

Clegwell & Hartleyburn CIO

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure Guidelines

**THIS POLICY SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL STAFF
VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS AT ALL TIMES.**

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS **STATEMENT**

(Clegwell & Hartleyburn Community Hub (CIO))

This organisation is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are safe and protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Our policy applies to all persons employed or volunteering within our organisation. We recognise our responsibility to respond appropriately and, with respect to children, young people and vulnerable adults, to work with other agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those groups with whom we have contact and to have clear guidelines for our procedures.

- **A child is defined as a person aged up to 18 years old.**
 - **An adult is aged 18 years and over.**
1. We believe every child, young person and vulnerable adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that the people we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
 2. We want children, young people and vulnerable adults who use or have contact with this organisation to enjoy what we have to offer in safety.
 3. We want parents and carers who use or attend our organisation to be supported to care for their children, young people and vulnerable adults in a way that promotes their health and wellbeing and keeps them safe.
 4. We want organisations that work with or commission work from us, or who provide funding to us, to have confidence and recognise that we are a safe organisation.
 5. We will achieve this by having an effective safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedure and following the national guidance in 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused', or the 'Protection of Vulnerable Adults' Act.
 6. If we discover or suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult is suffering harm we will, for children; notify Children's Services via South Tyneside Council's Referral and Assessment Team, Laygate, South Shields. Tel: 0191 424 5010 or contact the police, in order that they can be protected if necessary. For adults, notify South Tyneside Council's Adult Services, Adult Duty Team on (0845)1304959.
 7. This Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement and our Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Procedure applies to all staff, volunteers and users of Clegwell Community Hub (CIO) and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises.
 8. **We will review our safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults' policy and procedures at least every 2 years to make sure they are still relevant and effective.**

Signed:

J Trainer

Date 08.03.26

Director of Organisation

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Clegwell & Hartleyburn Community Hub (CIO)

This organisation will:

1. Arrange to take all reasonable measures to ensure the risks of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults are minimised.
2. Take their Duty of Care seriously and put the interests and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults first.
3. Arrange to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of the child, or children, young people and vulnerable adults, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local services.
4. Ensure Safe Recruitment and Employment practices are observed as we recognise this is an important part in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
5. Have a senior member of the organisation to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding / child protection issues, providing advice and support to other staff, liaising with other staff, and working with other agencies, who will be known as the 'Named Senior Person'. All staff will be made aware of this role:

The Named Senior Lead Person for this Organisation is **(James Trainer 07514 186670)**. In his / her absence the designated person will be **(Emma Lowe 07514 186675)**.

6. Listen to children, young people and vulnerable adults, encourage them to respect and care for others and take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical abuse taking place.
7. Endeavour to create an open and accountable environment, permitting adults, young people and vulnerable adults to voice their concerns about inappropriate behaviour and misconduct while providing strong sanctions to deter abuse, victimisation and cover up of serious malpractice.
8. Ensure policies and procedures apply to all staff (paid or unpaid), children, young people and vulnerable adults, parents and carers regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

Our organisation is aware of the responsibilities, which its staff and volunteers (paid and unpaid) have with regard to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and inappropriate or inadequate care, is committed to responding in all cases where there is concern.

This document will be shared with all staff and volunteers within their induction process to ensure they are familiar with the organisation's beliefs, guidelines and understand their responsibilities.

The documents below provide the framework for the organisations responsibilities as part of a co-ordinated shared response to the health and wellbeing of children, young people or vulnerable adults. All staff will be made aware of these documents and how they can access them.

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#)
- [Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges](#)
- [Worried About a Child](#)
- [South Tyneside Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

Date Policy Agreed:
March 2023

Review Due Date:
March 2027

Practice Guidance

This document has been designed to help workers and volunteers know how to respond to situations where they may have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have contact with in any situation.

For the purposes of the guidance, those adults eligible for support under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures are those who are;

18 years and over and who are or may be eligible to receive support from social care or health services and who may be unable to take care of themselves or be unable to protect themselves against serious harm or exploitation and whose independence and wellbeing would be, or is at risk if they did not receive appropriate health or social care support.

People who may be eligible include adults who are frail, either physically or mentally (dementia) due to old age, adults with mental ill-health, adults with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments, and adults with learning disabilities. Other people to consider include adults who misuse substances, adults whose behaviour or condition puts them at risk of abuse, and victims of domestic violence who meet the above criteria.

