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Nottingham Central Women's Aid

Safeguarding Children Policy

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Related Documents

NCWA Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
NCWA Confidentiality Policy
NCWA Equality and Diversity Policy
NCWA Whistle Blowing Policy
NCWA Health and Safety Policy
NCWA Record Keeping Policy
NCWA Data Protection Policy (GDPR)

Purpose of the Policy and Procedures

NCWA recognises the direct links between domestic abuse and child abuse and the harm experienced by children. The purpose of this Policy is to outline the NCWA commitment to protect and safeguard children experiencing abuse and the principles underlying our approach. The accompanying Procedures are intended to assist NCWA staff and volunteers to understand their roles and responsibilities when dealing with concerns of a Safeguarding or Child Protection nature and to feel confident about the necessary action to take.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Trustees.

Principles underlying the Policy

NCWA believes that all children and young people have a right to be protected from all forms of abuse or neglect, whether this is physical, sexual or emotional.

- a) NCWA uses a children centred approach, and believes that the child is never to blame for any abuse that they may suffer. The welfare of the child is paramount.
- b) NCWA will offer support and empower the non-abusing parent in order to protect and safeguard children.



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- c) NCWA will ensure that women who have disclosed childhood sexual abuse will be supported to protect and safeguard their children.
- d) NCWA recognises that all adults, including staff and volunteers, have a duty to create safe environments and protect children from harm.
- e) NCWA will ensure that all staff, volunteers, Trustees, parents and service users are made aware of NCWA's safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- f) NCWA will ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children receive Safeguarding Children training.
- g) NCWA has a responsibility to ensure that all adults with access to children are appropriately vetted, trained and supervised.
- h) NCWA will respond to any concern about abuse to children promptly and will refer through the relevant pathways.
- i) NCWA recognises that responsible information sharing plays a key role in enabling organisations and professionals to protect women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- j) NCWA will usually only share information with a woman's consent but will share information without consent where we believe a child is at risk of significant harm.
- k) NCWA will ensure that staff record concerns about child abuse fully and accurately, complete referrals in a timely manner as well as any decisions made and the reasons for them.
- l) NCWA recognises the need to maintain good working relationships with lead agencies for safeguarding children.
- m) NCWA endorses the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Safeguarding Board procedures and accessing the training they provide.

Anti-discriminatory practice

NCWA is committed to anti-discriminatory practice, by taking into account the diverse needs of our service user group and NCWA'S Equality and Diversity Policy.

NCWA recognises the negative impact of discrimination on a child's development. Every effort will be made to challenge discriminatory practice both externally and within NCWA itself by challenging assumptions and stereotypes, recognising differing needs and attempting to meet these needs as far as is practicable.

Definitions



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Abuse is 'a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons'. Abuse can occur as a direct act, a failure to act or provide proper care, preventing others from providing proper care, or failure to report disclosures or suspicions. Abuse may be a single act or may happen over a period of time, it may be planned or happen in the heat of the moment. It may be intentional or unintentional.

These procedures apply to all children up to the age of 18 years.

Abuser an abuser may be: a parent, a carer, another adult including service users, or a child. These procedures will also be used in conjunction with NCWA Disciplinary Procedures where there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.

Child, in accordance with the Childrens Act 1989 and 2004, a child is any person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. For the purpose of this policy and procedures the term children therefore means "children and young people" throughout.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued on insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations 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;
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic abuse;
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;
- Exploiting and corrupting children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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 misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.



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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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness on a child.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of, pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (such as via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is unusual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under section 5 Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Significant risk of harm

Some children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries (section 47) to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Risk to Children Offender (previously schedule 1 offender) a person who has been identified as presenting a risk or potential risk to children.

NCWA recognises that these definitions of abuse are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive.

Safeguarding and Child Protection



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Effective child protection is essential as part of the wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, NCWA will work with agencies and individuals to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

This distinction is taken from Department for Education Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance March 2015.

Identifying Risks

There are a number of assessments that are used to identify risks these are:

- a) EHA – [Early Help Assessment \(City\)](#)
- b) EHAF – Early Help Assessment (County)
- c) Signs of Safety (City)
- d) MARF – Multi Agency Request for Services (City)

Procedures

If any member of staff or volunteer has a concern or reason to believe that a child is being abused or has been abused, discuss this with another worker and if possible the NCWA Designated Safeguarding Children Lead (Sam) a decision should be taken on action to prevent further abuse in line with this Policy.

