

LEEDS PARENT CARER FORUM

INTRODUCTION

At LPCF we believe that children have the right to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. We therefore aim to provide a caring environment wherever the venue where children's self esteem and autonomy are nurtured.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness of both employed staff and volunteers of the need for safeguarding children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a clear statement on how LPCF will act to promote the welfare of children.
- To support the child's development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To establish ways of working together with other agencies.
- To promote the children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to, by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children are physically safe.

PROCEDURES

- Immediate action to refer or consult is required where there is suspicion of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.
- Investigation is not the responsibility of LPCF but is the responsibility of children and families' assessment team and the police.
- Written notes must be signed and dated, will be kept at each stage and stored in a secure place.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Staff will maintain confidentiality at all times, unless there is a direct threat to a child's safety in which case, concerns must be reported to the relevant authority.
- One of the LPCF Co-Chairs will have sight of the individual's certificate and will have a quality discussion regarding any information disclosed on the certificate has taken place prior to employment commencing.
- LPCF will only employ suitable staff and volunteers to work with our children.

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- LPCF commits to safer recruitment. All recruitment will include reference checking, interviewing, risk assessing, DBS checks.
- All staff and volunteers will be briefed in the LPCF Safeguarding Children policy and procedures and receive training on how to identify possible safeguarding issues.
- LPCF take stringent security steps to ensure that no person whom is not authorised has unsupervised access to the children.
- Families accessing LPCF activities are required to supervise their children at all times.
- Children will be assured that they can approach an adult if they are worried about anything and that they will receive an appropriate and supportive response.
- LPCF agrees to keep abreast of safeguarding legislation, guidance and good practice and to revise all policies and procedures in accordance with such changes.

SHARING CONCERNS

- Consultation is a crucial requirement whenever there is any concern that a child may be subject to abuse, even when it is not immediately apparent that an urgent referral is appropriate.
- Keep a noted record of low-level concerns over a period before referring to the Leeds City Council Children and Family assessment team .
- Urgent or emergency situations require referral to the assessment team or to the police. Actual physical injury, verbal statements of actual abuse and evidence of serious neglect justify an urgent referral.
- Evidence of domestic violence requires referral of the family to the Children and Family assessment team .
- The family must be informed that a referral has been made, and told the reason for concern. The Children and Family assessment team must be told what has been said to the child's parents/carers.
- Write down the name of the Children and Family assessment team worker who was spoken to, with a record of the date, time and details of the discussion.
- Write down any subsequent conversations with any parents/carers.

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- Inform the named named Safeguarding Officer member of the LPCF Steering Group of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any member of staff/volunteers.
- Inform whichever site the activity has taken place in of any serious incidents that occur on their premises.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse

Child abuse happens when someone harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, or involve neglect. Children who experience abuse may struggle to speak out, so it's vital that anyone working with children or young people is able to recognise the signs of abuse.

Physical abuse is the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment. Examples include striking (with or without an object), hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, burning, inappropriate use of drugs and physical restraints, force-feeding and physical punishment.

Psychological or emotional abuse is causing anguish, pain or distress to another person through verbal or nonverbal acts. Examples include: verbal assaults, insults, threats, intimidation, humiliation and harassment.

Sexual abuse is sexual contact or photographs of a person without their permission. Also, sexual contact with any person incapable of giving consent. Examples include unwanted touching and all types of sexual assault or battery including rape, sodomy, coerced nudity and sexually explicit photographing

Neglect

Neglect is the refusal or failure of a caregiver to provide for the needs of a child or vulnerable adult.

Needs are the care, goods, and services necessary to maintain the health or safety of an individual. Examples include lack of food, water, clothing, medicine, shelter, supervision, personal safety, personal hygiene and medical services.

Neglect can be repeated conduct or a single incident when the result could be serious physical or psychological harm or substantial risk of death.

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Physical Abuse

- Bruises, black eyes, welts, cuts and rope marks
- Broken bones and skull fractures

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- Open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing
- Sprains, dislocations, or internal injuries/bleeding
- Broken eyeglasses/frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, and signs of being restrained
- An individual's report of being hit, slapped, kicked or mistreated
- The caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to visit the individual alone

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

- Emotionally upset or agitated
- Extremely and unusually withdrawn, not communicating or not responding
- Unusual, childlike behaviour (sucking, biting, rocking)
- Nightmares or sleep problems
- Bed wetting
- Unusual levels of aggression
- An individual's report of being verbally or emotionally mistreated

(It must be noted here that as LPCF parents have children with a range of additional needs some of these behaviours may be displayed with abuse being the cause.)

Sexual Abuse

- Bruises around the breasts or genital area
- Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- An individual's report of being sexually assaulted or raped

Neglect

- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores, or poor personal hygiene
- Unattended or untreated health problems
- Hazardous or unsafe living conditions/arrangements (improper wiring, no heat or no running water)
- Unsanitary and unclean living conditions (dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, fecal/urine smell, or inadequate clothing)
- An individual's report of being mistreated

DISCLOSURES

Where a child tells you that they or another child is being abused, the adult informed should:

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.

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- Reassure the child as far as possible but don't promise confidentiality as LPCF has a duty to refer.
- Don't ask leading questions; these could later invalidate evidence.
- Ask open questions.
- Explain what you have to do next and who will be told.
- Record the child's name, address, age, date and time of observation or disclosure. Write down any non-verbal behaviour and the actual words/signs used by the child rather than "interpretations". Record the name of the person reported to.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST LPCF MEMBERS / VOLUNTEERS

- We ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about member/volunteer action within LPCF, which may include an allegation of abuse through the complaints procedure.
- Dependant on the nature of the complaint, each stage will be followed through the complaints procedure and factual information recorded from the outset.
- If an adult is informed about a possible allegation, they should immediately notify the named LPCF Safeguarding Officer, who is a member of the LPCF Steering Group.
- If an adult has witnessed any form of abuse by another LPCF member //volunteer they should inform the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT PROCEDURE

- Any employee, LPCF member or volunteer to raise any concerns with a member of the LPCF Steering Group. (If unsure of who to speak to, go directly to LPCF Safeguarding Officer).
- The LPCF Safeguarding Officer to work with the person reporting the issue to make clear notes on the situation.
- The LPCF Safeguarding Officer to assess the severity of the situation.
- The LPCF Safeguarding Officer will discuss what action needs to be taken with one of the LPCF Co-Chairs. This action will be acted upon and recorded.
- Inform the parents and / or gain their consent for you to make this contact unless doing so would put the child at risk
- If the concern remains serious, the LPCF Safeguarding Officer will report the incident to Leeds City Council's Duty and Advice Team

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- During office hours (9.00am – 5.00pm) call the Duty & Advice Team on 0113 376 0336 (option 2)
- Out of office hours (evenings, weekends and bank holidays) call the Children's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0113 5350600
- If it is believed that a child is in immediate danger and at risk of harm, the police should be called on 999
- All actions by LPCF will be accurately recorded and kept securely
- If an incident is reported to the Duty and Advice Team, the LPCF Steering Group will be informed

At LPCF we want our children to feel happy, safe and secure, we want them to have all their individual needs met and have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

Named Safeguarding Officer: Louise Sanderson
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LPCF Co-Chairs:
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