

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

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This Policy has been developed in accordance and under the guidance of the:

- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)
- Education Act (2002)
- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- What to do if You are Worried a Child is being Abused (March 2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and college (July 2015)
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (Home Office July 2015)
- Guidance for safer working practice those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium October 2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People's Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (Swindon).

This policy deals with the protection of Children and young people, the terms applied to people under the age of 18 years.

Community First will keep its Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures under review to take account of any new Government legislation, regulations or best practice documents to ensure staff are kept fully up to date with their responsibilities and duties.

The welfare of every child and young person in contact with the service remains our priority at all times. This principle is the central tenet of the Children Act and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

1.0 Safeguarding Strategy

Community First will:

1.1 Take a preventive approach to protecting children and young people from potential harm, damage, abuse, radicalisation or being drawn into terrorism (violent and non-violent extremism)

1.2 Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of children and young people.

1.3 Work to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

Community First last review date: March 2021

Next review date: March 2022

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

1.4 Plan, implement, monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure that the maximum is done to provide a safe environment for children and young people.

1.5 Take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children and young people's welfare is minimised by appropriate:

- Risk assessment and management
- Health and Safety procedures
- Vetting staff selection, recruitment, induction supervision and training
- Creation and promotion of an open work culture "Whistleblowing"
- Reacting to and reporting abuse

1.6 Community First is committed to promoting the welfare and safety of all who come into contact with it. Protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

1.7 Community First will respect the confidentiality of children and young people within clearly defined boundaries which are explained to all service users. They should be supported to give and receive personal information responsibly and in the knowledge of the possible consequences of doing so with reference to our Confidentiality Policy

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 Community First holds as one of its highest priorities the health, safety and welfare of all children and young people.

2.2 Community First and its staff, including contractors, have a collective and individual duty of care to ensure that its staff fulfil their responsibilities to prevent the abuse of children or young people, to refer any abuse discovered or suspected and to prevent children and young people from being drawn into terrorism.

2.3 This Safeguarding of Children and Young People Policy and Procedure will be made available to all parent/carers who will be advised that cases may be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child or young person.

2.4 Community First will advise children and young people about the standards of behaviour and conduct they can expect from staff, volunteers and Trustees and of what to do if they experience or suspect abuse.

2.5 Community First will work with appropriate agencies, and in particular all

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

relevant Local Authority Child Protection Teams, Safeguarding Boards, Social Service and Local Prevent Partnership Boards to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded through the effective operation of our Safeguarding children and young people's procedures. We adopt in totality the Safer Recruitment Consortium's "Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings" (October 2015).

- 2.6 A consultative approach will be adopted with all relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Officers, Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAIT) and the Local Prevent Partnership Board to ensure good practice and the best outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.7 Community First recognises that any child or young person can be subject to abuse or radicalisation and all allegations of abuse or concerns about radicalisation will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with our procedures.
- 2.8 Community First recognise that it is the responsibility of all staff to act upon any concern, no matter how small or trivial it may seem.
- 2.9 Community First recognise the responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review Safeguarding procedures.
- 2.10 We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with or who come in to contact with children and young people and to providing appropriate supervision.
- 2.11 We require all staff to follow our Code of Behaviour which is appended to this policy document, and will draw the attention of staff to this code of conduct and procedures in induction and relevant training.
- 2.12 All staff working with children or young people will undertake training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for Safeguarding including the PREVENT strategy. They will be kept up to date by refresher training at a maximum of three-year intervals. Our Designated Safeguarding Officers will undertake refresher training every two years to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. There is a designated trustee responsible for safeguarding and Prevent and it is our policy that all existing, and newly recruited, trustees undergo an enhanced DBS check and social media audit.
- 2.13 Community First has appointed Designated Safeguarding Officers who are responsible for co-ordinating action within the organisation and liaising with other agencies. Contact details can be found in Appendix B.
- 2.14 Community First operates safe recruitment procedures and ensures that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff, volunteers and Trustees who will work or come into contact with children and young people including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, Proceeds of Criminal Act (POCA) and list 99.
- 2.15 Any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to safeguarding of children and young people's arrangements will be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive and will be remedied without delay.

3.0 Definition of Abuse

Children and Young People (source Working together to safeguard children March 2015)

3.1 Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

3.2 Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

3.3 Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

3.4 Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3.5 PREVENT - Any young person in danger of radicalisation or demonstrating extremist tendencies is deemed to be vulnerable and appropriate support under the Prevent strategy will be sought. Appropriate support could involve referring the child or young person to Channel.

