



### Safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults policy

These policy and procedures apply to all paid contractors and volunteers, including the Steering Group, Parent Representatives and/or anyone else working on behalf of Listen 4 Change Parent Carer Forum (L4C PCF).

#### Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide members of the L4C PCF Steering Group, contractors and associated volunteers, with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and to provide information for parent carers about the safeguarding measures that L4C PCF employs to ensure that it meets those responsibilities.

Whilst it is not the responsibility of this organisation to determine whether or not abuse has taken place (this is undertaken in liaison with external child protection professionals), it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns in relation to children and vulnerable adults to the relevant authority. L4C Steering Group, contractors and volunteers do not have direct contact with children and young people however by the nature of the organisation, we work directly with parent carers of disabled children and young people. Therefore, it is essential that we have robust policies and procedures. All Steering Group members, volunteers, and contractors are expected to be familiar with, and comply with this policy and its procedures.

L4C PCF believes that all children, young people and vulnerable adults deserve to live happy, safe, and secure lives, and should be protected from abuse, harm, or neglect. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of that group of people to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects and safeguards children, young people and vulnerable adults.

#### Procedures

The safeguarding lead for L4C PCF is Elaine O'Brien and the deputy is Emma Roberts. The role of the nominated safeguarding lead, and deputy in their absence, is to provide a single point of contact between L4C PCF and the statutory child protection agencies – children's social care and the police.

#### Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD:

- If emergency medical attention is required, an ambulance should be called (dial 999) or the child taken to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- If a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted (dial 999), as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary via Police Protection Order.

#### Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

All individuals within L4C PCF need to be alert to the potential abuse of children or vulnerable young adults, including abuse by members of the organisation.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

### **What to do if children or vulnerable adults talk to you about abuse or neglect**

It is recognised that a child or vulnerable adult may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously, individually or in groups, when you are present.

In these situations, **you must:**

- Listen carefully to the child/vulnerable adult. DO NOT directly question them.
- Give the child/vulnerable adult time and attention.
- Allow the child/vulnerable adult to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child/vulnerable adult who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's/vulnerable adult's presentation, as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's/vulnerable adult's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child/vulnerable adult that you are glad they have told you; they have not done anything wrong and what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child/vulnerable adult safe.
- Do NOT ask the child/vulnerable adult to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

### **Consulting about your concern**

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child or vulnerable adult and decide what action is necessary. You may become concerned about a child or vulnerable adult who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child or vulnerable adult.

If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to one of the people designated as responsible for safeguarding within L4C PCF. If that person is implicated in the concerns, you should discuss your concerns directly with Social Services by calling St Helens Local Authority - Safeguarding Children Partnership: **01744 671266**

You should consult externally with St Helens Social Services in the following circumstances:

- when you remain unsure, after internal consultation, as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when you are unable to consult promptly, or at all, with your designated internal contact for child protection
- when the concerns relate to any member of the Steering Group Committee.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the police should progress.

## **Making a referral**

A referral involves giving Social Services or the police information about concerns relating to an individual or family, in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases, the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made, except in the circumstances outlined above (Recognition of Abuse or Neglect). Inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Social Services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from someone not known to the child/vulnerable adult or their family, you should make a telephone referral directly to the police and consult with the parents.

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member, or someone known to the child/vulnerable adult, you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Office.

## **Information required**

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). A lack of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- Your name, telephone number and position, and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child/vulnerable adult and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals known to be involved with the child/vulnerable adult/family e.g. GP, Health Visitor, school.
- The nature of the concern and foundation for it.
- An opinion on whether the child/vulnerable adult may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child / vulnerable adult and family.
- Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.

## **Action to be taken following the referral**

- Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- Put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed, or that no further action is to be taken, and the reasons for this decision.

## **Confidentiality**

L4C PCF will ensure that any records made in relation to a referral will be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child’s need for protection.

More information about safeguarding children and vulnerable adults can be found on the St Helens Council website via the link: [Social care - St Helens Borough Council](#)