



# **CHILD PRETECTION POLICY**

## Document Control

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# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

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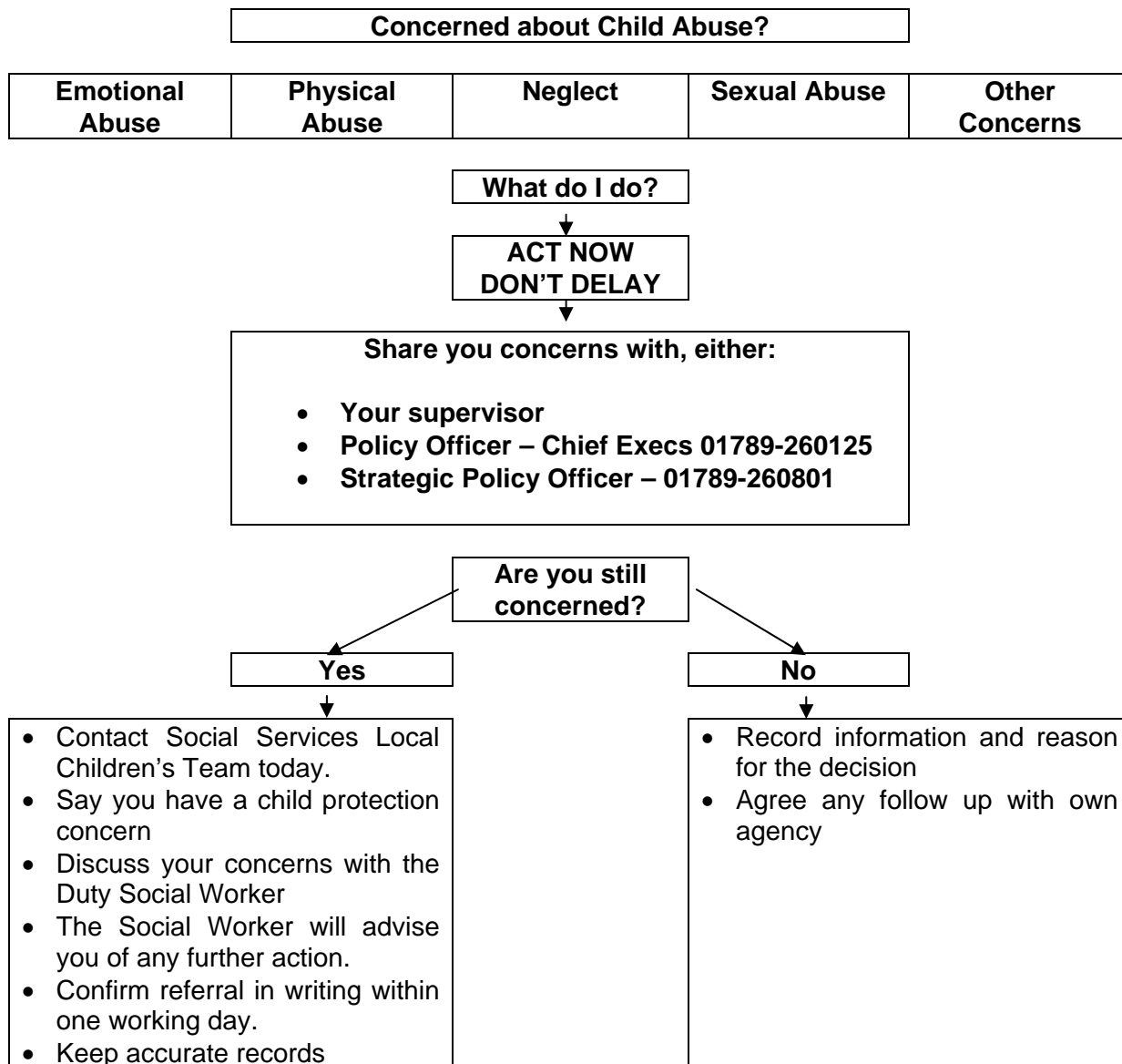
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Social Services Children's Team - (01827) 720800. (01926) 410410

Police Child Protection Unit [24 hours] (01926) 415000 ask for Control Room Inspector

**Remember** – no young person is immune from abuse.

If you have concerns pass the information on to Social Services.

LET THE DUTY SOCIAL WORKER DECIDE whether or not further enquiries are justified.

YOU NEED NOT GIVE NAMES STRAIGHT AWAY IF IT HELPS YOU MAKE THAT CALL

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In producing this Policy, Stratford-on-Avon District Council recognises that it has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure that when staff are given responsibility for children, they should provide them with the highest possible standard of care. This Policy has been developed on the basis of guidelines set out by the Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee and Warwickshire County Council Social Services Children's Team.

1.2 Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and all forms of clubs and societies. It is known that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. Everyone providing services for children, whether paid or voluntary, has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing their abuse.

### 1.3 Policy Statement:

**'As a provider of public services it is Stratford-on-Avon District Council's responsibility to ensure that it as an organisation, and the individuals within the organisation, takes all reasonable steps to protect young people using Council services from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and respecting their rights, wishes and feelings.'**

1.4 This can be achieved by:

- a) Offering safeguards, as outlined in this document, to the young people with whom we work.
- b) Ensuring that members of staff, elected Members, volunteers and members of organisations using Stratford-on-Avon District Council facilities or contracted to undertake work on behalf of Stratford-on-Avon District Council are appropriately:
  - Checked for their suitability to work with young people, and
  - Trained in child protection procedures.
- c) Being active in promoting the well-being and safety of children and young people in all our services.

1.5 Stratford-on-Avon District Council is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people. To do this, Stratford-on-Avon District Council undertakes this commitment by:

- Recognising that all young people have the right to freedom from abuse.
- Ensuring that all our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of young people in their charge.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and providing parents and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Having officers who will take responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies.

- Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the appropriate staff and the appropriate external authorities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protection Policy and activities after one year and every three years thereafter.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the child protection policy and procedures during their induction and working towards appropriate Child Protection Training.

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility on Stratford-on-Avon District Council to co-operate with Warwickshire County Council to improve the well-being of children across all five outcomes:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-being

Specifically, the Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by:

- Appointing a Member Champion. This is the Portfolio holder Revenues and Housing.
- Appointing a Senior Manager, reporting directly to the Chief Executive, as champion. The Council's senior officer champion is the Head of Revenues and Housing.
- Setting out a clear statement of the Council's responsibilities towards children and making it available to all employees.
- Establishing clear lines of accountability and effective working arrangements within the Council for safeguarding children.
- Using the views of children & young people to shape services
- Ensuring safe recruitment procedures for those coming into contact with children & young people
- Appropriate training for all employees
- Enabling effective working relationships with other relevant agencies and sharing information appropriately. The Council is represented on the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board by the Head of Partnership Development.