It may also include carers; family and friends of those people who provide personal assistance and care to adults on an unpaid basis, who meet the above criteria. Individuals who are not in receipt of services but fulfil the above criteria are eligible for support under the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

Adults who are meeting their assessed care needs through Direct Payments, Individual budgets or Self-Funded Placements, (adults funding their own care arrangements), will be afforded the same support to investigate and safeguard themselves against abuse as would any other adult eligible to access the Safeguarding Adults Procedures.

Please note that just because someone is disabled in some way, or old or ill does not mean that they are unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse. They may be perfectly able to do so. However, research has shown that anyone being cared for, either in a care setting or at home or by other services, is by definition vulnerable. This is because the person is in a position of dependency on others.

Generally, the more dependent a person is on the assistance or support of others to carry out everyday activities of daily life, the more vulnerable the person is likely to be. This is particularly so when there is also a degree of mental incapacity or mental disorder that affects the person's ability to make informed decisions and exercise choice.

Due to the nature of our work, Clegwell & Hartleyburn Community Hub (CIO) may be in the frontline of work with some children, young people and vulnerable adults and their families and/or carers. This may mean that we are the first to know that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult has been abused or that we are concerned about a person's wellbeing. Everyone has an equal responsibility to ensure that children's, young people's, and vulnerable adult's needs are put first and to safeguard any person with whom we may come into contact. This responsibility rests not only with the Trustees (or Manager) but also with every individual employed or volunteering within our organisation whilst at work or at home.

It is essential that all staff and volunteers know how to respond in these circumstances.

All staff and volunteers must endeavour at all times to safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm and exploitation whatever their:

- Race, Religion, First Language or Ethnicity

- Gender or Sexuality
- Age
- Health, ill-health, or disability
- Location or placement (e.g. living alone, in a hostel or residential unit, with their family or a foster family, as a tourist in a hotel, care home residents etc)
- Criminal or offensive behaviour
- Wealth or lack of it
- Political or immigration status

Individuals within the organisation need to be alerted to the potential abuse of children, young people, and vulnerable adults both within families and also from other sources including abuse by members of staff in our and other organisations. They need to know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving these groups. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult in accordance with the procedures provided.

Confidentiality

It is important for all staff to follow the statement of confidentiality outlined below:

We treat all children, young people, vulnerable adults, carers, parents, and families with respect. Information that is given to us will be treated confidentially and shared only with those persons who have an agreed reason to have the information. Information will only be passed to other people with the agreed consent of the person giving the information, except if there are concerns about the welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult. In these circumstances a discussion will be held with the designated worker/line manager and if it is considered appropriate the information will be shared with professionals in the local authority/police/health.

Immediate Action

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children, young people, vulnerable adults and families.

It is always good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns.

IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON, OR VULNERABLE ADULT. THIS MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child, young person or vulnerable adult to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. In the case of a child, it would be appropriate for a responsible person or designated adult to accompany the child to hospital.
- If a child, young person, or vulnerable adult 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 a Police Protection Order.

Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

'Abuse and neglect' is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children, young people or vulnerable adults, including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the person's health or development.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a vulnerable person. Somebody may abuse a child, young person, or vulnerable adult, by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in the family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. An adult or adults or another child or children may abuse them.

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2010 sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

These categories overlap and an abused person does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse (e.g. a child may be suffering physical and emotional abuse). The definitions below encompass all groups covered by this policy.

a) Physical Abuse

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 (*Working Together, 2010*).

b) Emotional Abuse

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far 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 (*Working Together, 2010*).

c) Sexual Abuse

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. (*Working Together, 2010*).

d) Neglect

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 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 (*Working Together, 2010*).

N.B. Children, young people or vulnerable adults need to be protected even when it appears that they are not aware that the physical abuse, or sexual activity that they are involved in or witness, or the neglect they experience, is harmful to them.

Signs of Possible Abuse

When considering whether there is evidence to suggest a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused, there are a number of possible indicators (listed below). However, there *may* be other explanations, so it is important not to jump to conclusions but rather seek advice from Children's Services or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit, in the case of vulnerable adults, contact Adult Services. There may also be no signs or symptoms; this does not mean that a report of abuse is false.

Signs Suggesting Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc that do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*
- Changes in routine

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a person concerning sexual abuse.
- Person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child, young person or vulnerable adult who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia*
- Bed wetting and soiling.

Signs Suggesting Emotional Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child, young person or vulnerable adult withdraws or becomes clingy – also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults, carers, or family
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

*** These signs may also indicate the possibility that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is self-harming.**

Concerns of a general nature/not relating to a specific individual

There may be instances where concerns do not relate to a specific individual. It may be that there are concerns in respect of institutional abuse or neglect within a service, and this may affect a number of people who use that service.

