



INFORMING - ADVISING - SUPPORTING - EMPOWERING
Parents & Carers of Children & Young People with Additional Needs & Disabilities

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

VERSION CONTROL

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The Department for Education's Working Together to Safeguard Children defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

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

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm.

This document applies to children and young people. The term 'children' will be used throughout the policy to apply to children and young people below the age of eighteen.

POINT is fully committed to this policy for safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people, by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

This document outlines child protection policy and procedures. It is not a comprehensive 'how to' guide in child protection practice but relates specifically to the role of all those involved in working directly or indirectly with children in child protection practice, i.e. activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

POINT has a responsibility to work with others to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Team members may have varying degrees of contact with children and young people, so it is essential that team members in contact with children, young people and their families have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out their jobs safely and effectively. All staff have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children with whom they work.

This document outlines our commitment to the protection of children and aims to:

- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and young people and reduce risks to them;
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken.

We ensure that all team members, including freelance, contracted staff and/or associates are aware of the requirements within this policy. It is the responsibility of these groups to ensure that the personnel they are responsible for are aware of and understand the procedures and have levels of knowledge and skills commensurate to the level and nature of their direct involvement with children and young people.

We work within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and believe that:

- All children have the right to be protected.
- All children should be listened to and their views taken seriously.
- Children's needs should be looked at holistically and should not be defined solely in terms of their abuse.
- All interventions must be child-centred.
- To effectively protect children, professionals must identify and work with safe and protective adults within children's families and communities.
- Professionals need to be aware of how issues of race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality and age, impact on an individual's life experiences.
- Professionals need to be aware of how issues of race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality and age impact on their understanding of and response to keeping children safe.
- Joint working between agencies and disciplines is essential for the protection of children.
- The following individuals will be required to read and sign this policy prior to undertaking any work or role relating to POINT:
 - i. Any team members employed by POINT.
 - ii. Any agent acting on behalf of POINT in a capacity that may bring them into contact with children and young people.

Definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. An individual may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Neglect or abuse, physically, emotionally or sexually, can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self-image and self-esteem, and on his or her future life.

Harm may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The definitions of harm outlined in Working Together 2010 are used to determine whether a child needs a child protection plan.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which 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.

Emotional abuse

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 a 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.

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 (for example, 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

(a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or

(b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

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

Neglect

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 substance abuse. Once a child is born, 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. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Abuse and Children with a Disability

Evidence available in the UK on the extent of abuse among children with a disability suggests that they are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect.

Children with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons.

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with these procedures in the same way as with any other child. The same thresholds for action and the same timescales apply. It would be unacceptable if poor standards of care were tolerated for disabled children that would not be tolerated for nondisabled children.

Confidentiality

In any work with children and young people it is important to be clear about confidentiality. While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence, and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, when there are concerns that a child is or may be at risk of significant harm, then the over-riding objective must be to safeguard that child and disclosure of information is imperative.

Confidentiality and child protection should be discussed with children and young people at the beginning of any piece of work, and reminders and information given from time to time, to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities the staff members have. It is absolutely essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

POINT team members have no powers to investigate child abuse. Nonetheless, POINT team members have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and a responsibility to work closely and co-operatively with other agencies in order to achieve this.

If, in the process of your work, a child discloses to you that they are being abused you will need to tell them that you must report it.

It is important to remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so any concerns must be properly recorded and shared with a line manager.

In the event of a situation in which you consider a child is at risk, you should contact POINT's designated safeguarding officer for advice.

POINT currently have 2 safeguarding officers.

Oldham Office: Elaine Robinson – Tel: 0161 667 2054 or 07703 468283

Bury Office: Keelie Rigby – Tel: 0161 705 4366 or 07703 468284

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

If you witness something that is of severe concern, inform your manager at the time and tell the manager that you intend to pass on your concerns. You will need to inform the relevant agency on the same day that you have referred this concern to your manager.

Referrals must be made using the Local Authority Safeguarding Procedures relevant to your area of work.

As you will be aware, every individual has the right to make a referral to Social Care (particularly if they feel their concerns are not being taken seriously) but we would always advise you to consult with the named people first.