern, then your responsibility is to **consult, report, record**.

66. Any disclosure, suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to a designated Child Protection Officer in A.C.N. as soon as possible. It should be remembered that there may be siblings or other children or young people who are also at risk.

67. **You should offer appropriate support to the young person** but avoid any direct questioning. It is important to recognise that you may not be the most appropriate source of support, but you may be able to help the young person identify other forms of support (for example, a specialist therapist).
68. Recording is also important in situations where there are ongoing concerns for example, about the health of a young person. Such recording may illustrate a pattern or indication of possible abuse.

### **Lines of reporting**

69. The person to whom project-based A.C.N. staff should report any cause for concern is the project Child Protection Officer and all staff within that project should normally report any concerns to that person.
70. Staff in other parts of the organisation should report child protection concerns to the Lead Child Protection Officer.
71. ***In the event of the cause for concern being about another member of staff***, concerns about the young person should be reported to the Project Child Protection Officer. Concerns about another member of staff should be reported to the line manager.
72. **The only exception** is where the Project Manager or Child Protection Officer is him/herself implicated in the cause for concern. In this situation, the member of staff must contact the person who manages the member of staff who is cause for concern.



**73. Role of project Child Protection Officer**

- To receive reports of concern from members of staff in project and report these concerns to the Lead Child Protection Officer.
- To refer as quickly as is appropriate to Children's Social Care, Police, or NSPCC.
- To disseminate knowledge and understanding of procedures and own role throughout the project.
- In the case of concern about a A.C.N. staff member, to take the following steps - (1) to refer the young person as appropriate to Children's Social Care, Police, NSPCC and - (2) to refer the matter of the staff member to the staff member's line manager.
- To liaise with the Lead Child Protection Officer and the appropriate members of Prevention Services Management Team in order to inform of the existence of child protection concerns (**excluding** personal information re: the young person) or incidents.
- To liaise with the designated Child Protection Advisor when support and guidance is required.
- To liaise with other relevant agencies and ensure own knowledge and understanding is up to date and comprehensive.
- To ensure that the young person is receiving appropriate support whether or not a referral is made to Children's Social Care, Police or NSPCC. If a decision is made not to refer, to ensure that other relevant options are pursued e.g. possible use of Complaints Procedure.

**74. Role of the Child Protection Advisor**

- To act as a source of advice and guidance for the Project Child Protection Officers.
- To ensure own knowledge and understanding is up to date and comprehensive.

**75. Role of Prevention Services Management Team**

- To ensure that every project has a named and trained Child Protection Officer.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate Child Protection Training.
- In the case of concern about a young person or member of staff to ensure that the Project Child Protection Officer has fully carried out their role.
- To consider whether any disciplinary action is necessary in line with A.C.N.'s disciplinary policy.

**76. Role of the Lead Child Protection Officer**

- To receive reports of concern from members of staff not in Prevention Services.
- To receive reports of concern for Project Child Protection Officers
- To disseminate knowledge and understanding of procedures and own role throughout the organisation.

- To liaise with the Child Protection Advisers, other relevant agencies and ensure own knowledge and understanding is up to date and comprehensive.
- To collect and collate statistical information from the projects about reported concerns (excluding personal information).
- To initiate review and monitoring of procedures and any practice implications that might be identified in light of statistical information collated.
- Where reports of concern or incidents involve allegations against a member of staff or volunteer, a Director or Manager will assume the role of the Lead Child Protection Officer

## 77. Recording information

It is crucial that all concerns are properly recorded whether Children's Social Care are involved or not. The records may be needed later to contribute towards an assessment of the family or, in some situations, as a part of evidence for civil court proceedings under the Children Act and/or criminal prosecution. Furthermore, looking back over past records can indicate a pattern which may indicate abuse is happening (or has happened in the past), or may identify unmet needs.

78. The following information, if available, should be recorded:

- Name and address of the child;
- Age and date of birth;
- Ethnic origin;
- Religion, if any;
- Disability, if any;
- Preferred communication method;
- Preferred language;
- Name and address of adults involved in incident/concern/allegation;
- Date and time of the alleged incident;
- Nature of injury, behaviour or concern;
- When the behaviour or injury was first noticed;
- The child's explanation in her/his own words as verbatim as possible (or other form of communication);
- Adults explanation;
- Date and time of the recording;
- Any questions which were asked, as verbatim as possible;
- Signature of the person recording the concern.