This corporate policy aims to fulfil the requirement to set out clearly the Council's responsibilities towards safeguarding children and has been developed on the basis of the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Child Protection Procedures and the DfES paper, "The Role of District Councils in Improving Outcomes for Children".

This policy aims to provide corporate guidance on safeguarding children. However it cannot cover the detail of every Council service. Heads of Service must review their own methods of working and where necessary produce their own service policies covering their own service specific activities.

## **2 RECOGNISING ABUSE**

### **2.1 Being Alert to Children's Welfare**

Everybody who works with children, or works with parents and other adults in contact with children should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, indicators that a child's welfare or safety may be at risk. The abuse or harm to children may occur from:

- Parents;
- Others who have parental responsibility;
- Adults who are in a position of trust or who are temporarily entrusted with their care;
- People who, though not having parental responsibility, are known within a wider circle of the family or neighbourhood;
- A complete stranger;
- Other children;

It must also be recognised that abuse or harm occurs as much from omissions and lack of protection as from commission of acts of abuse. Effective measures to safeguard children should not be seen in isolation from the wider range of support and services available to meet the needs of children and families:

- Many of the families who become the subject of child protection concerns suffer from multiple disadvantages. Providing services and support to children and families under stress may strengthen the capacity of parents to respond to the needs of their children before problems develop into abuse. It is worthy of note, however, that Child Protection permeates all classes of society;
- Child protection enquiries may reveal significant unmet needs for support and services among children and families. These should always be explicitly considered, even where concerns are not substantiated about significant harm to a child;
- If child protection processes are to result in improved outcomes for children, then effective plans for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare should be based on a wide-ranging assessment of the needs of the child and their family circumstances;
- All work with children and families should retain a clear focus on the welfare of the child. Just as child protection processes should always consider the wider needs of the child and family, so broad-based family support services should always be alert to, and know how to respond quickly and decisively to, potential indicators of abuse and neglect.

### **2.2 Assessing Children in Need**

The Department of Health *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* provides a systematic basis for collecting and analysing information to support professional judgements about how to help children and families in the best interests of the child.

The framework is to be used for the assessment of all children in need including those where there are concerns that a child may be suffering significant harm. The definition for Children in Need used in Warwickshire identifies a range of circumstances in which children may be deemed in need if their health or development would be impaired without provision of service.

## **2.3 Background Factors Influencing the Vulnerability of Children**

Many families under great stress nonetheless manage to bring up their children in a warm, loving and supportive environment in which the children's needs are met and they are safe from harm. Sources of stress within families may, however, have a negative impact on a child's health, development and wellbeing, either directly, or because they affect the capacity of parents to respond to their child's needs. Research tells us that such sources of stress may include the following.

### **Social Exclusion**

Many of the families who seek help for their children, or about whom others raise concerns about a child's welfare, are multiply disadvantaged. Many lack a wage earner. Poverty may mean that children live in crowded or unsuitable accommodation, have poor diets, health problems, be vulnerable to accidents, and lack ready access to good educational and leisure opportunities. Racism and racial harassment are additional sources of stress for some families and children.

### **Domestic Violence**

Everyone working with women and children should be alert to the frequent inter-relationship between domestic violence and the abuse and neglect of children. Where there is evidence of domestic violence, the implications for any children in the household should be considered, including the possibility that the children may themselves be subject to violence or other harm.

Domestic violence has an impact in a number of ways. It can pose a threat to an unborn child because assaults on pregnant women frequently involve punches or kicks directed at the abdomen, risking injury both to mother and foetus. Children may also suffer blows during episodes of violence. Children may be greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent. Both the physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by adult victims who experience domestic violence can have a negative impact on their ability to look after their children.

Children who are experiencing domestic violence and/or conflict may benefit from a range of support and services, and some may need safeguarding from harm. Domestic violence and/or conflict is not in itself a definition of abuse but, as outlined above, children living in circumstances where this is a feature may be at risk and in need of child protection services.

### **Mental Ill Health**

Mental ill health in a parent or carer does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child, but it is essential always to assess its implications for any children in the family. Parental illness may markedly restrict children's social and recreational activities. Where a parent is suffering from a mental or physical illness, children may have caring responsibilities placed upon them inappropriate to their years. If they are depressed, parents may neglect their own and their children's physical and emotional needs. In some circumstances, some forms of mental illness may blunt parents' emotions and feelings, or cause them to behave towards their children in bizarre or violent ways. Children most at risk of significant harm are those involved in parental delusions, and children who become targets for parental aggression or rejection, or who are neglected as a result of the parent's illness.

## **Drug and Alcohol Misuse**

As with mental ill health, it is important not to generalise, or make assumptions about the impact on a child of parental drug and alcohol misuse. It is, however, important that the implications for the child are properly assessed. Maternal substance misuse in pregnancy may impair the development of an unborn child. Some substance misuse may give rise to behaviour that put children at risk of injury, psychological distress or neglect. Children are particularly vulnerable when parents/carers are withdrawing from drugs. Children may be at risk of physical harm if drugs and equipment are not kept safely out of reach.

## **Children who are Disabled**

The particular needs of children with disabilities may make initial recognition more difficult. Disclosures of abuse may be less likely from children who are disabled because of communication difficulties, or isolation, or lack of awareness. Children who are disabled may have less access to safety/abuse prevention programmes. Signs may be more subtle, more confusing or explained away as resulting from a child's disability. Some disabled children may receive intimate personal care, possibly from a number of carers, which may increase a risk of exposure to abuse and make it more difficult to maintain physical boundaries.

Recognition of the abuse of a child who is disabled does not need specialist skills, but the application of existing knowledge to the particular vulnerability of these children who will be children in need. Examples of things to be aware of include changes in mood, demeanour, emotional distress or different patterns of behaviour.

## **2.4 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. The local authority (WCC) is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. A court may only make a Care Order (committing the child to the care of the local authority) or Supervision Order (placing the child under the supervision of a social worker, or a probation officer) in respect of a child if it is satisfied that:

- the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; and
- that the harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to a lack of adequate parental care or control.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely in judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes a single traumatic event may be considered as significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is an accumulation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosive nature of long-term emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm.

## **2.5 Definitions of Abuse**

The following definitions of abuse and the guidance on recognition are given to assist professional staff and those providing services to children in assessing whether abuse may have occurred. A child is defined as a young person under the age of 18 years.

Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Non-organic failure to thrive may be a feature or a result of neglect.

### **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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This used to be described as "Munchausen syndrome by proxy" and is now described as fabricated or induced illness. Any instances of female circumcision, excision or infibulations will be regarded as physical abuse under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, abusive images including the internet or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or failing to discourage them from such behaviour.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 or inadequate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## **2.6 The Impact of Abuse and Neglect**

The sustained abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually, can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being.

