



# Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

*Note: Parent Carers Together is not a safeguarding agency. Safeguarding issues will be passed to the Police or other appropriate statutory bodies such as BCP Council Children's Services First Response Hub.*

## The purpose of this policy document:

***“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”***

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

## Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure an understanding of how Parent Carers Together (the parent carer forum for Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole) meets its responsibilities to promote the safeguarding of children and young people.

This policy provides clear guidance to Parent Carers Together Steering Group about their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children and young people, and to provide information to parents and carers about the measure that Parent Carers Together employs to ensure that it meets its responsibilities to promote the welfare of, and safeguard children and young people.

## Legislation and guidance that underpins this Policy

This Policy and Procedures have been developed in line with the principles of The Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004, The Children and Families Act 2014 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 and with reference to the following:

- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2006)
- Every Child Matters 2004
- Non-Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Disabled Children (2009)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



## **The Principles behind this Safeguarding Children Policy**

There is clear evidence that disabled children and young people have an increased vulnerability and heightens risk of abuse. It is important that all those who work with children and young people with SEND understand this and know what to do in the event of abuse being disclosed.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. All agencies and individuals share the responsibility to protect children from harm or the risk of harm. The application of this policy is based on the following principles:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.
- The welfare of children and young people is paramount.
- All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership is essential in promoting children and young people's welfare.



We all have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm.

Parent Carers Together does not have unsupervised direct contact with children and young people, however, by the nature of our organisation we do work directly with parents and carers of special needs/disabled children and young people. Therefore, it is essential that we have robust policies and procedures in place.

Whilst it is not the responsibility of Parent Carers Together to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, this is undertaken by external child protection professionals, it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns to the relevant authorities.

All Steering Group members and staff are expected to be familiar with, and comply with this policy, and its procedures.

### **Policy Statement**

Parents and carers who attend or are members of PCT need to be aware that any concerns that a child or vulnerable adult has, or may be experiencing harm, which comes to the attention of the Steering Group will be referred to the local statutory agency.

The Steering Group/Board members and any staff will be recruited using safe recruitment procedures to ensure that they are suitable individuals to take on a role that puts them in contact with large numbers of parent carers.

Steering Group/Board members will be provided with training and induction to assist them in fulfilling their duties.

### **Definitions and Signs of Abuse**

Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and young people is defined 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.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).



There are 4 recognised types of abuse, and it is important that our volunteers and staff know what they are and how to recognise them. Children and young people can be abused by each other and adults. Abuse occurs when harm is inflicted or when it fails to be prevented. Children and young people with SEND are particularly vulnerable. Children can be harmed in a variety of settings; it is often the case they are harmed by people they know, although rare, they can also be harmed by strangers to.

- **Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill-health, to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using the term fabricated illness. Physical harm may also be as a result of the failure to act to protect.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or young person 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people. It may involve causing the children and young people to feel frequently frightened or in danger or involve exploitation or corruption of children and young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment, although it may occur on its own.



- **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual acts or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse is not gender specific and can be carried out by children and young people as well as adults.
- **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 or young person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing, failure to protect from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child or young person's basic emotional needs.

### **Reporting Procedures – Do Not Hesitate**

It is necessary that action is taken to safeguard the child in all cases.

#### **Immediate action:**

- If medical attention is required, an ambulance should be called via **999** or the child/young person should be taken to A&E.
- If a child is in immediate danger, the police should be called via **999**. It is only the police that have the power to remove a child immediately, via a Police Protection Order.



### **Guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of abuse:**

- Do treat allegations seriously, listening carefully to what is being said.
- Do allow a spontaneous account of information. **Do not** interrupt. **Do not** interrogate. **Do not** change the subject.
- Make an accurate record of the information given, including those present, the presentation of the informer as well as what was said. **Do not** throw this away; it could be needed in future as evidence. An accurate record should also contain:
  - Date and time of what has occurred and date and time of disclosure
  - Names of people who were involved
  - What was said or done by whom
  - Any action taken by the group to gather information and refer on
  - Any further action taken i.e., suspension of a worker or volunteer
  - Where relevant, reasons why no referral to a statutory agency
  - Name of person reporting and to reported
  - Do make sure that the words recorded are those of the informer.
  - Ensure they are aware that you cannot promise to keep this secret but reassure them they have done the right thing in talking to you.
  - Explain what you are going to do next and who you need to speak with and why, ensuring they understand their safety is paramount.