Concerns do not need to be specific to an individual in order to alert. The Duty of Care remains the same whether alerting concerns involving one individual, several individuals or service-related issues that may affect many people.

What to do if children, young people or vulnerable adults talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child or a vulnerable adult may seek out an adult to share information about abuse or neglect with or talk spontaneously either individually or in groups when an adult is present. In these situations, staff members or volunteers must:

- Listen carefully to the child or adult, and NOT directly question them.
- Give the child or adult time and attention.
- Allow the child or adult to give a spontaneous account; do not stop them when they are freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child or 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 or adult's own words where possible.
- Explain that they cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child or adult that:
 - You are glad they have told them.
 - S/he has not done anything wrong.
 - What you are going to do next.
 - Explain that you will need to get help to keep them safe.
 - You must NOT ask the child or adult to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Consulting about the concern

The purpose of consultation is to discuss concerns in relation to a child or adult and decide what action is necessary. Staff or volunteers may become concerned about a child or adult who has not spoken to them, because of something they have observed, or information they have heard about a child or adult.

If a child or adult is upset or has a visible injury it is good practice to ask them why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child or adult who wants to talk. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If staff members are concerned about a child or adult, they must share their concerns. Initially they should talk to their Line Manager, or one of those named senior people above.

If a member of our staff or a volunteer is implicated in any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, staff should report concerns directly to the Children's Services Referral and Assessment Team telephone number 0191 424 5010, or the Adult Services Duty Team telephone number 0845 130 4959. (See section on Allegations Management below)

Staff members and volunteers should consult externally with Children's Services Referral and Assessment Team or Adult Services Duty Team in the following circumstances:

- When they remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child or vulnerable adult protection concerns exist
- When there is disagreement as to whether child or vulnerable adult protection concerns exist
- When they are unable to consult promptly or at all with the designated internal contact for child or vulnerable adult protection
- When the concerns relate to any individual within our organisation

Consultation is not the same as making a referral, but this should help a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Children's or Adult Services or the Police should progress.

Making a referral

A referral involves giving Children's or Adult Services or the Police, information about concerns relating to a child, young person, vulnerable adult 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 circumstances where it is considered that informing parents/carers would place a child, young person, vulnerable adult, yourself or others at immediate risk.

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Children's or Adult Services about how and when the parents or carers should be approached and by whom.

If the concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from someone not known to the child or child's family, young person or vulnerable adult (stranger abuse) make a telephone referral directly to the police and advise the parents or carers.

If the concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, make a telephone referral to the Referral and Assessment Team at Laygate, South Shields Tel: 0191 424 5010 (Children) or the Adult Services Duty Team Tel: 0191 130 4959 (Adults). Outside of Office Hours contact the Emergency Duty Team Tel: 0191 456 2093.

Information required

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

- Provide your name, telephone number, position and request the same details from the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child, young person or 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 any professionals' known to be involved with the child, young person, or vulnerable adult/family e.g.: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concerns, and reason for them.
- Your opinion on whether the child, young person or vulnerable adult may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child, young person, vulnerable adult and family or carers.

- Whether the parent, carer or person with parental responsibility has given their consent to the referral being made.

Action to be taken following the referral.

Ensure that an accurate record is made and kept, detailing the concerns that have been referred.

Make sure the concerns are confirmed in writing to the Referral and Assessment Team or Adult Duty Team 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.

Confidential Records of Concern

Ensure that any records in respect of the children, young people, vulnerable adult, their parents and/or carers are kept confidential in a secure place. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Where the sharing of information is vital to protect a child, young person or vulnerable adult the issue of confidentiality is secondary to their need for protection.

IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT, CONSULT.

Safe Recruitment and Selection

Our organisation will take all possible steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

When interviewing potential staff, we will ensure:

- There is an open recruitment process.
- There is a rigorous interview.
- Applicants' identity and claims to any academic or vocational qualifications will be verified.
- References will be taken up by direct contact with referees.
- Evidence of the date of birth and address of the potential employee will be sought.
- Where appropriate, an enhanced disclosure via the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) will be secured.

Where a position requires an enhanced disclosure, this will be clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post. All applicants will complete an application form enabling each of them to have the same opportunity to provide information about themselves and assist in identifying any gaps in their employment.

During interviews the interview panel will explore:

- The candidate's attitude toward children, young people, and vulnerable adults
- His or her ability to support the organisations agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee.

A job offer will only be made subject to the necessary checks being satisfactory.

All staff will have a job description and contract of employment and be required to work a probationary period.