The harm may be physical, such as neurological damage, physical injuries, impaired growth, disability or, in the extreme, death.

The harm may be emotional and impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem and is especially damaging in infancy. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and substance misuse may feature in the families where children suffer emotional harm.

The harm may be psychological, manifesting itself in behaviour problems, such as aggression, long-term difficulties with social functioning and relationships, educational difficulties or intellectual impairment.

Sexual abuse can lead to disturbed behaviour, including self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour that may endure into adulthood. The severity of the harm increases the longer the abuse occurs, the more extensive the abuse and the older the child. The severity of harm is also linked to the extent of premeditation and the degree or threat of coercion. The child's ability to cope with the experience of sexual abuse, once recognised or disclosed, is strengthened by support of a non-abusive adult or carer who believes the child, offers protection and helps the child to understand the abuse.

### **3 MAKING A CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL**

#### **3.1 In What Circumstances to Refer**

It is particularly important that all those whose work either brings them into contact with children or contact with adults who have children, are alert to the definitions and indicators of child abuse. In circumstances where **you** have concerns that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm to his or her health or development, or where a child gives information detailing abuse, the following principles must be adhered to. This is irrespective as to whether a possible instance of abuse has occurred outside of a district council event or not.

- a) all concerns and allegations, whatever their origin, must be taken seriously and considered with an open mind which does not pre-judge the situation;
- b) in circumstances where a child volunteers/discloses information about abuse, listen to the child. **Do not question him/her**;
- c) never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events. The child should **not** be asked to repeat their story to a colleague or asked to write it down;
- d) in circumstances where a child has an injury but no explanation is volunteered, it is acceptable to enquire how the injury was sustained;
- e) if there are concerns about the explanation given for the cause of the injury, these must be referred to Social Services;
- f) always make a written record as soon as possible of any information volunteered to you. The record will include the time it was written, the setting, personnel present, as well as what was said;
- g) record all subsequent events up to the time of Social Services/Police intervention;
- h) do not promise confidentiality;
- i) **ACT NOW – DO NOT DELAY.**

It is the responsibility of the individual professional who identifies concerns to ensure that the matter is referred to Social Services without delay.

While professionals should, in general, seek to discuss any concerns with the family and where possible seek agreement to make referrals to Social Services, **this should only be done where such discussions will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm or cause any significant delay.**

Whilst advice can be sought from a senior officer, this should not unduly delay the referral process. Concern need not be related to a single specific incident. It may also arise from the accumulation of minor concerns.

### **3.2 Procedures to follow when making a referral**

An Officer may in the first instance wish to contact the Policy Officer with lead responsibility for Young People in the Policy and Public Relations Unit on **01789-260125** – or the Strategic Policy Officer in Environmental Services on **01789-260801**.

If either of these Officers is not available, and you are sure that there is a problem, referral to the Social Services Department on **01926 410410**, and ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker. All the County Social Services Offices are contactable through this one number.

Out of hours, the Emergency Duty Team should be contacted on **01926 886922**. Make it clear you are making a Child Protection Referral.

If you do contact Social Services, do let Policy and PR know that you have done so.

When you are making a referral regarding child protection concerns, it is important to have the following information wherever possible readily available for the duty social worker:

- Name, date of birth, ethnic origin, gender of the child, address and telephone numbers;
- The reasons for your concern;
- Injuries and/or other indicators observed;
- The child's first language;
- Details of any specific needs of the child, e.g. disability, etc;
- Details of family members, if known;
- Other agencies, professionals involved;
- Family doctor.

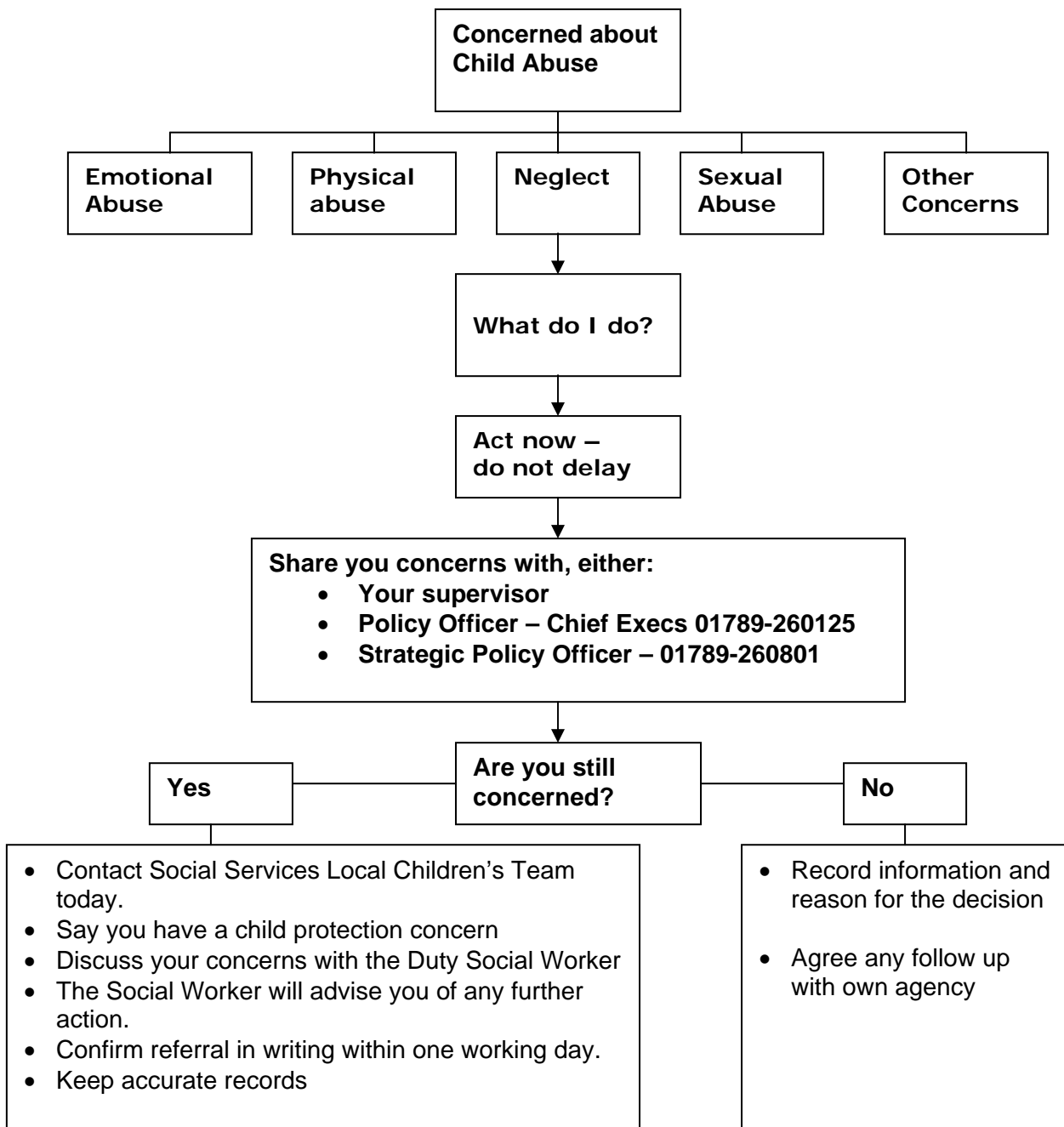
Social Services will make enquiries with other agencies who may have information regarding the child and family. On the basis of the information gathered, they will then make an initial assessment on what further action is necessary or appropriate.

