

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people is everybody's business

1. INTRODUCTION

The YMC Committee recognises that all members have a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of children and preventing abuse.

This document is designed to provide a basic procedure which should be followed in every case.

2. BACKGROUND

Everybody has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and ensure the Child Protection Policy and related procedures are followed at all times.

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person aged 17 years and under. The 2004 Children Act also includes those aged less than 25 years who are defined as 'vulnerable adults'.

3. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

It can involve any one or more of the following:

Physical abuse: This involves hitting, burning, punching and slapping.

Emotional abuse: This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child eg ridiculing.

Sexual abuse: This involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the young person is aware of what is happening.

Neglect: This is persistent failure to meet a young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

The harm or potential harm may become evident in a number of different ways. It may be that a young person makes a verbal disclosure about an abusive situation, or their behaviour changes or is unusual and so raises concerns, or there may be an injury that causes concern. As well as specific instances, it may be that a number of factors occur over time which causes concern. Third party disclosures are also common.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for reviewing the Child Protection Policy & Procedures working in conjunction with the BMC Guidelines and Procedures.

The Child Protection Officer is also responsible for ensuring all records and paperwork regarding concerns are appropriately recorded and securely stored. The Child Protection Officer or Advisor will complete a Child Protection Action Form to record and monitor each concern.

The role of the Child Protection Officer is to share relevant information where appropriate with other agencies, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the young person, and **is not** to investigate any concerns.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any concern about risk, abuse and harm to a young person needs to be taken seriously and handled in a sensitive manner.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given. Action should always be taken by reporting the matter in the appropriate way.

Information should be strictly limited to those who need to know within the YMC and appropriate agencies where relevant. Any written records will be kept securely by the Child Protection Officer.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

How to Respond to a Disclosure, Suspicion or Allegation

“ If there is a concern about a child’s welfare, or the behaviour of an adult the one thing not to do is do nothing”

Child Protection (policy and guidelines) MCofl 2003

If a child indicates to you that they are being abused in some way or information comes to you of possible abuse, on receiving this information you should:-

React calmly - do not rush into inappropriate action. What you are told may be very shocking but it is important you give the child some stability.

Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that they did the right thing to tell someone, i.e. you, about the incident.

Take the child seriously and listen carefully to them. Recognise how difficult it was for them to tell you.

Only ask questions which help to clarify the situation. Do not question any

more than is strictly necessary. The law is very strict when it suspects a child has been led or ideas have been suggested.

If possible allow only one adult to talk to the child to begin with. It is possible that discrepancies in the account of what has happened can, in the event of the allegation being referred, lead to legal complications later.

Try not to make the child repeat their account unnecessarily.

Do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening but that you will endeavour to keep the incident as confidential as possible.

Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible.

Do Not

Take sole responsibility for further action

Approach or try to contact the alleged abuser

Ignore what has happened

Make promises you cannot keep

You should discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Officer (or designated Child Protection Advisor in the Child Protection Officer's absence) as soon as reasonably possible after they have become aware of the concerns so action can be taken if appropriate to safeguard and promote the welfare of the young person.

Recording information

Information that is passed on must be as helpful as possible. Hence there is a necessity for making as detailed a written record as possible. This will be signed, witnessed and dated and endeavour to contain:

The nature of the incident

A description of any visible injuries

The child's account

Times, dates or other relevant information

A clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay and opinion

After attaining this information do not hesitate to pass it on to the relevant organisation.

Hut Usage

Whilst at the hut, all young persons under 18 shall be under the appropriate supervision of a responsible adult, i.e. parent/guardian or an adult nominated as such by the parent/guardian (in loco parentis). The responsible adult shall bear the primary responsibility for the well being and safety of the young person.

The young person and the parent/guardian must be made aware, understand and accept the type of sleeping arrangements. The responsible adult must take responsibility for making sure that not only the sleeping arrangements but also other arrangements are safe for the child/children under their care.

The entry in the hut register must be endorsed by the responsible adult to indicate that the above conditions have been met. If the responsible person is not the parent/guardian, this signature also confirms that authorisation has been given by the young person's parent/guardian, having been made aware of the conditions of the accommodation by the responsible adult.

If families are using the hut with children, both families and other hut users must be aware of the needs of each other. Extra care must be taken in hazardous areas such as the kitchens and with the use and care of the fires. Similarly, in bedrooms and washrooms, hut users are to remain sensitive to young persons.

To obviate the risk of accusation, It is recommended that adults, including vulnerable adults do not allow themselves to be alone with children other than their own

The following link gives the full BMC Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Guidelines

http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmcNews/media/u_content/File/youth_equity/youth/child_protection/Interim%20BMC%20Child%20Protection%20Policy_Aug%2007.pdf

August 2009