79. Some of this information may not be available to you. Do not pursue the questioning of a young person. It is important s/he freely volunteers whatever information s/he wishes you to have. You may consult any files or records which A. C. N. has relating to the child or his/her family. Do not delay reporting the matter because you do not have all the information.

80. When recording, be sure you separate fact from opinion. Set out the facts first. Having an opinion is entirely valid and may be crucial but it must not be confused with factual information. Ensure that you record opinions as such and demonstrate that you have the evidence (i.e. the facts) to support your thinking.
81. Always remember that any records relating to child protection may be accessed by third parties such as Children's Social Care, police or the courts.

### **Issues of confidentiality**

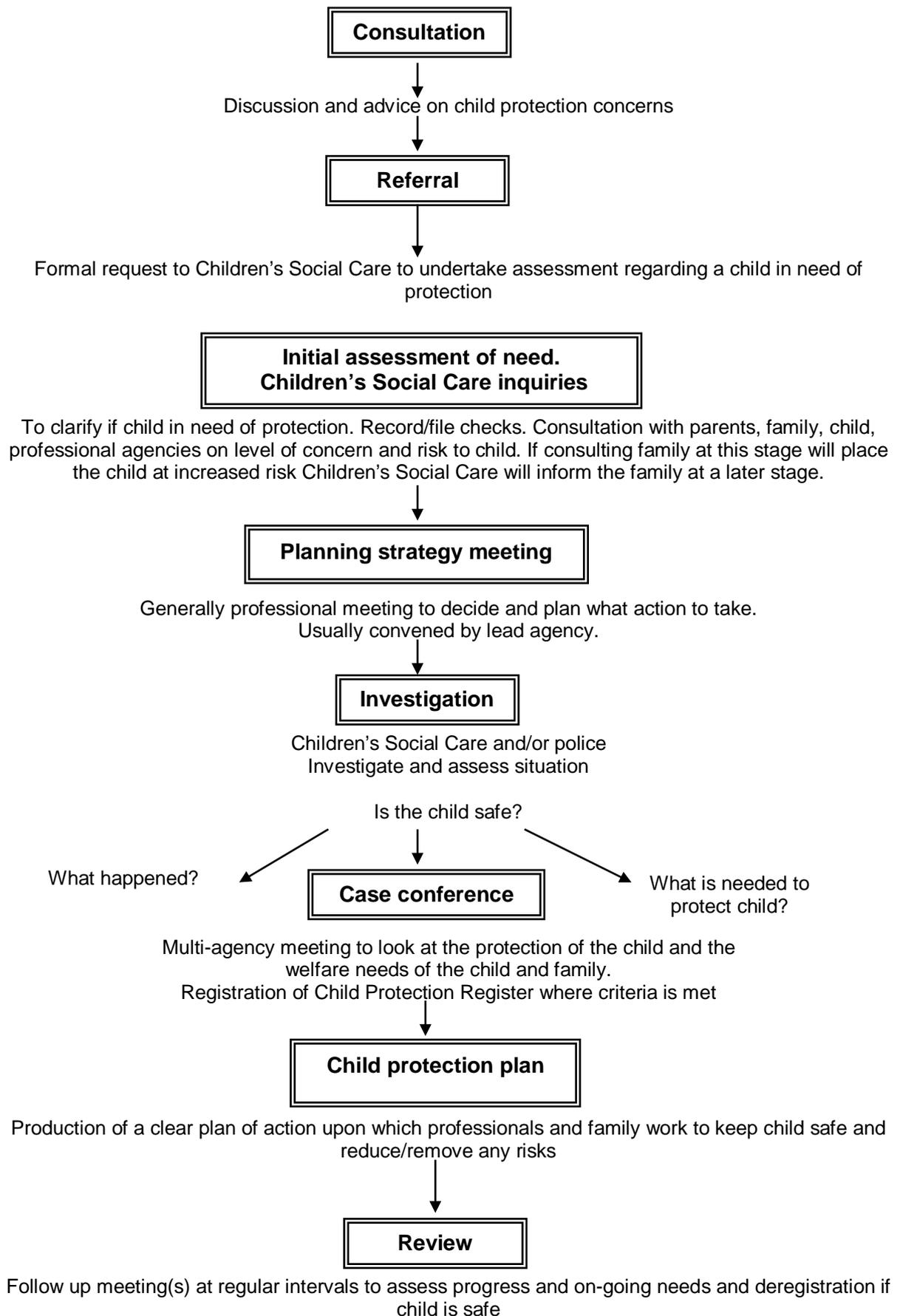
82. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, strengthened by the Human Rights Act 1998, people have a right to know what information is being held on them by public authorities and a right to correct any inaccuracies. It would therefore normally be considered good practice not to refer a child or young person to another agency without that person's knowledge and consent.
83. However, this principle of confidentiality can be overridden when there are child protection concerns. That is to say, when you have concerns that a child or young person is being or has been abused, then the principle of child protection and safety takes absolute precedence over the principle of confidentiality. Such an action to override the principle of confidentiality must be justifiable in each individual situation, on a case-by-case basis.
84. Should a child or young person disclose abuse to you, it is vital to explain to that person as quickly as possible that you cannot keep this information confidential (even if they ask you to "keep a secret") and you will have to pass the information on to the relevant agencies in accordance with A.C.N. child protection procedures and legal requirements.
85. The principle of confidentiality is also important in relation to ensuring the confidential and secure storage of any records relating to child protection cases. Paper records must be locked and the use of codes (instead of names) should be used when information is held electronically.