Whenever Social Services receive information about a possible criminal offence against a child, they will share the information with the Police at the earliest opportunity and a decision will be made jointly on how to proceed with the enquiries.

Following the referral of a child, the referrer and the Social Services Department must be clear about who will be taking what action.

Professionals who contact Social Services to make a referral should confirm the details of this in writing within 24 hours addressed to the Children's Team Manager for that locality.

### 3.3 Summary of Child Protection Guidelines



**Emergency Contact Numbers**

Social Services - Out of Hours Service - (01926) 886922  
 Social Services Children’s Team - (01827) 720800. (01926) 410410  
 Police Child Protection Unit [24 hours] (01926) 415000 ask for Control Room Inspector

**Remember** – no young person is immune from abuse.

If you have concerns pass the information on to Social Services.

LET THE DUTY SOCIAL WORKER DECIDE whether or not further enquiries are justified.  
 YOU NEED NOT GIVE NAMES STRAIGHT AWAY IF IT HELPS YOU MAKE THAT CALL.

## 4 SESSIONAL GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS - Health and Safety

### 4.1 Type of Session – official guidelines

The table below summarises how the providers of early education and day care for children under eight are regulated – *day care provision is not included below as the District Council does not provide child care of this nature (e.g. playgroups, schools, nurseries).*

Type of Provision	When to register with Social Services?
Crèche	- is a facility which provides occasional care for children under 8 and are provided on particular premises for more than five days in a year. They need to be registered where they run for more than 2 hours per day (even if individual children attend for less than 2 hours)
Out of School Care	- is a facility providing day care for children under 8 which operate during one or more of the following periods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before school</li><li>• After school</li><li>• During school holidays</li></ul> The total care provided is more than 2 hours in any day and for more than five days a year. This form of care can include children from 3 years old as well as those over 8. e.g. summer camps, holiday playschemes, after school clubs. Open access schemes are excluded.

### 4.2 Ratios of Adults : Children

The ratios that must be adhered to, to comply with the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) guidelines which are as follows:

Children 0 - 2 years 1 adult : 3 children (Children up to the age of 2)  
Children 2 - 3 years 1 adult : 4 children (Children from the age of 2 up to the age of 3)  
Children 3 - 8 years 1 adult : 8 children (Children from 3 up to the age of 8)  
Children 8 – 16 years 1 adult : 20 children (no official guidance)

### 4.3 Parental Consent

Consent forms must be completed by parents/guardians to enable children to take part in Stratford District Council sessions and activities. At one-off events, where this is impractical, session leaders should ensure that they have: name, address, basic medical information and an emergency contact number. Other information may include consent for photographs or video to be taken, consent to travel in a car/minibus and details on who will collect the child at the end of the session.

### 4.4 Site Surveys

Prior to the start of a session, all staff should familiarise themselves with the venue. Staff should be aware of the location of telephones, fire exits and emergency evacuation procedures, toilets, first aid kit, and equipment stores. Staff should also check the work area for safety hazards such as slippery floors, or objects placed in hazardous locations (e.g. corridors, at the side of activity areas, etc.).

#### **4.5 Registration**

Before a session, staff should make sure that they have all appropriate documentation, including registers, medical consent forms and minor/major accident report forms. Information on the register should include; child's name, address, home telephone number, session/course time, emergency contact telephone number (neighbours, grandparents) date of birth and information about any medical problems.

#### **4.6 Identification**

Stratford District Council staff managing a project or activity must always wear a name badge and appropriate uniform in order to identify themselves to children and parents.

#### **4.7 Medical Consent Forms**

All parents/carers should sign a medical consent form when their child first attends a session (if a child is subject to a care order, Social Services must give medical consent). This is to ensure that leaders have all relevant information concerning a child's health before the start of each session. If a parent does not wish to sign a medical consent form, Stratford District Council retains the right to refuse admission to the session.

#### **4.8 Behavioural Problems**

Staff should treat disruptive behaviour seriously, as it can spoil the session for other children. A child should be warned that if bad behaviour continues she/he will be removed from the session. If problems persist the parents should be informed so that they can speak to the child. If there is still no improvement the parents should be informed and the child may be permanently removed from the session.

#### **4.9 End of session**

It is advisable to end the session with all children together, and be aware of who is collecting them from the session. If a child is not collected from a session, two members of staff should remain behind and a parent should be contacted as soon as possible. Staff should reassure the child that they have not been forgotten. If, after this time the child is not collected, staff should contact line management. At this stage the Police may be contacted and alerted to the situation. Staff should remain with the children until advised by the Police.

#### **4.10 Accident Report Forms**

At least one member of staff working at the session must be first aid qualified, and all staff must be aware of the location of accessible first aid kits. A nominated member of staff should also be responsible for checking and re-stocking first aid kits. Non prescriptive medicines or tablets should not be given to any child, except when medical consent has been given by the parents/carers and is documented in a 'Safe Working Procedure'.

If an accident occurs, an accident report form should be completed as soon as possible after treatment has been given. Report forms should be filled in with as much detail as possible concerning the accident. Forms should be signed by the parent/guardian when they collect the child. If the person collecting the child is not the parent/guardian, a duplicate accident report form should be sent home with the child. Forms should then be handed to line managers as soon as possible.

#### **4.11 Restraint Policy**

It is essential when working with children to understand what physical restraint is and when its use is acceptable. The Department of Health has outlined three main levels of physical intervention in the control of children's behaviour – i.e. restraint.

- a) Simple physical presence as control, involving no contact – e.g. standing in front of an exit.
- b) Holding and touching to persuade a child to comply with verbal requests – e.g. holding a child's hand or using shoulders to steer a child away from a situation.
- c) Actual physical restraint, where the child is held or held down.

It must be remembered that the decision to intervene via actual physical restraint is an option to be decided upon as a professional decision, to be taken calmly and in full knowledge of the desired outcome. Though it will probably be as a last resort, it is not an act of desperation but a conscious decision to act in the child or other's best interest.