3.6 Significant Harm - Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

4.0 Named Roles

4.1 Trustees

A named Trustee (Lead for HR Committee) takes delegated responsibility for leading on Safeguarding issues and the Board should satisfy itself that:

- The roles outlined in this policy are being undertaken appropriately.
- An appropriate Safeguarding induction, support and training programme is implemented.
- Recruitment procedures safeguard children and young people's welfare.
- There is adequate financial support for the services and activities offered in order for the service to operate effectively and safely.

4.2 Designated Safeguarding Officers

These are senior members of staff and all staff, volunteers and service users should be made aware of who our Designated Safeguarding Officers are, their role and when they are available.

Designated Safeguarding Officers have the following responsibilities:

1. To ensure that this policy is implemented and is adhered to at all times.
2. To be familiar with and have an understanding of all relevant legislation.
3. To liaise with the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable People's Partnership' (which brings together those who lead Wiltshire's services to safeguard children, young people and adults, and was previously the Local Safeguarding Children Board, (LSCB) and local Children's Social Care teams as appropriate. <http://www.wiltshirescb.org.uk/> and in Swindon the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
4. To ensure that safeguarding is part of Community First's working culture.
5. To arrange appropriate training and support for all relevant workers.
6. To provide support during and after incidents involving safeguarding and referrals to Children's Social Care teams or the police.
7. To provide the Chief Executive and Board of Trustees with appropriate information on the number and outcomes of incidents or concerns involving safeguarding children and young people as requested.

4.3 Implementation

All Community First staff will be briefed on the policy annually and must agree to apply it in practice. The policy is deemed to be incorporated in the contract of employment and it is a condition of service with Community First that the staff, volunteers and Trustees understand and operate the policy fully. All staff, volunteers and Trustees will be given a copy this policy, a copy will be freely available to other groups involved in any events or meetings held by Community First.

5.0 Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that the rights of the child or young person are protected through staff awareness of the issues and the following of the statutory and local guidelines in the reporting of concerns.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

Community First will take steps to identify vulnerable children or young people on referral. Additional supervision measures will be put in place for all children and young people defined as vulnerable.

6.0 Advice to Staff on When to Take Action and How

6.1 Children and young people can be potentially abused within the family, community, organisations by employees (including those employed to promote their welfare and protection from abuse), visitors, volunteers and fellow children and young people.

6.2 It is the responsibility of **all** staff working within Community First to record and refer concerns regarding the safeguarding of children or young people even if they are just suspicions or overheard rumours, but not to discuss it with anyone other than a Designated Safeguarding Officer (see contact details in Annex B).

6.3 If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm or injury, or you believe a criminal offence has been committed, call the police on 999. Do not place yourself in danger, in an emergency, get medical help.

6.4 If a child or young person comes to you with a report of apparent abuse or a concern over radicalisation or extremism, you should listen carefully to him/her, using the following guidelines. When listening staff must:

- allow the child or young person to speak without interruption
- never trivialise or exaggerate the issue
- never make suggestions
- never coach or lead the them in any way
- reassure them, let them know you are glad they have spoken up and that they are right to do so
- always ask enough questions to clarify your understanding, but do not probe or interrogate – no matter how well you know the child or young person – spare them having to repeat themselves over and over.
- be honest – let the child or young person know that you cannot keep this a secret; you will need to tell the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- try to remain calm – remember this is not an easy thing for them to do.
- do not show your emotions – if you show anger, disgust or disbelief, they may stop talking. This may be because they feel they are upsetting you or they may feel your negative feelings are directed towards them
- let the child or young person know that you are taking the matter very seriously
- make the child or young person feel secure and safe without causing them any further anxiety.

6.5 If you suspect any abuse or extremism / radicalisation you should immediately (within a maximum of two hours) contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer either in person or by telephone outlining what has been disclosed, what you have overheard or your suspicions. You should also contact them if you know or suspect that a

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

member of staff or child or young person has a previous history of abuse of children or young people.

6.6 Contact will be made with Wiltshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (**MASH**) **0300 456 0108** (08:45am-5pm Mon-Thurs) and (8:45am-4pm) Friday Emergency Duty Service **0300 456 0100** (5pm - 8.45am).

If a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm or injury, or it is possible a criminal offence has been committed, the police will be called on 999. Or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team on 101, or Police Domestic Abuse Investigation Team on 101.

Contact details for Swindon **MASH** are **01793 466903**. The Swindon Emergency Duty Service (EDS) is available outside office hours on **01793 436699**.