It is the responsibility of staff to report concerns, NOT to decide whether or not something is child abuse. If a staff member has reason to believe that a child(ren) is at immediate risk of significant harm they should contact the police and where possible the designated safeguarding children lead (but this should not delay action) before following the necessary safeguarding procedures below.

A report or a referral is not a betrayal of trust, it is necessary, so that wider enquiries can be carried out and informed decisions made for the most effective course of action to protect the child and promote his/hers welfare. Staff should not wait until they are one hundred percent certain about their suspicions before they act.

Allegations Management

Any allegation or concern about the conduct or behaviour of a person who works with children and/or young people must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This



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will enable the management of the three strands of the allegations management process (potential safeguarding concerns, criminal investigation and disciplinary procedures).

NCWAs Named Senior Officer is responsible for allegations and information all information should go to them in the first instance before a referral is made to the LADO (Unless the allegation related to them in which case it should go to the management committee). Referrals must be made to the LADO when information suggests that an adult who has contact with children as part of their employment or voluntary work may have:

- 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 in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children

Referral

Assess the severity and need to protect

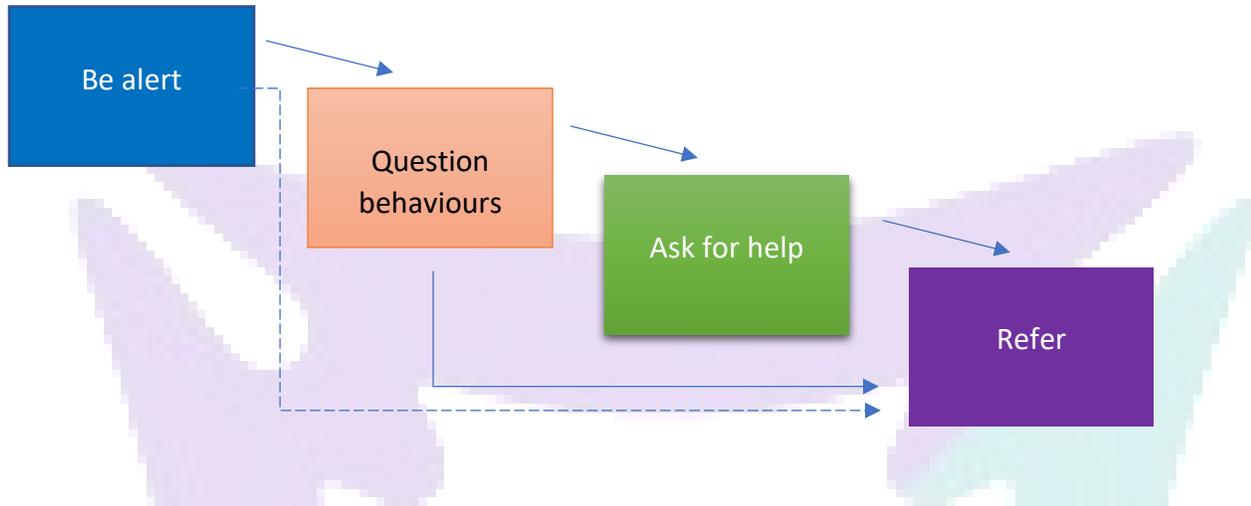
Before making a Safeguarding referral and only if safe to do so, 2 workers (wherever possible) will speak to the mother of the child concerned and inform her of the concerns in a non-judgemental manner. The child protection procedures along with legal duties should be explained along with what will happen next e.g. a referral made to social care. The mother should be reassured that her and the children will be supported throughout the process.

Wherever possible, consent for the referral should be gained.

It may sometimes also be helpful to discuss the referral with Children's Social Care, the MASH (County), Nottingham City Council Children's Services or the NSPCC (giving no names) and to ask what action would likely be taken in this situation. Health Visitors may also be able to offer helpful advice, or an internal Safeguarding meeting can be called with relevant workers, the manager and/ or the Designated Safeguarding Lead to reach a decision.

The Safeguarding procedure ([Appendix 1](#)) gives you a guidance on how to make referrals and saving your information in On-Track.