#### **When to implement Physical restraint;**

- d) If a child is in imminent danger of significant self harm through his/her actions.
- e) If a child is placing others in imminent danger of significant harm through his/her actions.
- f) If a child is about to cause or is causing serious damage to property.

#### **It is also important to remember when not to use physical restraint;**

- g) Exact retribution.
- h) Retaliate for any reason.
- i) To punish the child or young person.
- j) As any kind of treatment or therapy.
- k) To be an administrative convenience.
- l) Instil fear.

Staff may be liable for abuse/GBH allegations if any injury is caused to a child whilst under restraint. If a child becomes excessively violent, the parents and the police should be contacted and assistance obtained from other people on site.

If restraint is used, then the incident should be recorded, and reported to the Policy Officer in the Chief Executives Department. This is to help you if there any follow up to the incident, as well as to enable an audit trail to be maintained. The Policy Officer is responsible for monitoring all such incidents.

#### **4.12 Code of Behaviour**

Do treat everyone with respect

Do provide an example you wish others to follow

- Do plan activities so that they involve more than one other person being present, or at least in sight or hearing of others
- Do respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Do provide access for young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like and provide a caring atmosphere
- Do use common sense when demonstrating skills e.g. discuss your actions with children or young people when contact is necessary
- Do remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Do recognise that caution is required especially in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
- Do (on overnight excursions) - have separate sleeping accommodation for supervisors / trainers and children
- Do use gender, cultural and disability sensitive language

- 
- Do not permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. ridiculing, bullying)
  - Do not play physical contact games with young people
  - Do not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with other
  - Do not jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
  - Do not allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes but deal firmly and fairly with such behaviour at all times
  - Do not exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
  - Do not show favouritism to any individual
  - Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures or tell jokes or stories of a 'smutty' nature
  - Do not rely on your good name to protect you, it may not be enough!
  - Do not believe "it can never happen to me" it can!
  - Do not get close to or have physical contact with a young person without clearly explaining what you are doing (e.g. correcting the position of a foot, showing a skill in the water) etc.

#### **4.13 Use of Digital Cameras and New Generation Mobile Phones**

Historically, some photography has always taken place in leisure facilities and settings to record competitions, birthday parties or for publicity purposes. Modern cameras and new generation mobile phones present the opportunity for misuse. Their use has,

therefore, been banned from all Stratford District Council leisure facilities and projects involving children. Opportunities for legitimate photography is, however, enabled through consultation with the relevant course or facility manager.

The Institute of Sport and Recreation Management has produced guidelines on the above, which includes recommending a ban on the use of mobile phones.

## **5. GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS - Recruitment And Training**

### **5.1 Reducing Opportunities for Allegations / Abuse to Occur**

It is a manager's responsibility to protect the children attending their sessions, and to protect any members of staff from being accused of improper behaviour.

Managers should be aware of the need to reduce the opportunities for allegations of child abuse being made against staff. This can be achieved through an appropriate induction and training process.

All staff who are likely to have unrestricted access to children must undergo an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before being recruited. If there is restricted access, then a standard CRB check is required.

- There should never be a situation where a member of staff is left alone with a child. Managers must ensure that there is always another member of staff in the room where the session is being held. Managers should ensure that all staff are made aware of this during their induction.
- Staff should avoid taking children home alone in the car. If this situation is unavoidable, however, staff should ensure there are others in the car, or obtain signed permission from the parents detailing when the child will be returned home.
- All staff should receive child protection training and a copy of these guidelines. The manager has a responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of child protection procedures, that they are trained and are fully aware of the need to eliminate, as far as is practicable, child abuse opportunities.

### **5.2 Recruitment and Criminal Records Bureau Check (CRB)**

All staff who have unrestricted access to children will have to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check. Please refer to the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy. These will be renewable; enhanced checks will be renewed after two years, and standard checks after three years. The full policy on CRB Checks can be seen at Appendix 2.

### **5.3 Child Protection Training**

All staff who have unrestricted access to children (including playscheme workers) must attend a child protection training course. Suitable courses are provided by Sports Coach UK including 'Good Practice and Child Protection', 'Working with Children' and Warwickshire County Council.

Stratford District Council staff should contact Sports Development or the Policy Officer in Policy and Public Relations if they have a training need in this area, subsequent to which a local course will be identified or if there is sufficient demand one can be organised by the Sports Development Officer or Policy Officer.

Up-date training should be provided to ensure staff are fully aware of current procedures and informed of any changes as they may arise.

#### **5.4 Clubs and Organisation using SDC Facilities**

It is preferable that all clubs and organisations, or their Governing Bodies, using Stratford District Council facilities, should have an acceptable Child Protection Policy in place.

As a minimum requirement, all such clubs and organisations must accept and apply the standard of care as outlined within this Policy. A copy of the Policy will be made available on request to hirers with Terms and Conditions of hire information.

#### **5.5 Contracting Individuals and Organisations**

All contracts with individuals or organisations should include an assessment of risk with regard to child protection issues. If necessary, contracted staff should undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check. Individuals should accept and apply the standard of care as outlined within this Policy. Organisations should have their own Child Protection Policy where necessary, or should also accept and apply the standard of care as outlined within this Policy.

#### **5.6 Allegations against Staff**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff it will be very distressing for all concerned. The member of staff may not be made aware of the allegations made against him/her and for their own safety, and the safety of the child, but may be suspended "without prejudice". Suspension must occur irrespective of any personal feelings. Staff should be advised to seek legal advice. Social Services should be informed of the situation.

Should such an incident occur, refer to section 5.9 of the Blue Book. This will be done by the Policy Officer in Revenues and Housing or the Strategic Policy Officer in Community Services, in conjunction with the appropriate Director and Head of Personnel.

The confidentiality of the member of staff and the child involved must be maintained at all times. A "No Comment" statement should be given to other parents and press should they enquire.

It may be necessary to contact the Police if there is a prospect that a criminal offence may have been committed. Such a decision will be taken by the appropriate Director and the Head of Customer Services.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy is based on the work undertaken by North Warwickshire Borough Council, which Stratford District is grateful to have been able to use.

Dr Vic Tuck.

*Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board Development Officer*

John M. Sullivan

*Education Safeguarding Children's Manager, Warwickshire County Council.*

Documents used to help devise this guide include:

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused.

*DfES, ODPM, DH, Home Office, Lord Chancellor, dcms.*

Towards a child safe Essex

*Essex Child Protection Committee, 1977*

Interagency child protection guidelines,

*Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee Interagency Procedures, 2004*

Protection children - A Guide for Sportspeople

*Penny Crisfield/NCF/NSPCC, 1997*

Sports Development - Coach Guidelines

*Warwick District Council, 1997*

Full Day Care - Standards of Day Care for Children Under 8 -

*Warwickshire County Council Social Services - 1993*

Anne Shearer - Warwickshire County Council - Child Protection Team

Working together to safeguard children in Warwickshire

*Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee, 2001*

**INCIDENT FORM** Personal Details

Name of child (BLOCK CAPITALS - correct spelling and any previous names)		Ethnicity of child
Telephone number:		Home Address
Age	Date of birth	
Parent / Guardians Name (BLOCK CAPITALS - of person with parental responsibility)		
Who lives with the family? (Names, Date of Births etc.)		

