

Safeguarding - Approved

## Safeguarding Policy

## Child Protection Policy

## Child Protection Procedures

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<b>Created by:</b>	Elaine Johnston
<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Trustees

### 1. Parenting Project Safeguarding Policy

The Parenting Project is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people.

#### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:**

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring 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 (*DfE, July 2013*)

The Parenting Project is working within the following guidance:

**'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Statutory Guidance** (*DfE, updated August 2013*)

This guidance relates to:

- Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which requires local authorities in their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State;
- Section 11 (4) of the Children Act 2004 which requires each person or body to which the section 11 duty applies to have regard to any guidance given to them by the Secretary of State; and
- Section 16 of the Children Act 2004, which states that local authorities and each of the statutory partners must, in exercising their functions relating to Local Safeguarding Children Boards, have regard to any guidance given to them by the Secretary of State.

The guidance clarifies the core legal requirements, making it much clearer what individuals and organisations should do to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

It is intended to provide a national framework within which agencies and professionals at local level – individually and jointly – draw up and agree on their own ways of working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### 1:1 A Child-Centred Approach

- Our safeguarding systems are child centred. Within the Parenting Project the needs and views of the children are always prioritised.
- Children are respected, their views heard and our relationship with them is built on trust and consistency in meeting their needs. This guides the behaviour of Parenting Project employees.
- <sup>1</sup>Staff working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs.

A child-centred approach is supported by:

- the Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004). This Act requires local authorities to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked after (section 22(4) Children Act 1989), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3)(d) of that Act);
- the Equality Act 2010 which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs.
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information.

### **Children have said that they need** (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE, 2013*)

- Vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- Understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon

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<sup>1</sup> 'Staff' refers to staff, volunteers, trustees and partners

- Stability: to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- Respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- Information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- Explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- Support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- Advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views and experiences.

The Parenting Project has recognised what children have said they need and ensures their needs are met.

## **1:2 Assessing Need and Providing Help**

### **Early Help**

- The Parenting Project recognises that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.
- Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- The Parenting Project recognises that effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to: identify children and families who would benefit from early help; undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.
- The Parenting Project has procedures in place to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families.
- Staff understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- In particular the staff are alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
  - is disabled and has specific additional needs;
  - has special educational needs;
  - is a young carer;
  - is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
  - is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence;
  - is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Staff in the Parenting Project have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect, to share that information and work together to provide children and young people with the help they need.

- Preventing radicalisation - The Parenting Project is committed to preventing children from being radicalised and drawn into any form of extremism or terrorism. The Parenting Project promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by providing children with the opportunity to learn how to discuss and debate points of view and to understand a range of faiths; and by ensuring that all children are valued and listened to within Parenting Project.

All staff are made aware of the importance of identifying indicators of children being radicalised and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. The Parenting Project will make appropriate referrals in respect of any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

The Parenting Project expects all staff, volunteers, governors, visiting professionals, contractors and individuals or agencies that hire Parenting Project premises to behave in accordance with the Parenting Project's Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), will challenge the expression and/or promotion of extremist views and ideas by any adult on Parenting Project premises or at Parenting Project events and, when necessary, will make appropriate referrals in respect of any such adult.

The Parenting Project ensures staff develop their knowledge and skills in this area and have access to training to identify and respond early to abuse and neglect, and to the latest research showing what types of interventions are the most effective.

### **1:3 Assessment**

- Assessment of need happens in a timely way to ensure the needs of the child are identified early.
- The Parenting Project uses the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- The Parenting Project adheres to Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board 'Thresholds for Intervention' when using CAF for helping children and their families.

### **1.4 Early Help Services**

- The Parenting Project provides early help services including family and parenting programmes, assistance with health issues and help for problems relating to drugs, alcohol and domestic violence. Services delivered to children and parents are always be evaluated to demonstrate the impact they are having on the outcomes for the children.
- All assessments and early help services are focused firmly on outcomes, deciding which services and support to provide to deliver improved welfare for the child.
- Assessment is an on-going process, with the impact of services informing future decisions around action.