### **Enquiry process**

86. The following flow diagram outlines the enquiry process once referral to Children's Social Care has been made.
87. A.C.N. staff may be asked to contribute information to this process. It is possible that attendance at a case conference or court proceedings may be required in order to share the information. In these situations it is advisable for a member of staff to be accompanied by a manager. There may also be times when it is good practice for a member of staff to accompany a young person to a conference or court in order to offer support.

## Child protection enquiry process (diagram 2)

Official Policy



## SECTION 3

### Guidelines for responding to allegation of abuse

88. The purpose of these guidelines is to give you some additional assistance in thinking through what you should do and how you should act when you are confronted with a child protection situation.

89. A child protection concern may come to your attention in a number of ways.

90. In all circumstances the young person's immediate health and safety must take priority. In relation to any injury which comes to your notice you must consider the need for:

- Immediate medical attention
- Immediate action to protect young person

91. In these circumstances, you may need to make immediate contact with the police and/or Children's Social Care and/or emergency health services. The procedures (see diagram 1) then apply with regard to lines of reporting within A. C. N.

### A child or young person discloses an abusive act or experience to you

92. Remember that disclosure of abuse is often in itself frightening and difficult for the child or young person and can re-awaken painful memories. It may also have a strong emotional impact on you as the listener. This can make it hard for a child to disclose, especially if the child senses that the listener is shocked or upset.

93. If a child or young person confides in you that they are being, or have been, abused they have placed you in a position of trust. They trust you to help them though it is important to make it clear that you cannot keep this 'a secret'. Simply by telling you, they have demonstrated their trust that you will act. You should:

- React calmly and in an encouraging manner;
- Stress that it is right to tell;
- Emphasise that the child or young person is not to blame;
- Take what is being communicated seriously and communicate this to the child or young person (body language can be as important here as words);
- Keep questions to the minimum necessary for ensuring a clear and accurate picture of what is being communicated to you. Do not ask for any explicit details;
- Offer reassurance that the information will be kept private but be clear that there are certain people who you have to tell in order to make sure the relevant action is taken. Stress it is part of your job to make sure children and young people are kept safe;

- Make a full record of what is communicated as soon as possible. This should include words, behaviour and other means of communication. Any words, including your own, should be recorded verbatim;
- Do not delay in passing the information on to the designated officer.

94. Again, do not underestimate the potential impact on you. Ensure you know who you can talk it through with in order to find the emotional support and help which you need. If this is with someone other than the designated officer, ensure complete confidentiality in relation to any personal information.

### **Responding to allegations of abuse, inappropriate or dangerous behaviour made against a member of staff or volunteer**

95. If the allegation is against a member of staff, whether paid worker or volunteer, the concern must be reported to the designated officer. This process can be particularly demanding, especially if the person against whom the allegation is made is a close colleague or personal friend, or you. Nonetheless, the procedures must be followed.

96. If the allegation is against the person you have to report to, then concerns should be reported to your Line Manager's Manager.

97. It is the responsibility of senior management to pursue any necessary disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and this is parallel to action, which may be taken to protect the child.

