



POSITIVE FUTURES

ACHIEVING DREAMS. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

Name of Policy:	Safeguarding Children Policy		
Policy Lead:	Operations Director		
Next Review Date:	17.11.24		
Change Record			
Issue Date	Nature of Change	Ratified by	Date ratified
08.12.08	Updated in line with RQIA requirements	SMT	08.12.08
16.06.10	Use of the term safeguarding children; changes to management structure and in line with RQIA	SMT	19.05.10
19.09.11	Amended to reflect guidance to RQIA inspectors	SMT	14.09.11
19.04.13	Updated to include points from consultation with the people we support and SLT; key points updated as suggested by the people we support; clearer reference to recruitment process; more robust reference to managing urgent situations	SLT	15.04.13
19.05.14	Reflect changes to organisation's purpose statement; separation of Policy and Procedure; clarification of duty to report remove 'other member of staff'; inclusion of Adult Placement Providers	SLT	19.05.14
19.05.15	Guidance included to include the need for everyone to reflect on and review their work to ensure best protection for the children and young people; terminology updated (Adult Placement Service now Shared Lives Service)	SLT	19.05.15
12.05.16	Inclusion of explanation of Child Sexual Exploitation	Directors	09.05.16
14.06.17	Key points removed; detail moved from Policy to Procedure and Handbook	Directors	02.05.17
18.09.18	Amendments made in light of changes to regional policies and procedures published by SBNI in November 2017, revisions to Cooperating to Protect Children and Young People in NI (Version 2) August 2017 and Keeping Children Safe guidance 2016; additional guidance developed in response to these policies and procedures: Code of Behaviour Guidance for Staff and Volunteers Supporting Children and Young People, Positive Futures' Guide to Safe Activities (Family Services) and Sharing Information in Family Services	Directors	07.09.18
04.11.19	Clarification on the need for 3 yearly Access NI rechecks for all staff in line with best practice	Directors	17.09.19
10.08.20	Annual review completed; no substantive policy changes; new easy read guide developed	Directors	29.07.20
08.10.21	Annual review completed – no substantive changes	OD	27.09.21
15.11.22	No changes	OD	15.11.22
17.11.23	No changes	GD	13.11.23

Safeguarding Children Policy

“Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.”

*Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland,
Version 2, August 2017*

Aim

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Promote a zero-tolerance culture and approach to all forms of abuse
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people (that our staff and volunteers have contact with) and protect them from abuse
- Ensure that staff and volunteers understand the concept of safeguarding and recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse
- Ensure that staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to safeguard children from abuse (including exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation, CSE) or neglect by:
 - **Promoting** the wellbeing of all children and young people we have contact with
 - **Preventing** children and young people experiencing abuse, including child exploitation or neglect
 - **Protecting** all children and young people from any potential or actual abuse
- Advise staff and volunteers about acceptable standards of behaviour
- Provide guidance on what to do in the event of any concern about a child, including how to record and report it
- Outline the organisation’s responsibilities to ensure we recruit, train and support suitable, competent staff and volunteers to be with children.
- Promote a continuous learning approach to safeguarding.

Context

Positive Futures has a legal duty to safeguard the children and young people we support and any other children or young people we come in contact with as detailed in relevant legislation, policies and standards frameworks. This document should be read alongside our:

- Safeguarding Children Procedure
- Safeguarding Children Handbook
- Keeping Children Safe: An Easy Read Guide.

Staff and volunteers need to be clear about their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and young people, specifically understanding the signs of potential abuse and how to report and record these concerns.

Child abuse occurs when a child or young person is neglected or harmed, either physically or emotionally. Children may be abused in any setting e.g. in a family, in an institution or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. There continues to be reluctance by some professionals and wider society to accept that children with a disability can be abused. Positive Futures has a 'zero tolerance' approach to any form of abuse.

We understand that children with a learning disability may be even more vulnerable to abuse because:

- They may be more dependent on adults for their care, including personal care
- They may not recognise abusive behaviour because of their learning disability
- They may have limited communication and be unable to tell someone what is going on
- They may have low self-esteem and not be confident about telling other people that they are being abused
- Their behaviour may be affected by any medication they may be taking
- Their behaviour may be perceived to be associated with their disability rather than abuse.

Policy Statement

This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers who have any contact through their work with children and young people we support who are up to 18 years of age, however, everyone, including the people we support, has a

responsibility to immediately report any concerns they may have that a child or young person is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care.

Any staff member or volunteer who has knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that a child or young person using Positive Futures' services is being abused, or is at risk of being abused, must report it immediately. Volunteers or other persons known to Positive Futures must tell a member of staff in the service. Shared Lives Carers must inform their Shared Lives Social Worker. Any member of staff hearing the concerns of a volunteer, other person known to Positive Futures, or who has concerns of their own, must advise the Service Manager or the designated Child Safeguarding Officer, or an Operations Manager / Director as soon as possible (using the Emergency On Call number if necessary). For staff, failure to do so may be considered gross misconduct in the context of our Disciplinary Policy (see our Whistleblowing Policy).

Positive Futures has a designated Child Safeguarding Officer for children and young people. Any staff or volunteer may contact the Child Safeguarding Officer for advice, guidance and/or support (see the Safeguarding Children Procedure for contact details).

We ensure that staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training every two years in line with best practice.

The following Policy guidelines set the standards for our work relating to safeguarding children:

- We will make sure we have trustworthy people working and volunteering with children and young people.
- We will seek to create a culture of safety for the children and young people we support, minimising risks and maximising protective practices to ensure that they can grow and develop in a stimulating, enjoyable environment, free from concerns.
- In line with our Recruitment and Selection Policy, staff and volunteers are subject to pre-employment criminal record checks and employment reference checks to determine their suitability to work with children and young people.
- Staff should have updated checks through Access NI every three years in line with our Criminal Record Checks and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.
- We will cooperate fully with any safeguarding / child protection investigation and share any information relevant to the welfare of the child / young person.

We make parents / guardians, staff, volunteers and Trustees aware of this Policy and Procedure and the name of the designated Child Safeguarding Officer and how to contact him / her in the event of any concerns.

We will make a copy of our Safeguarding Children Policy, Procedure and associated guidance documents available to all staff and volunteers at induction. Managers ensure that staff and volunteers are familiar with these and are able to put all aspects of them into practice.

We have a Personal Care Plan in place for each child who requires personal care in line with our Personal and Intimate Care Support Policy and Procedure.

We work in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure any allegation of actual abuse or neglect that is reported is managed through our Safeguarding Children Procedure.

Related Documents

Policies/Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding Children Procedure

Guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding Children Handbook• Keeping Children Safe: An Easy Read Guide• Anti-Bullying Guidance <p>Specific to Family Support Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guide to Safe Activities (Family Support Services) <i>[to follow]</i> <p>Specific to Children’s Residential Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting Internet Safety Guidance – Children’s Residential Services• Physical Contact Guidance – Children’s Residential Services• Sexuality and Relationships Guidance – Children’s Residential Services

How has this policy been informed by staff, volunteers and the people we support?

This policy has been informed through consultation with the Operations Team.