### **1.5 Staff Supervision**

- In the Parenting Project effective staff supervision plays a critical role in ensuring a clear focus on a child's welfare.
- Supervision supports staff to reflect critically on the impact of their decisions on the child and their family.
- Staff always have access to a manager to talk through their concerns and judgements affecting the welfare of a child.

## 2. Parenting Project Child Protection Policy

The Parenting Project has developed this policy in line with paragraph 4 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (DfE, 2013).

**Section 11 of the Children Act 2004** places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### 2.1 Accountability

- The Parenting Project has a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- The **Chief Officer Elaine Johnston** is responsible for monitoring the Parenting Project's ability to safeguard and protect children in all areas set out in the Safeguarding, Child Protection and Child Protection Procedures policies and for ensuring the policies are reviewed annually.
- The Chief Officer will ensure an annual report is made to the Board of Trustees, on child protection matters to include changes affecting child protection policy and procedures, child protection training received, the number of incidents/cases recorded or referred, outcomes for the children and any issues arising which, when addressed, could lead to children being protected more effectively.
- The trustee designated to oversee the Child Protection Policy and practice and champion child protection issues is **Jane Williams**.

### 2.2 Information Sharing

- The Parenting Project has developed clear information sharing guidelines based upon Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Policies and Procedures (2006).
- Keeping children safe from harm requires professionals and others to share information. This includes information that identifies personal characteristics of the child and qualitative or descriptive information such as their health and development and exposure to possible harm, information about their parents or carers who may not be able to care adequately or safety for them and those who may pose a risk of harm to a child or unborn child.
- The Parenting Project records confidential, personal and sensitive information, this includes information that identifies personal characteristics of the child and qualitative or descriptive information such as their health and development and exposure to possible harm, information about their parents or carers who may not be able to care adequately or safety for them and those who may pose a risk of harm to a child or unborn child.
- Such information is recorded in the interests of keeping children and unborn babies safe from harm. The procedure for record keeping in this context is outlined below within the Parenting Project Child Protection Procedures.
- The Parenting Project recognises that confidential, personal and sensitive information held by any professional or agency can only be disclosed in accordance with common and statute law, and that there is nothing within the principles of common law relating to confidentiality, the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Human Rights Act 1998 to prevent the justifiable and lawful exchange of information for the protection of children or the detection or prevention of serious crime.

- The Parenting Project acknowledges that The Data Protection Act 1998 controls the sharing of personal and sensitive information. Personal information is data which can identify an individual and sensitive information includes the person's race or ethnicity, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, physical or mental health, sexual life, the commission or alleged commission of any offences and details of criminal proceedings.
- The Parenting Project works within the principle that where there is consent from the data subject there is no difficulty about the sharing of any amount of factual or subjective information about children. If however, the Parenting Project has a reasonable basis for believing that the public interest in the safeguarding of a vulnerable child has outweighed the public and professional duty of confidentiality in the circumstances of the case and that it has a lawful purpose, it may be perfectly proper not to seek consent when passing on sensitive personal information, just as it may be proper to disregard the withholding of consent.
- The Data Protection Act makes provision for the non-consensual disclosure of personal and sensitive information providing it is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully, disclosed in appropriate circumstances, is accurate and relevant, is not held longer than necessary and is kept securely. The Parenting Project works strictly within the Data Protection Act.
- The Parenting Project will share information with WSCB and all agencies and professionals working together to safeguard children from harm as set out in the child protection procedures below.