### **An allegation against another young person or peer of the child or young person**

98. Do not assume that if abuse is perpetrated by another child or young person that it is less serious or less significant for any of those involved, there are additional issues which require consideration by A.C.N., together with the police and social services:

- Does the abuser present a risk such that her/his attendance at A.C.N. schemes or projects needs to be reconsidered?
- Does there need to be proactive self protection work with individuals or groups?
- Does there need to be work raising the awareness of all young people in relation to the prevalence and effects of all forms of abuse? Such work could also encompass issues around the impact of oppressive behaviour such as sexism and racism on individuals and groups?;
- Will there be a criminal prosecution and will this impact on A.C.N. projects?;
- What, if any, information should be provided to significant others e.g. partner agencies, about child protection concerns due to offending behaviour or convictions? Liaison with Children's Social Care and the police is required regarding any ongoing investigation process and when and by whom any information can be given to others.

**If the young person is a risk to children**

99. Young people may cause harm to other children or young people and commit a criminal offence. However, an offender who has harmed a child might not continue to present a risk towards children. If the offender is under 18 years old it is possible that there is little or no future risk of harm to other children and the stigma of being identified as presenting a continued risk of harm to children is potentially damaging to the development of the juvenile offender. If an individual has been sentenced and identified as a risk to children, agencies have a responsibility to work collaboratively to monitor and manage the risk of harm to others.
100. Interim guidance "Guidance on offences against children" Home Office circular 16/2005 explains how people who present a potential risk of harm to children should be identified. This replaces the previously limited identification mechanisms of the Schedule One of the Children and Young Person's Act 1933, as there are other offences which would also deem someone to be a risk to children. For example, under Sexual Offences Act 2003.
101. This is important information for A.C.N. staff when making decisions about which young people should be offered a service. It must be taken into account and, as with all potential service users, a judgement made as to what level of risk there is to other children and young people who are attending the project. Such a decision must be made in the knowledge of what the offence was and the context and circumstances of the offence.
102. Projects must request information from referring agencies as to whether the individual poses a risk of harm to children. There should be discussion with young people who self-refer regarding any offending or abusive behaviour which might present risks to young people.
103. Where A.C.N. is offering a service to a child or young person who is or was deemed a risk to children, the designated officer should:
- Ensure that as much relevant background information as possible is obtained before any young person joins a project, through liaison with other agencies;
  - Ensure that previous records of convictions or concerns regarding offending behaviour are recorded;
  - Ensure that safeguards are put in place to ensure that all children and young people are protected;
  - Ensure the young person themselves enjoys a protective environment which reduces the risk of re-offending or causing harm to children;
  - Ensure that codes of confidentiality are maintained
104. Where a young person who has been a service user becomes a volunteer for A.C.N., the Guidance on Recruitment and the policy for the Employment of Ex-Offenders as Staff or as Volunteers, apply.

## Conclusion

105. All A.C.N. staff are expected to:
- Become familiar with these procedures (not just read them);
  - Be able to apply the procedures in practice;
  - Recognise abusive situations when they occur and demonstrate an understanding of the potential impacts of child abuse;
  - Understand that child protection does not operate in a vacuum. An organisation which operates effective good practice principles according to the Equal Opportunities Policy (where, for example, instances of verbal sexism or racism, homophobia are effectively challenged) is less likely to collude with other forms of abuse;
  - Know who the designated officer is and how to contact him/her;
  - Respond confidently and sympathetically to any child protection issues arising in A.C.N.

## **Appendix 1 - Useful references, resources and recommended legislation and guidance**

### **Legislation**

The Children Act 1989 (England and Wales)  
The Children (Scotland) Act 1995  
The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995  
The Children Act 2004

The Adoption and Children Act 2002

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

The Data Protection Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)  
The Protection of Children Act 1999  
Sexual Offences Act 2003

### **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

### **The Education Act 2002**

#### *Guidance*

### **Working Together to Safeguard Children**

(HM Government, 2015)

### **Every Child Matters: Change for Children**

A national framework for change which is underpinned by the Children Act 2004. Endorsed across Government by the ministers responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of services for children, young people and families.