Post Appointment

All staff and volunteers (paid or unpaid), regardless of previous experience will take part in an induction programme during their first three months of employment.

The purpose of this will be to:

- Provide training about our policies and procedures.
- To provide support to individuals in the role for which they have been engaged.
- To provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.
- To enable the person's line manager, supervisor or mentor to recognise any concerns about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- To ensure that the individual is aware of policies, procedures and statements in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- To ensure that individuals understand how and with whom they should raise any concerns with regard to any practice issues.
- To ensure that individuals are aware of other relevant procedures, e.g., disciplinary, capability and whistle blowing.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate levels of training in safeguarding children, young people or vulnerable adults and other responsibilities in connection with their role.
- To advise individuals about supervision and appraisal systems.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers / Whistle Blowing

Allegations are usually addressed in two areas:

1. Allegations that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being harmed by a member of staff, is known as Allegations Management
2. General allegations of wrongdoing is known as Whistle-Blowing

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure they do not abuse their positions of trust within our organisation. Any concerns raised by a member of staff/volunteer or a member of the public regarding inappropriate behaviour by any member of this organisation will be managed via the following procedure and all allegations will be acted on.

Allegations Management

If anyone raises a concern about another worker, professional or volunteer where they have:

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- Behaved towards a child or children, young people or vulnerable adults in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with these groups in their work, volunteering capacity or private life.

This will be reported to one of the named senior people listed above. The Named Senior Person must inform the South Tyneside Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Allegations Management – Tel: 0191 454 5021. The LADO will advise on how to proceed, whether the matter can be dealt with within our organisation's own arrangements or whether a multi-agency strategy meeting is required. In relation to vulnerable adults, consult the Adult Services Duty Team - Tel: 0845 130 4959.

Where the LADO decides that the issue can be dealt with internally, the reasoning and advice will be recorded and sent to the employee's Line Manager, or one of the named senior people listed above who are designated as being responsible for Allegations Management), Children's Services Referral and Assessment Team and the Police Child Protection Unit. In this instance it will be necessary to comply with the timescales in the Local Authority guidance and inform the LADO of the outcome of the investigation.

Where the LADO decides the case needs to proceed to an 'Incident Evaluation Meeting' (IEM) meeting s/he will make a referral to the Children's Services Referral and Assessment Team and convene the meeting/s in accordance with their guidance.

Complaints made directly to the police will be reported to the LADO as soon as possible and again s/he will decide whether to hold a strategy meeting. The Police may interview the complainant if they feel this is appropriate.

Whistle-Blowing

Members of staff may be the first to notice if anything is seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they might not say anything because they think this would be disloyal, or they might be worried that their suspicions are not justified. They may also be worried that they or someone else may be victimised.

If anyone wants to raise any concern, they can do so with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result. Members of the public should also be encouraged to voice any concerns they raise officially.

What types of action does this include?

This policy is intended to deal with **serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:**

- Fraud or corruption
- Member groups, children, or students, particularly children and adults in our care, being mistreated.
- Unauthorised use of money
- An unlawful act
- Any danger to health and safety
- A person abusing their position for any unauthorised use or for personal gain.
- A person deliberately not keeping to a policy, a code of practice or any law or regulation.
- A person failing to meet appropriate standards.
- A person being discriminated against because of their race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age sex, sexuality, class or home life.

The concern may be about members of staff, or other people who work directly for or with the organisation, as part of a collaborative/partnership agreement.

What is not covered?

Whistle-Blowing policies cannot be used to deal with serious or sensitive matters that are covered by other procedures.

Such Procedures include the following –

- Staff complaints about their employment. These complaints should be dealt with through the Grievance Procedure.
- Customer's complaints about services. These complaints should be dealt with through the Complaints Policy.

Whistle-blowers should be made to feel confident in using the policy to raise issues as where an allegation is true, they have nothing to fear. Let them know that, if necessary, you will take appropriate action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect them from any harassment, victimisation or bullying.

You will keep their concerns confidential if this is what they want, unless you are unable to by law. Explain this at the time they raise a concern so they can decide whether or not to proceed.

Anonymous Allegations

Let people know that because you will protect them (as explained above), you encourage them to give their name when they make an allegation. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective and if, for example, you do not have enough information, you may not be able to investigate the matter at all.

If they feel that they still do not want to give their name, their Line Manager, the senior named people listed above who are designated as being responsible for Allegations Management, will decide whether or not to consider the matter. The decision will depend on:

- The seriousness of the matter.
- Whether the concern is believable.
- Whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

Any member of staff or volunteer raising a concern should first do so with their manager or the nominated person, this will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter, and who is suspected of the wrongdoing.