Details of Incident (please continue on another sheet if necessary)

Location of incident (full details)	Date and time of incident:
Details of witnesses (name, address, contact details)	
Incident details ( <i>please see notes overleaf</i> )	
Details of action taken - if none, please state reason for decision:	

Declaration (person completing the form)

I declare that the information provided is correct to the best of my knowledge Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)	
Signature	Date

**This form should be forwarded to the [POST REF] as soon as possible under PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL COVER**

## **INCIDENT FORM CHECK LIST**

Good recording of details is essential, whether for a referral or to inform senior officers if a decision is made not to report an incident.

Things to consider:

### **For physical abuse:**

- Where is the injury?
- Who has seen it?
- What does it look like?
- How does the child say it happened and when?
- Does the explanation fit the injury?
- Is the child in obvious pain? - (Does the child need to go to hospital?)
- Has the child's behaviour or attitude changed - how and when?

### **For sexual abuse:**

- Who is saying what?
- What is the child actually saying?
- When did this happen?
- Does the person live in the same house?
- Is it safe for the child to go home?
- Can the child write down what has happened with enough detail for it to make sense?
- Is the child in pain?
- Has the child's behaviour altered - how and when?

Other forms of abuse:

**Neglect**  
**Emotional Abuse**

## CRB POLICY

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The Police Act 1997

The Police Act 1997 (Part 5) increased the protection available to vulnerable members of the community, ie.: the elderly, young, ill and disabled, by improving the comprehensiveness of the information available to employers. This enables employers to make more informed recruitment and retention decisions concerning the individuals who are applying to work with, or are already working with, these vulnerable members of the community. This protection can also be legitimately extended to public or private funds and assets when designated.

#### 1.2 The Criminal Records Bureau

The Act created this facility by establishing The Criminal Records Bureau in England and the Disclosure Scotland service in Scotland. These organisations provide a service called Disclosure which is a carefully regulated 'one-stop-shop' service that enables organisations to gain access to important criminal and other information for recruitment and licensing purposes. The Disclosure service offers organisations a means to check the background of job applicants and existing employees to ensure that they do not have a history that would make them unsuitable for the relevant posts.

#### 1.3 Disclosures

Disclosures are documents containing information held by the police and government departments which provide details of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC). If the position involves working with children, Disclosures will also contain details from lists held by the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) of those considered unsuitable for this type of work. Depending upon the level of Disclosure, it might also contain information held by local police forces.

#### 1.4 Level of Disclosure

There are three levels of Disclosure: Enhanced, Standard and Basic. In England and Wales only Enhanced and Standard are currently available, the Basic will become available shortly. In Scotland, Disclosure Scotland is already offering all three therefore a Scottish candidate may present a Basic Disclosure.

#### 1.5 Declarations and Basic Disclosures

The Act also provided employers with the right to:

- Ask any applicant or employee to *declare* current ('unspent') convictions
- Request a Basic Disclosure from any applicant or employee.

While Stratford District Council does not intend to do this, even when Basic Disclosures become available in England, if the Council remains in any doubt about an individual's integrity, the right to pursue this confirmation exists.

## **2. CRB Policy Statement**

- 2.1 As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' and employees' suitability for positions of trust, Stratford District Council complies with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions, existing staff and service-users fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction, offending background or other information revealed.
- 2.2 We have written advice within our 'Recruitment Guidelines' on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which can be made available on request to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- 2.3 We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and encourage applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience – Declarations on Criminal Offences and CRB Disclosures are not viewed until after the Selection process is finalised.
- 2.4 A Declaration and Disclosure are only requested after an assessment by the Head of Service and/or the Head of Personnel Services has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. Individual employees are welcome to contribute to the safeguarding of vulnerable members of our community by highlighting posts to their Head of Service or Personnel Services which have developed over time in such a way that a Declaration and Disclosure check could be warranted.
- 2.5 Stratford District Council reserve the right to request a Basic Disclosure from all applicants and employees, however current practice involves requesting completion of a Declaration of Criminal Offences and pursuing CRB Disclosure checks only for those positions considered applicable for Standard or Enhanced Disclosures, ie.: positions involving regular contact with vulnerable members of the community.
- 2.5 We ensure that all those in Stratford District Council who are involved in both the recruitment process and in the re-assessment of posts over time, have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g.: the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Police Act 1997 (Part 5). We also ensure that Declaration and Disclosure information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- 2.6 We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

## **3. Procedure**

- 3.1 Prospective employees

- 3.1.1 Where a Declaration and Disclosure check are to form part of the recruitment process and will be pursued for the successful candidate, all job adverts, interview and appointment literature will contain a statement to this effect.
- 3.1.2 For all advertised posts for which a Declaration and Disclosure check are recommended, we encourage successful applicants to provide details of their criminal record on the Criminal Offences Declaration Form. Failure to reveal conviction history or information that is directly relevant to the position sought, or failure to consent to undergo a CRB check when requested, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- 3.1.3 We undertake to discuss any matter revealed either by the applicant personally, or in a Disclosure, with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. We ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.

## **3.2 Existing employees**

- 3.2.1 Once an applicant is employed in a post which is subject to a CRB Disclosure, in the case of an Enhanced Disclosure they will be required to undergo a new Disclosure check every 2 years and in the case of a Standard Disclosure they will be required to undergo a new Disclosure check every 3 years.
- 3.2.2 It is incumbent upon ALL employees who are aware their posts are subject to a Disclosure check to inform Stratford District Council immediately if they are convicted of ANY offence between Disclosures. The Council reserves the right to determine if the nature of the offence is relevant to the position held. Failure to declare ANY offence will be a Disciplinary offence and dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary procedure.
- 3.2.3 There may be instances where a job or service has developed over time in such a way that Management and Personnel Services deem it necessary to request a Declaration of Criminal Offences from, and to conduct Disclosure checks on, existing postholders. In the interests of the community it serves, Stratford District Council reserves the right to request employees to complete Declarations and to undergo Disclosure checks upon request.
- 3.2.4 Failure to consent to a Declaration and Disclosure check will raise doubts in the minds of authorised Officers of Stratford District Council as to the suitability and integrity of the employee. The Council therefore reserves the right to formally re-assess the employee's position, including a consideration of redeployment or termination of employment.
- 3.2.5 When the results of a Disclosure check upon an existing employee give cause for concern, particularly if information received does not match that provided on their Declaration, the employee would always be given the opportunity to discuss the information received from the CRB. Stratford District Council reserve the right to act upon information received from the CRB. This action, if the information warrants it, could include redeployment within the organisation or termination of employment.