<http://www.everychildmatters.co.uk/>

<https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/EveryChildMatters.pdf>

### **Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education**

<https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Safeguarding%20Children%20Guidance.pdf>

## **Wales specific**

### **Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004**

(Welsh Assembly Government 2006)

### **Safeguarding Children: Working Together for Positive Outcomes**

(Welsh Assembly Government 2004)

This is practice guidance providing a summary of the key processes within Working Together and Framework for the assessment of Children in Need and their families (National Assembly for Wales 2001)

### **All Wales Child Protection Procedures**

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

## Resources

### **Away From Home and Safe – Getting Residentials Right**

Away From Home and Safe  
216 Belmont Road  
Belfast  
Tel: 02890 651498

### **Child Protection Awareness Programme**

Educare , Tel: 01926 436211  
<http://www.educare.co.uk>

### **NSPCC**

Tel: 0808 800 5000  
Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/information-service/>

### **Sportscheck**

**Sportscheck is a step-by-step guide to help sport organisations of any size safeguard children.**

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/event-management/>

### **Safe Sports Events**

**A practical resource, designed to help you ensure the safety of children and young people whatever size events are organised. A CD rom features templates to suit your needs.**

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/event-management/>

### **Safe Sport Away – A Guide to Good Planning**

Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and NSPCC  
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/event-management/>

All above sports publications available from

England Tel: 0116 366 5590 Email: [Cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:Cpsu@nspcc.org.uk) <http://www.thecpsu.org.uk>

Northern Ireland Tel: 02890 351135 Email: [Cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:Cpsu@nspcc.org.uk) <http://www.thecpsu.org.uk>

Wales Tel: 0844 8920290 Email: [Cpsuwales@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:Cpsuwales@nspcc.org.uk) <http://www.thecpsu.org.uk>

Scotland Tel: 0141 418 5674 Email: [safeguardinginsport@children1st.org.uk](mailto:safeguardinginsport@children1st.org.uk)  
<http://www.safeguardinginsport.org.uk/>

## Useful contacts

Disclosure and Barring Service  
DBS Customer Service  
PO Box 3961  
Wootton Bassett  
SN4 4HF  
Helpline:0300 0200 190

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Criminal Records Unit in Wales  
Email: [help@wcva.org.uk](mailto:help@wcva.org.uk)

Disclosure Scotland  
PO Box 250  
Glasgow G51 1YU  
Tel: 0870 609 6006

Access Northern Ireland  
PO Box 1085  
Belfast  
BT5 9BD  
Tel: 0300 200 78888

4Children 5 Greenwich View Place, London E14 9NN  
Tel: 0207 512 2112  
[www.4children.org.uk](http://www.4children.org.uk)

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services  
CAN Mezzanine, 49- 51 East Road, London N1 6AH  
Telephone 020 7250 8406  
Email: [mail@ncvys.org.uk](mailto:mail@ncvys.org.uk)

NYAS - National Youth Advocacy Service  
Egerton House, Tower Road,  
Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 1FN  
Telephone: 0151 649 8700  
Fax: 0151 649 8701  
Email General Enquiries: [main@nyas.net](mailto:main@nyas.net)  
Email Young People: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

The Children's Legal Centre  
University Of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester  
Essex CO4 3SQ  
Advice line: 0808 802 0008  
Email [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

UK Youth  
483 & 485 Liverpool Road  
Islington  
London N1 8PG  
Tel: 020 137 3810  
Email: [info@ukyouth.org](mailto:info@ukyouth.org)

The *Who Cares?* Trust  
15-18 White Lion Street,  
London N1 9PG  
Telephone: 020 7251 3117  
Email: [mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk](mailto:mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

*National Youth Age*

The National Youth Agency

19-23 Humberside Road

Leicester LE5 3GJ

Tel: 0116 242 7350

Email: [nya@nya.org.uk](mailto:nya@nya.org.uk)

## **Appendix 2 Indicators of abuse**

### **Physical Abuse:**

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g., on the cheeks or thighs. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

#### The physical signs of abuse may include:

- ◆ Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body;
- ◆ Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching);
- ◆ Cigarette burns;
- ◆ Bite marks;
- ◆ Broken bones;
- ◆ Scalds.

#### Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- ◆ Fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- ◆ Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts;
- ◆ Flinching when approached or touched;
- ◆ Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather;
- ◆ Depression;
- ◆ Withdrawn behaviour;
- ◆ Running away from home.