### 2.3 Designated Professional Leads

- The Parenting Project has **12 Designated Safeguarding Leads:**

*NB: Only designated professionals included on this list within this policy may be contacted regarding a safeguarding concern.*

Name	Job Title
Elaine Johnston	Chief Officer
Sarah Hudson	Children's Centre Co-ordinator
Caroline Loveridge	HR Manager
Caroline Jacobs	Clopton Children's Centre Manager
Nicky Gillmore	Stratford Children's Centre Manager
Debbie Smith	Alcester Children's Centre Manager
Becki Cameron	Lighthorne Heath Children's Centre Manager
Debbie Muitt	Wellies and Badger Valley Children's Centre Manager

Manjit Kaur-Evans	Southam Children's Centre Manager
Emma Tait	Counselling Co-ordinator
Steph Elliot	Stratford Town Trust Family Support Project Lead
Felicity de Souza	Parent Mentor Project Lead

- The Parenting Project ensures that a designated professional is available at all times to staff, parents, professionals and partner agencies to keep children safe.
- The designated professionals have all received the appropriate training for the role from WSCB. (See *training record*).
- The Parenting Project ensures that this training is updated every two years.
- The role of the designated professional is to support all Parenting Project staff to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect.
- The designated member of staff will take advice from a child protection specialist when managing complex cases (e.g. Education Safeguarding Children Manager).
- The designated member of staff is responsible for coordinating action where it is suspected that a child is in need, has been harmed, or is at risk of significant harm.
- The Parenting Project will ensure the designated professionals are familiar with WSCB policies and procedures and Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2013)
- The designated professionals will ensure all child protection records are maintained in accordance with WSCB procedures and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- The designated professional roles are explicitly defined in job descriptions.
- The designated professionals are given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

#### 2.4 Safe Recruitment Practices

The Parenting Project recognises that making safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children an integral factor in HR management is an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people.

- The Parenting Project implements safe recruitment practices to prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people; promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice. The practices are in accordance with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education DfE (2007)

- The Parenting Project recognises that safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the process. It starts with the process of planning the recruitment exercise and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants.

The Parenting Project achieves this by:

- ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- ensuring that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children
- obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies
- obtaining independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and following up any concerns
- a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his or her suitability for the post
- verifying the successful applicant's identity
- verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed
- checking his or her previous employment history and experience
- verifying that s/he has the health and physical capacity for the job
- the mandatory check of List 99 and/or the Protection of Children Act (PoCA) List6 and an Enhanced Disclosure via the Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS)
- ensuring at least one member of the recruitment panel has received Safer Recruitment training
- ensuring all recruitment and selection processes are overseen by a designated professional lead
- ensuring the safer recruitment checklist is completed for each recruitment
- ensuring that all managers receive safer recruitment training and that it is updated in accordance with WSCB guidance.

## **2.5 Dealing with Allegations made Against Staff**

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child.

- All staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation against another member of staff or they themselves have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff. It is our policy that all allegations will be reported straight away, to the Chief Officer, or Jane Williams (Trustee Management Board) in cases where the Chief Officer is subject of the allegation or concern.
- The Parenting Project complaints and child protection procedures will be followed alongside this policy.
- This policy will be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that member of staff (including a volunteer) has;
  - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;



- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or,
  - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children. This will include cases of verbal abuse.
- There may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation:
    - A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
    - Enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;
    - Consideration of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

### **Supporting Those Involved**

- Parents or carers of a child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They will also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution. That includes the outcome of any disciplinary process. N. B. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child will be told the outcome.
- In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's social care, or the police as appropriate, will be consulted by the Chief Officer to consider what support the child or children involved may need.
- The Chief Officer will also keep the person who is subject of the allegations informed of the progress of the case and consider what support is appropriate for the individual. If the person is suspended, the Chief Officer will also keep the individual informed about developments at the Parenting Project. If the person is a member of a union or professional association s/he will be advised to contact that body at the outset.
- Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered.

### **Resignations**

- The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, will not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process.
- Wherever possible the person will be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it. The process of investigating the allegation and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated will continue even if the person does not cooperate.
- Similarly, so called "compromise agreements", where a person agrees to resign, the Parenting Project agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in

any future reference, will not be used in cases of alleged child abuse. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate.

### **Record Keeping & Timescales**

- A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, will be kept on a person's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference if the person has moved on. It will provide clarification in cases where a future DBS check reveals information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction. In addition, it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time.
- It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Every effort will be made to manage cases to avoid any unnecessary delay.