6.7 With regard to concerns around radicalisation or extremist behaviour if the Designated Safeguarding Office judges the child or young person to be in immediate danger or likely to act imminently then the Police will be called otherwise advice from CHANNEL will be sought. The Prevent Coordinator for the South West is: Salam Arabi-Katbi salam.katbi@education.gov.uk **07824 083307**

6.8 The Community First Designated Safeguarding Officer will ask the referring member of staff to produce a full written record within 24 hours, through our Safeguarding Disclosure Form including:

- Name and position of the person who reported the matter
- Whether the matter is a direct disclosure from a child or young, a suspicion or an overheard conversation
- A factual account of what has been overheard, seen or what has been disclosed, including any questions they needed to ask to clarify understanding
- The Report should contain as much detail as possible including observations (including physical signs of apparent abuse). It **must not** include opinions or personal interpretation of the facts
- Signed, dated and forwarded to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will store it in a secure place.

6.9 Detailed information about a case will be confined to the Designated Safeguarding Officers, Chief Executive, and (if not implicated) the parents/carers.

6.10 The reporting member of staff will be kept informed on the progress of the case on a 'need to know' basis only.

6.11 If the Children's Social Care Team or Social Care Services deem it a safeguarding issue the Chief Executive will advise the Trustee with a lead for Safeguarding without disclosing any detail on a need to know basis

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

7.0 Confidentiality

7.1 Confidentiality and trust should be maintained as far as possible. The degree of confidentiality will be governed by the need to protect the child or young person who is always the primary concern. The child or young person must at the earliest opportunity in the disclosure be informed of the need to pass information on.

7.2 Community First complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). (EU2016/679).

Legislation does not prevent sharing of information if:

- *those likely to be affected consent; or*
- *the public interest in safeguarding the child's or young person's welfare overrides the need to keep the information confidential; or*
- *disclosure is required under court order or other legal obligation.*

The member of staff reporting a disclosure, suspicion of abuse/ neglect or overheard rumours of abuse/neglect should not discuss the case with anyone other than a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

8.0 Allegations against a member of staff

8.1 The primary concern of Community First is to ensure the safety of the child or young person. It is essential in all cases of suspected abuse by a member of staff that action is taken quickly and professionally whatever the validity. Designated Safeguarding Officers will work in conjunction with the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations, Phone number 0300 456 0108, in order to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of Community First. Where the Designated Safeguarding Officer considers that a concern or allegation indicates that a member of staff has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or young person, or possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young person; or behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with them then a discussion will always take place with the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations.

8.2 The term 'member of staff' applies to all contracted personnel within Community First, volunteers and people employed by other agencies that are providing services for the organisation.

8.3 In the event that any member of staff suspects any other member of staff of abusing a child or young person, it is their responsibility to bring these concerns to either the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Chief Executive except where the suspect is either of the aforementioned.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

8.4 If the allegation concerns the Chief Executive or Designated Safeguarding Officer, the matter should be discussed with the Trustee with a lead for Safeguarding who will discuss it with the Chair, in addition to following the normal procedures for Child and Young People's Protection.

8.5 Where there is suspicion that a child or young person may suffer significant harm a Strategy Discussion will take place where the Designated Safeguarding Officer will be asked to represent the organisation.

8.6 If it is determined that there is no cause to suspect significant harm but a criminal offence might have been committed they will immediately inform the police and a similar discussion will take place with the Designated Safeguarding Officer being asked to represent the organisation.

8.7 Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups act 2006 places a legal duty on Community First to refer any person who has:

- harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or young person
- satisfied the harm test
- received a conviction or caution for a relevant offence

Such a referral will be made under the guidance of the Local Authority Designated Officer.

9.0 Type of Investigations

Criminal Investigations - If a crime is suspected, an investigation will not be carried out by the organisation, other than to establish the facts. All the information obtained will be handed over to the police who will carry out any investigation necessary, with the support of Community First.

Disciplinary Investigations - If a decision is made to pursue an allegation of abuse against a member of staff, this will be dealt with under the Community First disciplinary policy.

Community First may be unable to carry out any disciplinary proceedings until the police investigation is complete, but depending on the seriousness of the allegation, the member of staff may be suspended from work with pay until the investigation is completed.

10 Community First responsibilities to the member of staff following an allegation

10.1 Staff who are accused of a breach of the code set out in Appendix A may be subject to disciplinary procedure.

10.2 Where an allegation from a Child or young person occurs, an investigation will be carried out in accordance with procedure (available from HR). The Investigating Officer will be required to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Officer to clarify

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

whether there are any relevant records or relevant information in relation the individual.

10.3 Community First will inform the accused member of staff as soon as possible after initial consultation has taken place. However this should not be before the Strategy Discussion or police discussion, if needed, has taken place and agreement has been reached as to what information can be disclosed to the member of staff.

The member of staff should be advised to:

- Contact union representative
- Keep records of all conversations, meetings attended, letters received and telephone calls relating to the allegation.