The designated person responsible for Safeguarding within Parent Carers Together should then use the appropriate reporting systems for the situation. This may be reporting the matter to Local

## PARENT CARERS TOGETHER



**Bournemouth Christchurch Poole**

the voice of parent carers of young people with  
special educational needs and disabilities

Authorities Children's Social Care or the police. This is why recording all information impartially and accurately is vital as this could be used for evidence for later use.

### Who to Contact:

The Children's First Response Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact for Children's Social Care and Early Help in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole.

Phone:

01202 123334 Monday - Thursday 8.30am-5.15pm. Friday  
8.30am-4.45pm

01202 738256 Out of Office Hours - Monday-Friday 5pm-9am  
next day.

Email:

[childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) Monday-Friday 9am-5pm  
[childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) Out of Office Hours

*If the concern is regarding someone aged 18 + please contact:*

01202 123 654 Mon – Fri 9am-5pm

03001 239895 [Out of Hours Emergency Duty Service](#)

(Monday-Thursday 5pm-9am.

Friday 4.30pm- 9am Monday)

Email: [asc.contactcentre@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:asc.contactcentre@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

It is possible to contact the NSPCC with concerns and they will inform the relevant professional agencies.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 email:

[help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Consultation is not the same as a referral but should enable a decision



to be made as to whether a referral to the police or Social Services is needed.

### **Consult Social Services if:**

- After internal consultation it is still not clear if a child protection concern exists.
- If there is a disagreement about whether a child protection concern exists.
- When it is not possible to consult internally.
- If the concerns relate to a member of the Steering Group.

### **Referrals:**

A referral gives the police or Social Care information about concerns to enable enquiries to be undertaken and any necessary action taken. It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parent carers about any concerns and if you need to make a referral to social care, you should normally discuss this with the parent carer before you do. However, inability to inform parent carers should not prevent a referral being made. It would then be a joint decision with Children's Social Care about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom

If the concern is regarding risk of abuse or abuse from someone not known to the child or family, a referral should be made directly to the police (01202 222222, 101, [MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk) email only to be used if non-urgent-Monday-Friday 8am-6pm) in consultation with the parent or carers.

If the concern is about the risk of abuse or abuse from a family member, or someone known to the children, referrals should be made to Social Care.





## **Recruitment Selection and Vetting Process**

Any employees will be subject to a rigorous recruitment process, which would include a vetting process with a CRB check, and references sought as well as a formal interview process.

Steering Group members will also be vetted to ensure that they are suitable individuals to take on a role which places them in contact with a large number of parents and carers.

Steering Group Members and staff will be provided with training and induction to assist them to fulfil their duties.

## **Allegations against adults who work with children and young people**

If you have information which suggest an adult who works with children or young people (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children

You should speak immediately with the nominated safeguarding advisor. The safeguarding officer will consult with / make a referral to the LADO for the relevant area. (Local Authority Delegated Officer.

## **Code of Conduct**

Parent Carers Together has a Code of Conduct which all Steering Group members are expected to comply with.

The Code of Conduct has a clear section in relation to action taken should a safeguarding issue be raised in relation to a member of the Steering Group.

Steering Group members must inform the Chair about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your

## **PARENT CARERS TOGETHER**



**Bournemouth Christchurch Poole**

the voice of parent carers of young people with  
special educational needs and disabilities

responsibilities appropriately or risk bringing the name of Parent Carers Together into disrepute.

The following are examples of types of circumstances

- Any allegation that an individual may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed a crime
- Any child protection or safeguarding concern relating to children and / or vulnerable adults.
- Any significant challenge between individuals and Government agencies (e.g. where individuals may end up in a litigious relationship with a central or local Government Department)
- Other similar circumstances

In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the Steering Group member to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgmental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand. It is felt necessary however to insist on this protocol to safeguard both Parent Carers Together and the individual involved.

### **Nominated Safeguarding Adviser**

The nominated Safeguarding Advisor for Parent Carers Together Steering Group is: Louise Middleton.

The role of the nominated officer is to:

- To provide a single point of contact between Parent Carers Together and the statutory child protection agencies - children's social care and the police.
- To offer consultation and advice about safeguarding and child protection concerns pertaining to the activity of Parent Carers Together

## **PARENT CARERS TOGETHER**



**Bournemouth Christchurch Poole**

the voice of parent carers of young people with  
special educational needs and disabilities

Policy Adopted on	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2019
Reviewed on	July 2020 July 2022 June 2023
Next Review Date	September 2024