### **Procedure**

- The Chief Officer should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting Jane Williams (Trustee Management Board). However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or police or children's social care may need to be involved, the Chief Officer will not do that until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person. If the person is a member of the union or professional association s/he will be advised to contact that organisation at the outset.
- If the allegation is not demonstrably false or unfounded, and there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion will be convened by Jane Williams (Trustee Management Board), with Children's Services.
- Ofsted and the LADO must be notified – Children's Services will convene a Position of Trust Strategy meeting (POTs) to consider appropriate action and decide if the threshold of "significant harm" is not reached, and a police investigation might be needed.
- In cases where a formal strategy discussion is not considered appropriate because the threshold of "significant harm" is not reached, but a police investigation might be needed, the Chief Officer will consult the police and any other agencies involved with the child to evaluate the allegation and decide how it should be dealt with. (N.B. The police must be consulted about any cases in which a criminal offence may have been committed.)
- If the complaint or allegation is such that it is clear that an investigation by police and/or enquiries by social care are not necessary, or the strategy discussion or initial evaluation decides that is the case, Jane Williams (Trustee Management Board), will discuss the next steps with the Chief Officer. In those circumstances the options open to the Parenting Project depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available, and will range from taking no further action to summary dismissal or a decision not to use the person's services in future.
- Suspension will be considered in any cases where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might

be grounds for dismissal. A person will not be suspended automatically, however, the welfare of the child(ren) will be considered to be paramount.

- The power to suspend is vested in the Chief Officer and Jane Williams (Trustee Management Board). However, they will canvas police/social care views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children, to inform the Parenting Project's consideration of suspension.
- All procedures will be implemented within WSCB Interagency Child Protection Procedures framework.

### **Action on Conclusion of a Case**

- If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his/her services, Jane Williams (Trustee Management Board), should discuss with the Chief Officer whether a referral to the Department for Parenting Projects Children and Families for consideration of List 99 action or by the GTC is required, or advisable. Referrals for inclusion on List 99 should be made to the Department for Education and the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- In cases where it is decided on the conclusion of the cases that a person who has been suspended can return to work will consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The Parenting Project will also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still attending the Children's Centre.

### **Action in Respect of False Allegations**

- If an allegation is determined to be false, the Chief Officer will refer the matter to children's social care to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. In the rare event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Chief Officer will consider whether the police should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate against the person responsible.

## **2.6 Definitions**

### **Children**

- Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

- Defined for the purposes of this guidance 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; and taking action to enable all children to have the best chances.

## **Child protection**

- Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

## **Abuse**

- A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

## **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 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.

## **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); or  ensure access to appropriate medical

care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Young carers**

- Are children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care assistance or support to another family member. They carry out on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility, which would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care

### 3. Child Protection Procedures

#### 3.1 Making a Referral

**See also:**

- Warwickshire Local Safeguarding Children Board – Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2013)

**General Considerations:**

All concerns about the welfare of children and young persons, disclosures of possible abuse and observations of behaviour or injury which cause concern, must be taken seriously and reported within these procedures and those of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Staff share the responsibility of ensuring that concerns about children “in need” and those “in need of protection” are brought to the attention of the responsible person/agency in order that they may be investigated within the appropriate procedures.

**Procedure**

Every case of possible child abuse or risk of “significant harm” identified within the Parenting Project must be reported to the designated person without delay (matters should never go unreported overnight). A designated person may be contacted at any time.

It is the designated person’s responsibility to decide whether there should be an immediate referral to Children’s Services or the Police.

The designated person may decide that further discussion with colleagues outside the Children's Centre or an agreement to monitor the child to monitor the child is appropriate. (See Section 3 of Warwickshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Inter-Agency Procedures for contact details). In these cases a record of concern form **must** be completed by the person bringing the concern and the designated person and kept in the green ‘Record of Concerns’ file for future reference.