Concerns are better put in writing giving as much information as possible – including any relevant names, dates, places and so on. The earlier the issue is raised, the easier it will probably be to take effective action.

A person raising a concern will not have to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the allegation is true, but they will have to show that there are good reasons for their concern.

Code of Behaviour

All staff and volunteers are expected to behave in a manner, which reflects the child, young person and vulnerable adult-centred principles of our organisation. This good practice will be reinforced during staff development, supervision, and training sessions.

Working with Children

It is essential that care is taken to minimise the possibility for abuse and misunderstanding and misinterpretation. False allegations are rare but general good practice will help prevent them. The following examples will help to create a positive culture and climate for children, young people and vulnerable adults who visit our premises.

- Never work alone with children, young people, or vulnerable adults out of public view. Leaders should not ask staff/volunteers to work with these groups in situations where staff/volunteers will be completely unobserved.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate emotional and physical distance from children, young people, or vulnerable adults. It is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with children, young people or vulnerable adults who visit our premises.
- Do not engage in rough or sexually provocative games.
- Do not make sexual comments.

- Do not invite or allow children, young people, or vulnerable adults into your home (childminders are an exception and will be registered and inspected according to legal requirements)
- Do not give children, young people, or vulnerable adults lifts in your car except in emergencies (unless this is part of your job)
- Never let allegations, made by anyone, go unacknowledged, unresolved, or not acted upon

Staff/volunteers should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding when touching children, young people or vulnerable adults.

If it is an accepted part of an activity, touching should be appropriate to the situation and follow accepted guidelines where they exist. Consoling a child, young person or vulnerable adult who is upset, administering first aid, or supporting a participant in an activity is acceptable and necessary behaviour.

Listening to Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult says that he or she is being abused or provides information that suggests that they are being abused, the person receiving that information should:

- Be calm and reassure the person but not make promises that may not be kept, e.g. telling the person that no else will be told
- Discuss with the child, young person or vulnerable adult who needs to be told about the situation.
- Take what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says seriously.
- Ask questions only to clarify understanding of what has been said (do not interrogate the child, young person, or vulnerable adult)
- Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult know you understand what they have said and that you will act upon it.

Complaints

It is reasonable for children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents, and carers to have the right to complain or make comment if they are unhappy with the care or service they receive. Clegwell Community Hub (CIO) takes the care of children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously and will address any concerns that are raised.

Receiving complaints and comments about our organisation also helps us to understand the things that we do well and where there are areas that need to be improved.

If anyone would like to complain or comment about any aspect of our organisation it is important to take this seriously and direct them in the first instance to complete a complaints form. If they are reluctant to do this or the situation is regarded as serious the comments should be recorded in writing and brought to the immediate attention of the person's Line Manager (James Trainer CEO or Emma Lowe Community Facilities Manager 0191 4897575 or 07514 186670 / 07514 186675, or The Chair of Trustees (Mrs Liz McHugh) 0191 4897575 or write to Safeguarding Trustee Lead, Clegwell & Hartleyburn Community Hub (CIO), Mountbatten Avenue. Hebburn. Tyne and Wear. NE31 2QP, who is designated as being responsible for dealing with complaints.

Useful Information

NSPCC:

Offers online child protection resources and a Child Protection 24-hour Help line that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk.

Tel: 080 8800 500

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

South Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (STSCB):

STSCB is a statutory partnership that agrees how the relevant organisations in the borough will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in South Tyneside and ensuring that this is effective.

It is responsible for developing, monitoring, and reviewing child protection policies, procedures and practice issues and making sure that training is available to people working with children. The Board works on a strategic level.

Contact Jackie Nolan: Jacqueline.nolan@southtyneside.gov.uk 0191 424 6513

Website: www.stscb.org.uk

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Panel (POVAP)

In April 2008, the Panel established itself as a formal Safeguarding Adults Board with the main aim of ensuring the effective implementation of Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures across all sectors and all agencies supporting vulnerable adults within the South Tyneside.

South Tyneside Council:

The Council is made up of many departments that work with Children, Families, Parents and Carers, however *if you have concerns that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected, or that they may be at risk of harm, you should contact:*

Children

South Tyneside Contact and Referral Team, Laygate, South Shields Tel: 0191 424 5010

Emergency Duty Team (Outside of Office Hours) Tel: 0191 456 2093

Adults

South Tyneside Adult Services Duty Team Tel: 0191 424 6000

Police – non emergency – 101 (to be used except where there is immediate concern)

IN AN EMERGENCY, CONTACT THE POLICE (999)