The response to a suspicion or allegation of abuse follows our four stages (NSPCC Safeguarding Children)



It may not always be appropriate to go through all four stages sequentially. If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, you should refer to children's social care and/or the police. Before doing so, you should try to establish the basic facts. However, it will be the role of social workers and the police to investigate cases and make a judgement on whether there should be a statutory intervention and/or a criminal investigation.

Alerting

NCWA expects that all staff will alert their manager and/ or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to suspicion or disclosure of abuse. NCWA has also developed a Whistle Blowing Policy to provide reassurance to staff that they will be supported in making an allegation of abuse if that allegation is made in good faith.

Question Behaviours

The signs of child abuse might not always be obvious, and a child might not tell anyone what is happening to them. NCWA expects staff to question behaviours if something seems unusual and try to speak to the child, alone, and if appropriate to seek further information.

- a) If a child reports abuse, following a conversation you have initiated or otherwise, that they are being abused and neglected, you should: listen to them fully and do not interrupt,
- b) do not interrogate the child, it is not your role to investigate, do not ask leading questions and only ask open questions,



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- c) take their allegation seriously, and reassure them that you will take action to keep them safe, but DO NOT make any unrealistic promises E.g “everything will be alright now”.
- d) Do Not ask the child to repeat anything that they have said for another worker.
- e) Try to take notes or write up the conversation as soon as possible. Record the time, date, place and any non-verbal behavior and words used by the child. Do not paraphrase.
- f) You will need to decide the most appropriate action to take, depending on the circumstances of the case, the seriousness of the child’s allegation and check whether there are already multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place.
- g) You might refer directly to children’s social care and/or the police or discuss your concerns with your line manager or DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). At all times, you should explain to the child the action that you are taking.

Asking for Help

Concerns about a child’s welfare can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness, how they have been identified and over what duration they have arisen. If you have concerns about a child, you should discuss this with another staff member and where possible the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Referring and recording information

When referring or considering to refer a child to children’s social care, you should include any information you have on the child’s development needs and their parent’s/carer’s ability to respond to these needs within the context of their wider family and environment.

A staff member who suspects or discovers abuse is expected to consider:

- Is an immediate referral to Children’s Social Care or the Police required?
- Any immediate health or medical needs
- Is there a need to move the child to a place of safety?

Reports are embedded on On-Track with the relevant client record

All verbal referrals to Children’s Social Care or the police must be followed up in writing within 24 hours.

Reporting



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Immediately after an incident of abuse or neglect has been reported or witnessed, a staff member should write up the concerns and discuss with another staff member.

The safeguarding concerns recorded should contain only factual information, (not opinions,) about the alleged incident including details of conversations with the mother/carer, child, staff members or other service users. The dates and times of these conversations must be recorded. Discussions between staff about their concerns should also be recorded. All reports should be signed and include both the child's name and date of birth, so it is clear who has written the report and when it was written.

The concerns should be regularly updated as the information can be useful if there are any further allegations or concerns about abuse or neglect.

If a referral has been made to Children's Social Care, monitoring and plans to protect the child should be carried out in consultation with the appropriate agencies, and by using the EHA and CAF (City), EHAF (County) and Teen Dash Ric for reference (if required).

Investigation

A strategy discussion/meeting will be led by Social Care to determine what investigations need to happen by whom and by when. If the alleged incident involves a potential crime, then the police will be involved in the investigations. If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is a member of staff or volunteer of NCWA a referral will be made to the relevant LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). Alongside the referral to LADO the relevant NCWA Disciplinary Procedure will be followed and DBS may be contacted if appropriate. This may involve the member of staff or volunteer being suspended on full pay while the investigation is carried out.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Upon entering NCWA services, a woman will be informed about NCWA'S Safeguarding Children and Confidentiality policies.

The law permits the disclosure of confidential information if it is necessary to safeguard a child. Therefore, it is important that women with children understand that there are limits to confidentiality when safeguarding children's issues are involved. Confidentiality should not be confused with secrecy. If there are clear indications that a child is at risk of serious abuse, NCWA will either refer the case to Children's Social Care for assessment or involve the Police if a criminal offence has been committed or the child urgently requires protection.



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In cases, where the issue may not be considered to be serious, the children's worker and another member of staff will talk to the mother to agree actions. This could include completing an Early Help Assessment Form or Multi Agency Request Form – this can be completed if consent is not given but cannot be shared unless there is a risk.