In rare cases of serious physical injury, it may be necessary to arrange immediate medical treatment for the child. An ambulance should be called and, where necessary, the child will be taken to the Accident and Emergency Department of a hospital. The suspicion of abuse must be made known to medical staff by the person accompanying the child.

Once the decision has been taken to make a referral, the designated person will contact the Children’s Services team (where the abuse took place). If the child lives outside Warwickshire, use the procedures for that Local Authority.

### 3.2 The Referral Process

When the decision has been taken to make a referral to the Children's Team, the following procedures apply:

1. Telephone your referral to Children Services on: **01926 410410**  
***This number will connect you with the appropriate Children's Team.***

***For Out of Hours referrals telephone the Emergency Duty Team on:  
01926 886922***

3. Use the *Written Confirmation Following a Child Protection Referral* form to record the information you need to give to Children Services when you telephone them. *Forms can be found in the safeguarding file and on the WSCB website.*

4. This form covers all the information you are required to give by Section 3.1 of the *WSCB Interagency Child Protection Procedures (The Blue Book)*

5. When you have completed your telephone call, post or where possible fax the completed form to the Children's Team below:

**Stratford District Children's Team**

Elizabeth House  
Church Street  
Stratford-upon-Avon  
Warwickshire  
CV37 6HX  
Fax: 01926 413602

6. If you have made your telephone referral to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT), send a copy of the completed form to this team as well as Stratford Children's Team at:

**Emergency Duty Team**

The Cottage  
Arden Hill  
57 South Street  
Atherstone  
CV9 1DZ  
Fax: 01827 718499

7. **Remember:** this form is to *confirm* your telephone call – it is *not* to be used to *replace* this call to Children Services

8. Give as much of the information required as you can. But do not unduly delay your call or sending the form if you find there are some gaps you cannot fill

9. The completed form must reach the relevant Children's Team Operations Manager no later than 24 hours after your telephone referral

**10.** The Children's Team should acknowledge your written referral within one day of receiving it. If you have not heard back within 3 working days, contact the team again. The form allows you to record the timing of this response on the copy you keep

**11.** Place this copy on the child's record or in your agency file. If you work in Education or Health, details are given on the form as to where you need to send another copy for monitoring purposes.

**If you do not receive a response or are not happy with the response you must refer to the WSCB Escalation Process.** A copy of this will be kept in the safeguarding folder. The process aims to assist professionals where a threshold is contested or where there are concerns around professional practice.

### 3.3 Supporting the Child

The designated person will need to agree what action should be taken for the immediate support of the child. This should include what time the child or young person will be going home and with whom. It is important that there is a clear understanding about how the parents or carers are to be informed of the referral and by whom. A written note of the agreements reached should be kept securely by the referrer with a copy of the referral form.

The appropriate member of staff (possibly the member of staff originally involved) should continue to support the child in accordance with the plan agreed with the Duty Officer.

### 3.4 Following a Referral

A referral may result in:

- No action.
- An assessment under Section 17 for Family Support Services; ('a child in need') with parents' consent.
- Acceptance of a referral under Section 47 for a Child Protection investigation; ('a child suffering from or at risk or suffering from significant harm').
- Further investigation before a decision can be made.

A Strategy discussion may be called. It is normally expected that representatives from The Parenting Project will be involved where they are the referrer. When the referral does not result in a Child Protection investigation or a Conference after an SC1 has been sent, the referrer should be notified of this decision and the reason for it given in writing. **If you remain concerned for a child's safety when a previous referral has been closed, or if there has been no response, refer the case again, speak to a senior manager or use the escalation process.**

When an Initial Conference is called, the designated person should be invited. This will often be at short notice and should be held within 15 days of the Strategy discussion or initial referral. Attendance at conferences should be regarded as a very high priority and will be monitored. The representative at the conference will be expected to share background information related to the case whenever possible a report should be prepared in readiness for the meeting. In addition they will be expected to determine the risk factors that place the child(ren) at risk of significant harm.

**See WSCB flowchart below for further clarification the referral procedure.**



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