## **4. Results of Disclosure Checks**

The existence of a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from joining our organisation or continuing to work with Stratford District Council. The

outcome will depend on the nature of the position, the individual's honesty and the circumstances and background of the offences.

## **5. General Principles**

### **5.1 Compliance with CRB Guidelines**

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants and employees for positions of trust, Stratford District Council complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Declarations, Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Declarations and Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request ('Data Protection Access to Files' policy).

### **5.2 Storage and Access**

Declaration and Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's or employee's personal file and is always kept separately, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

### **5.3 Handling**

In accordance with Part 5 Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Declaration and Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Declaration or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

### **5.4 Usage**

Declaration and Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested.

### **5.5 Retention**

Once a recruitment, or confirmation of suitability for employment, decision has been made, we do not keep Declaration or Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Declaration or Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the CRB about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

## 5.6 Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Declaration or Disclosure information is immediately and suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e.: by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Declaration or Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g.: waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Declaration or Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Declaration or Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

## 6. Cost of Disclosures

The cost of Disclosure checks is re-allocated to the appropriate Department.

July 2004

## Guidelines issued to Sports Development Staff

### Behaviour management

**When taking part in an activity it is important to remember that children's behaviour is best shaped through positive encouragement of desirable behaviour. The District Council has a responsibility to provide an environment, which does not permit the use of any form of physical or mental abuse.**

### Unacceptable behaviour

Understanding why children do things helps activity leaders to react to their behaviour in the best possible manner. First, however, it is important to define unacceptable behaviour ... unacceptable to whom?

It is all too easy for "no's" and "don't" to roll off the tongue when they are not always necessary but more a reflection of our tiredness and frustration.

We also sometimes think children are deliberately trying to annoy us when, in reality, they are just being children, as opposed to behaving like adults. It is important to remember that children do forget things, daydream, get messy and often have uncoordinated hands, arms and legs and get things wrong because they are not yet fully developed.

Once you have clear boundaries and can define, at your site, what is and is not unacceptable behaviour, it is helpful to understand what may be causing it. There are many different reasons, but they can be categorised.

### Rational

Behaviour can be seen as a rational response on the part of the child to a particular situation (rational to the child's eyes that is ... maybe not to the adult!). The child has a clear aim in mind and may see a mode of unacceptable behaviour as an effective method of achieving this aim. Most children aim to attract attention ..... **to be seen ... to be heard ... to be noticed.**

### For example:

- to test a new member of staff/test limits.
- to have some fun (activity leaders are often very funny when angry).
- to get attention / to get help.
- to leave a tag mark.
- to get their own way.
- to show they are bored.
- to generate some excitement.
- to win respect of other children.

- to protest about unreasonable rules / unfair treatment.
- to avoid losing face by backing down.
- to try and beat the system.

If children find they can achieve their aims through unacceptable behaviour they will be all the more likely to do it again. Make sure you don't unwittingly reinforce the unacceptable behaviour. For example, if the children "wind you up" because they think "it's a laugh" change your behaviour when you get cross so that there is no fun for them in annoying you any longer. Be aware, however, at the same time their behaviour may imply a legitimate complaint about your work or you.

If there is a hidden message, make sure you 'hear' and act on it. For example, they may be telling you through unacceptable behaviour that they are bored because there isn't much to do and the programme you have put on is not suitable.

### **Learned behaviour**

Some children's unacceptable behaviour is simply copying something they have previously learnt at home, at school, from peer groups, from the media etc. For example:

- Racist language / behaviour.
- Sexist language / behaviour.
- Violent behaviour.
- Attention seeking.
- Drug / solvent abuse.

All learnt behaviour needs to be unlearned. You will not create a golden child or completely undo / reverse negative behaviour patterns in the limited time you are working with these children. However, to reinforce positive values in an effective manner will often have an impact that will be remembered by a child for a long time.

### **Special problems**

Some children experience problems that go beyond the ups and downs of everyday life. For example:

- Psychological disturbance.
- Child abuse.
- Hyperactivity (recently referred to as Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder).
- Issues with other family members.

It requires great skill, knowledge and sensitivity to correctly identify problems of this type. When such problems are identified, the approach must be based on helping, rather than correction or punishment. Signs of serious problems are best referred to specialists.

If you suspect any of the above liaise with the Site Co-ordinator or Senior Sports Development Officer.

## Dealing with challenging behaviour

- Activity Leaders should not have to tolerate bad language, verbal abuse or behaviour that will ruin the activity.
- Always try to show a genuine attitude of caring. You might not accept certain behaviour but you can still accept the child.
- Have clear rules and boundaries agreed with staff and children so “acceptable” and “unacceptable” is clearly defined.
- Have agreed consequences for broken rules, i.e. withdrawal of certain privileges, assisting with chores, time out place. Consequences need not be too severe. “Banning” children may say something about our inability to manage the children, rather than their behaviour.
- Listen to children; don’t assume you are always right, you may have missed something. You can earn respect by showing some to the children.
- Always try to be consistent and fair (avoid favouritism).
- Be honest – admit to your mistakes when you make them.
- Give full explanations as to why some behaviour is unacceptable – don’t assume they already know.
- Encourage empathy – do this actively via role-play and co-operative games and activities.
- Have a quiet room / area where you can listen and talk with children individually – always make sure you are not alone in a room with a child or out of view of others.
- Be observant and pro-active – learn from the children you observe.
- **Never** humiliate, bully or belittle a child or feel you have to win, no matter how frustrated or tired you may be. Far from ‘winning’, you will lose the children’s respect, respect that you may have worked hard to establish.
- If you find a particular child’s behaviour difficult, make your colleagues aware of this. Ask to be removed temporarily from supervising him/her if you feel you are going to ‘snap’. If a colleague enjoys a more positive relationship with the child than you do, find out how he/she achieves this and try to replicate successful approaches.
- Keep the programme ‘busy’, fun, exciting and challenging to create opportunities for children to achieve.
- Be aware of “how you tick”. Prepare and deal with the best array of wind up techniques children experiment with. Find ways of dealing with this inside yourself ... control your own emotions.
- Organise site meetings for planning and discussion with your colleagues to support, evaluate and prepare.
- Inform children if bullying occurs it could result in contacting parents and removal from the scheme.

## *Bullying*

Activity Leaders must be vigilant as to children's behaviour towards one another, especially for signs of bullying. Remember that bullying can be physical or verbal.

If you suspect bullying is taking place, try to distract the perpetrator with other activities, reorganise groups if necessary and appropriate to do so. Make other staff aware of your concerns.