### **Emotional Abuse:**

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

#### The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- ◆ A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents care;
- ◆ Sudden speech disorders;
- ◆ Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

#### Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- ◆ Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- ◆ Being unable to play;
- ◆ Fear of making mistakes;
- ◆ Sudden speech disorders;
- ◆ Self-harm;

- ◆ Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

**Sexual Abuse:**

Adults, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- ◆ Pain or itching in the genital area;
- ◆ Bruising or bleeding near genital area;
- ◆ Sexually transmitted disease;
- ◆ Vaginal discharge or infection;
- ◆ Stomach pains;
- ◆ Discomfort when walking or sitting down;
- ◆ Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- ◆ Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn;
- ◆ Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people;
- ◆ Having nightmares;
- ◆ Running away from home;
- ◆ Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level;
- ◆ Sexual drawings or language;
- ◆ Bedwetting;
- ◆ Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia;
- ◆ Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts;
- ◆ Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about;
- ◆ Substance or drug abuse;
- ◆ Suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- ◆ Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence);
- ◆ Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

**Neglect:**

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- ◆ Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children;
- ◆ Constantly dirty or 'smelly';
- ◆ Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight;
- ◆ Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- ◆ Complaining of being tired all the time;
- ◆ Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments;

- ◆ Having few friends;
- ◆ Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive but only to serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc.

### **Appendix 3 Website, online and mobile safety**

Many organisations working with children and young people provide internet access both for educational and recreational purposes. For children who do not have regular or convenient internet access at home or at school, A.C.N. may be the sole or principal means by which they can go online.

A.C.N. will offer many children and young people the option of communicating their ideas, experiences and opinions in a safe and secure environment. This section provides information about the security of websites and key things to be aware of when planning online activities.

The main risks for children and young people associated with online activity are:

- Being groomed online by paedophiles;
- Experiencing online bullying;
- Being exposed to inappropriate or harmful material;
- Having contact details and/or communication being accessible remotely and not being held securely;
- Personal images and work being uploaded and published without their consent;
- As users uploading or submitting inappropriate or offensive content.

#### **SAFETY TIPS**

- **Know what children are doing online and who they are talking to.** Ask them to teach you to use any applications you have never used.
- **Help children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends** — personal information includes their messenger ID, email address, mobile number and any pictures of themselves, their family or friends — if a child publishes a picture or video online — anyone can change it or share it.
- **If a child receives spam / junk email & texts, remind them never to believe them, reply to them or use them.**
- **It's not a good idea for a child to open files that are from people they do not know.** They will not know what they contain — it could be a virus, or worse - an inappropriate image or film.
- **Help children to understand that some people lie or pretend online** and that, therefore, it is better to keep online friends online. They should never meet up with any strangers without being accompanied by an adult they trust.
- **Always keep communication open** for a child to know that it is never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.
- **Teach young people how to block someone online and report them** if they feel uncomfortable. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre works across the UK and maximises international links to tackle child sex abuse wherever and whenever it happens. You can report any concerns or incidents at <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> or visit <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/> for more information.

#### **Appendix 4 Safeguarding Children and Young People – Child Protection Policy & Procedures**

1.	DBS Clearance
2.	Positive Handling (plus Procedures, Guidelines, Training)
3.	Lone Working (includes, Public & Car Travel, Office and Outreach)
4.	Management of Incidents & On-Call Arrangements
5.	Accident & Incident Reporting
6.	Planning Activities & Trips with Young People (includes a whole range of guidelines and paperwork)
7.	Risk Assessments (various)
8.	Fraud & Corruption
9.	IT
10.	Data Protection
11.	Whistle-blowing
12.	Confidentiality
13.	Young Persons Confidentiality
14.	Bullying & Harassment
15.	Disciplinary, Grievance & Capability
16.	Alcohol, Drugs & Solvent Misuse
17.	Smoking
18.	Gifts
19.	Giving Gifts to Young People
20.	Funding Raised Independently by Young People
21.	Equal Opportunities
22.	Employment of Ex Offenders
23.	Volunteering
24.	First Aid & Fire (includes First Aid training)
25.	Health & Safety Inspections
26.	
27.	
28.	
29.	
30.	

**Appendix 5      Sample for Reporting and Recording Concerns**

Name of Child/young person:

Age/D.O.B.:

Home Address (and phone number):

Parent's name and contact details:

Other information: (preferred language, disability, ethnic origin, religion, preferred communication method, if known)

Details of concern – include where incident occurred, who witnessed it, date, time etc.

Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

Have parents been contacted? If so, what was said and agreed?

Who has been consulted in Active Communities Network about this Concern?

Action agreed and by whom:

Recorded by : ( Name, contact details and signature)