10.4 Whilst the case is ongoing, Community First must arrange to provide appropriate support to the member of staff.

10.5 Where it is subsequently found that an allegation has been made maliciously, we may refer the matter to be dealt with under disciplinary procedures. Community First may also take the decision to pursue an allegation of abuse through our Disciplinary Procedure. Discussion should be held with the relevant Social Care Team.

10.6 If the accused member of staff tenders their resignation or ceases to provide their services the allegation must continue to be investigated in accordance with the procedures. Compromise agreements by which a person agrees to resign or Community First agrees not to pursue the disciplinary action must not be used in these cases.

10.7 Every effort must be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity whilst the allegation is being investigated.

11 Record Keeping and Timekeeping

Community First will keep clear and comprehensive records of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, as well as details of any actions taken and decisions reached. These will be placed indefinitely on a staff member's confidential personnel file.

In the interests of all parties it is important to resolve cases as quickly as possible whilst ensuring a consistent, fair and thorough investigation.

Interpretation of this policy shall be made by the Chief Executive, the Management Team lead for Safeguarding or the lead Designated Safeguarding Officer if required. Any challenges to the policy by children, young people or staff will be considered by the HR Committee who will respond to the challenge.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

This policy will be reviewed annually by the HR Committee with any proposed amendments ratified by the trustees.

The Policy was last reviewed in March 2021

**The Policy was approved by the Chief Executive:
March 2021**

**Date of next planned review:
March 2022**

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

APPENDIX A

Code of Behaviour for Safeguarding Children and Young People

Community First recognises that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would apply to all situations at all times whereby staff come into contact with children and young people. However, below are the standards of behaviour required of staff in order to fulfil their roles within the organisation. This code should assist in the protection of both children, young people and members of staff.

These guidelines also apply to volunteers who work in an unpaid capacity on Community First youth projects.

Staff must:

- Implement the Safeguarding of Children and Young People's Policy and Procedures at all times
- All workers must understand and abide by Community First's Confidentiality policy
- Workers must do everything possible to protect those using the service from discrimination, bullying, aggression, intimidation or verbal or physical abuse.

Staff must never:

- engage in inappropriate rough, physical games including horseplay with children or young people.
- invite children and young people into their own house.
- do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves or that their parent/carer can do for them.
- physically restrain a child or young person unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury of the child/other children/visitors or staff/yourself. In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable, otherwise the action can be defined as assault.
- make sexually suggestive comments to, or within earshot of, a child or young person
- use any language or behaviour that is inappropriate to the worker's relationship with a child or young person
- abuse trust: While it is always an offence for any adult to engage in sexual activity with a young person under 16, it is also unacceptable and possibly an offence (an "abuse of trust") for a worker to have an intimate relationship with a young person aged 16-18 when the adult holds a "position of trust" over the young person
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind. The main principles of touch are:
 - touch should always be in response to the child or young person's need
 - touch should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child or young person
 - touch should always be with a child or young person's permission **or** a necessary response to an emergency situation, in which case parents/

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

guardians should be fully informed as soon as possible. Support of a physical or intimate nature should only be provided by a worker if

- It is absolutely necessary, due to an individual's young age or disability,
- recorded in the child or young person's case notes **and** consented to by the young person and their parent/ guardian

Planned Work

Unless pre-planned, workers should not give a child or young person a lift in their own car without prior arrangements being made with the young person, their guardian, and the worker's line manager, except in emergency.

Workers should not be alone with a child or young person, unless this is; a necessary part of supporting that individual for example 1:1 mentoring session, recorded appropriately **and** discussed with the young person, the worker's Line Manager and the young person's parent/ guardian. In this instance workers must ensure that they are aware of and ensure that relevant guidance in our lone working policy is adhered to and taken into account.

Consent is permissible from the young person themselves if aged 16 or over and living independently.

Staff who breach any of the above may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Including Procedures and Code of Behaviour)

APPENDIX B

Community First Designated Safeguarding Officers Contact Details;

Head of Youth Action Wiltshire – Steve Crawley steve@youthactionwiltshire.org
07818 077764 or 01380 729813

Senior Wiltshire Young Carers Service Coordinator – Niki Andrews
niki@youthactionwiltshire.org – 07984 181214 or 01380 720671

Community First Leadership Group Safeguarding Lead - Steve Crawley
steve@youthactionwiltshire.org - 07818 077764 or 01380 729813

Chief Executive - Lynn Gibson lgibson@communityfirst.org.uk - 07905 679031 or
01380 732811

Lead Trustee Chair of Human Resources Committee - Jane James

Whistle-blowing

The charity Public Concern at Work 020 7404 6609 email whistle@pcaw.demon.co.uk) can also give confidential advice to you regarding the disclosure of wrongdoing in the workplace.

MONITORING

Date issued:	June 2014	Date last reviewed:	March 2021	Date for next planned review:	March 2022
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