You may need to work with others on site to address the bullying behaviour. The Site Co-ordinator should do this, with support from the Senior Sports Development Officer as needed.

If all else fails, a decision may need to be taken to withdraw the child's place, for the sake of others welfare. Contact parents for the child to be removed from the scheme.

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

### **Examples:**

<b>INVENTIVE</b>	<b>COURAGEOUS</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT</b>
<b>CREATIVE</b>	<b>CARING</b>	<b>HELPFUL</b>
<b>CURIOUS</b>	<b>IMAGINATIVE</b>	<b>RESOURCEFUL</b>
<b>THOUGHTFUL</b>	<b>EMPATHETIC</b>	<b>KIND</b>

### **Can be encouraged by:**

Giving praise – listening – giving approval – staying calm – giving support – being consistent – letting children lead – allowing acceptable risk – playing with children – rewarding positive behaviour – planning with children – respecting children's rights – showing by example – seeking children's opinion – giving encouragement – making contracts with children – more do's than don'ts – keeping promises – keeping smiling.

## **Staff relationships with children**

- Hero worship for an older person of the opposite sex does very often occur. Please make sure that with all children, you do not find yourself in a compromising situation.
- No matter how innocent your participation is in an activity, do not allow yourself to become a partner or do anything that could be misconstrued by anyone. A simple example of this is the popular game of Truth, Love, Dare, Kiss or Promise.
- Do not allow children of the opposite sex to walk arm-in-arm with you or with their arms around you.
- Do not go into a quiet corner or secluded spot with any child, there are relationships other than boy/girl!!
- Your behaviour must be of an exemplary manner.
- You must not at any time allow yourself to indulge or be encouraged to indulge in any activity that can bring you, or the Council, into disrepute.
- Always remember that the children have very vivid imaginations and a great deal of their lives are spent in the world of fantasy; one small innocent action could be misconstrued to such an extent that you could find yourself in serious trouble with none to verify your actions during the period concerned.
- Do not allow the children to wander off in pairs or small groups, especially if you feel their intentions are not entirely honourable.
- If you have any suspicions that children are engaging in any activity that can be classed as a sexual or criminal nature, whether on or off the premises but during scheme hours, please report this to either your Site co-ordinators or direct to the Sports Development Officer.
- Visits and exploring still hold a certain amount of interest for this age group, but their questions can become far more technical so be prepared.

## ***Child Protection Policy***

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people.

### **What is child abuse/protection?**

This is the most important section of the whole manual. Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults, and often by people they know and trust.

- Child protection is the activity that promotes the well being of children and protects them from significant harm.

**Parents and carers are at the forefront of this activity – however if they are having difficulty in fulfilling these tasks and are unable to protect their children, the Local Authority are legally obliged to step in and provide protection.**

Indicators for suspicion for non-accidental injury

- Children can and do have accidents. Most childhood accidents are uncomplicated, easily described with injuries in common places. However, for children who have been injured in suspicious circumstances, one or a combination of factors will be considered when a diagnosis is being made.
- A child brought late for an examination or treatment.
- Injuries of a multiple or mixed type.
- An inappropriate history to the injury, the age of the child, a complicated and or variable history to the injury, including a history of frequent surgery visits for trivial reasons.
- Inappropriate parental reaction – over or under reacting, angry, disinterested.
- What is the child saying & what are others telling you?
- How the child appears and how the child and parent interact with each other.

### **Common physical signs**

- This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a guide that describes the common areas of physical injury.
- Finger tip bruising / thumb marks to tops of arms or under shoulder blades.
- Multiple and unexplained bruising to eyes, face and head, genitalia and limbs. Pain or itching of the genital area.
- Linear bruising – injury by belt or strap.

- Scalds or burns – injury by dunking or splashing, particularly to feet and lower leg, including cigarette burns.
- Adult bite marks. Torn or stained and blooded under clothes.
- Mouth injuries, torn lips and gums.
- Ear injuries – injury by pinching the tip, lobe or behind the ear.
- Head injuries – injury caused by a blow, shaking, throwing against a wall or floor.
- Babies with non-moving limbs. Difficulties walking or sitting.
- **Abdominal or internal injury. Distended stomach – possible sign if emaciation.**

### **Possible behaviour signs to indicate sexual abuse.**

- This list is not exhaustive. It describes some of the possible behaviours demonstrated by children who are or have been sexually abused. The behaviours can also be indicators of non-sexual life trauma for a child.
- Mood changes, tantrums, aggression, compliance, sudden school difficulties. Suicide attempts, substance misuse, self-harming.
- Insecurity and attention seeking. Poor self esteem, anxiety, depression, despair.
- Poor peer relationships. Withdrawal. Being secretive. Running away.
- Sleep and/or eating disorders.
- Lies, stealing, arson. Unexplained money and/or gifts – possible indicator of a kept secret or prostitution.
- Premature understanding of sex, inappropriate sex play, being seductive or promiscuous.

### **General policy on confidentiality**

- Instruction about how confidential information is recorded and stored securely.
- Who a professional can seek advice from if a child makes a statement of harm.
- Guidance on how confidential information is managed on a need to know basis amongst professionals.
- Guidance regarding who has access to this information.
- Mechanisms that continually remind people of the need for confidentiality in order to stop gossip and rumour.
- Thresholds and actions taken if a professional is considering dispensing with seeking consent to share information with another agency.

*When a child makes a disclosure?*

- Where abuse or neglect is suspected, the member of staff should:
- Listen carefully to what the child is saying.
- Do not put your own interpretation onto what you have heard.
- Do not ask leading questions – you can ask if there is anything else the child wants to tell you. Point of disclosure – you cannot ask them any questions.
- Do not promise to keep a secret.
- Tell the child what you will do next.
- Immediately record the facts – time, date, place, who was present, what was said, what was seen, who they are and their responsibility.
- Immediately report the disclosure to your child protection co-ordinator.

**Indicators of Neglect and Emotional harm**

**NEGLECT**

- Inappropriate clothing, bonding.
- Poor hygiene.
- Chaotic and/or poor school attendance.
- Disorganised with lunch boxes, P.E kits, etc. esteem.
- Hungry, stealing food, changeable feeding habits.
- Difficult relationships.
- Environmental growth or development delay.
- Unexplained or frequent illness.
- Low self esteem, attention seeking.

**EMOTIONAL HARM**

- Poor or no parent/child bonding.
- Child pushed away.
- Child clings to parent and then gives up.
- Punishment of self-esteem.
- Always criticised.
- Only receives negative responses.
- Lack of quality time.
- Parent does not or is unable to engage in a meaningful way – playing games.
- Punishment of inter-personal skills.

Parent who must always be in control and demonstrates inappropriate discipline.

**NB: For further information regarding Child Protection, please consult the Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee procedure – Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures. (Revised 2004 Blue folder).**