Duties to refer/concerns about a child

Please refer to the NCWA Guidance in the [appendix 1](#) as a guide to how to deal appropriately with safeguarding cases.

Safeguarding Children Conferences

Before the conference: The key worker (or the staff member who has been assigned to work with the child and the mother) should contact the family's social worker (if they have one) before the safeguarding children conference takes place to announce their involvement with the family, to ask for copies of reports and to request an invitation.

Safety Policies

All children have the right to be safe and to be protected from harm. NCWA will ensure that health and safety procedures are followed to create a safe environment for children. Any potential hazards will be drawn to the attention of staff and service users and will be dealt with as soon as possible. However, there is always the risk of accidents particularly when there is a large number of children, and ultimately it is the responsibility of each service user to ensure the safety of her own child(ren).

The duty of care and Public Liability Insurance

All NCWA staff paid or volunteers, are under a legal duty of care to safeguard and protect children using our services. Failure to do so could invalidate the organisation's Public Liability Insurance.

NCWA will ensure that adequate records are kept of any accidents or injury to children. Staff and volunteers will receive guidance and training in Health and Safety legislation and also regulations concerning the care of children.

Involving the Police



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The police, along with the Children's Social Care, have a lead role and statutory responsibility in Safeguarding Children. They also have a general responsibility to protect the public and prevent crime.

The police have emergency powers to remove a child from a dangerous situation, if there is an immediate threat to the child (such as abduction threats occurring during a contact visit).

It may also be appropriate to contact the police directly in circumstances where an offence has been committed against a child and urgent investigation is needed to prevent the removal of evidence.

Additional Sources of information

- Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB)
- Pathway to Provision Version 9.1 (County)
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/129861/pathwaytoprovisionhandbook.pdf>
- [Family Support Pathway 2018/20 \(City\)](#)
- [Signs of Safety \(City\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation](#)

National guidance

Government guidance "Safeguarding Children involved in Prostitution" (DOH 2000)

- National Women's Aid Safeguarding Children Policies
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- NSPCC Safeguarding Children

NCWA Safeguarding Procedure - Appendix 1

1. If you have a disclosure from or concern about a child:

You will need to speak to another team member and where possible the designated safeguarding lead before making a referral to DART, MASH, or Children and Families Direct Hub.

Using your On-Track (OT) send a message to the safeguarding lead regarding your safeguarding referral.



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2. County or City Referrals

If your referral is around concerns for a child in the **CITY** where a DASH RIC assessment has been completed for the mother send the referral to the DART. Where a DASH RIC has not been completed send the referral to Children and Families Direct. For city referrals a MARF form should be completed.

Referrals where there are concerns about a child in the **COUNTY** should be sent to the MASH (County).

Records of all Safeguarding concerns should be added to your On-Track within the relevant client record all referral forms must be added to uploaded documents.

3. Advice and Support

Professionals with a safeguarding concern – [Nottingham City](#) safeguarding children partnership.

The city now has a new **Single Point of Access system** where you can phone to make a referral to Social Care or ask for advice.

The number is: Children and Families Direct Hub on 0115 876 4800. Children and Families Direct is operational Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm.

Email: candf.direct@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Fax: 0115 876 2927

Emergency Duty Team: 0115 876 1000

Prevent: 0115 876 5512

Domestic Abuse Referral Team (DART): 0115 915 0494

Domestic Abuse Referral Team (DART) Email: dart@nottinghamcity.gcsx.gov.uk

Name	Role	Contact Details
Claire Maclean	Schools and Education Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Claire.Maclean@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Tel – 0115 8764749
Karen Shead	0-19 Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Karen.shead@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Tel – 0115 8764725
Debbie Mawson	LADO Business Support	lado@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 0115 8763193



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If no contact with any of the contacts above	Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership	0115 876 4762 0115 876 4747 0115 876 4148
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COUNTY – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

For referrals or enquiries phone: 0300 500 8090

Emergency Duty Team 0300 456 4546

Email: mash.safeguarding@secure.nottscg.gov.uk

Nottinghamshire Local Authority Designated officer (LADO): 01623 433 169

Relevant Legislation

Children Act 1989 & 2004

Children and Families Act 2014

General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR)

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

Serious Crime Act 2015

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2014

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Education Act 2002

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991

Domestic Abuse Act 2021