Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies

Key Points To Consider

This document has been written to offer guidance around some key points to consider when writing safeguarding, child protection and whistleblowing policies.

Reshet recognises that safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. If you would like further training and support in safeguarding young people, please contact Shelley Marsh info@reshetnet.com.   Please note the words 'safeguarding support' in the subject title.

When writing a policy, please consider the following key points:

- Any policy document should provide both a reference guide on what steps to take when issues arise but also clearly highlight the ethos of the <u>individual organisation</u> and the way it has developed its policy. If a standardised template is used, that should be adapted.
- Important to distinguish between what is Safeguarding and what is Child Protection. Safeguarding policy includes what we do to keep <u>all</u> children safe whereas Child protection policy informs us of steps we take when we become aware of a <u>specific</u> child being harmed or at risk of abuse. Typically, a Safeguarding policy will be broader and both are needed (not a case of either/or).
- For those organisations who work with both children and adults, it is advisable that those policies are not combined and treated as separate as they refer to separate legislations and dealt with by separate statutory departments.
- Any child protection policy should clarify the age range that it covers i.e 0 up to the child's 18th birthday and should also cover concern about unborn children.
- Neglect should be included in the definition of child abuse rather than a separate add-on, e.g. "Staff, carers and volunteers may encounter cases of alleged child abuse including neglect"   rather than "…..alleged child abuse <u>or</u> neglect"   to emphasise the fact that neglect <u>is </u>child abuse, so as not to perpetuate the belief that is sometimes held that neglect is separate to abuse and that it might be less of a priority or reason for intervention.
- Information on types of abuse and signs to look for is essential information to be included in any policy.
- In writing the policy it may be useful to consider the ways in which in your organisation people may raise child protection concerns and adapt policy accordingly (i.e child disclosure, staff/volunteer recognise signs of possible

abuse/harm, workers behaviour towards a child causes concern, a child is displaying worrying behaviour towards other children etc).

Every Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy will be different so as to meet the individual needs of the organisation. However, every policy should include the following sections which will benefit from adaptation to meet your individual organisation's structure:

a) **Purpose of the policy**

b) **Organisations Mission Statement**: this section can include the organisation's ethos around Safeguarding and Child Protection (i.e children and young people feel safe /heard, all staff/volunteers /parents encouraged to talk about concerns etc)

c) **Relevant Legislation that informs the policy**: The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Working Together to Safeguard Children and London Child Protection Procedures with a reference to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

d) **Roles and Responsibilities** of every stakeholder in the organisation regarding Safeguarding (from Trustees, to volunteers) reinforcing the message that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Strong statements like : *" X trustees, staff, carers and volunteers acquire positions of trust in children and young people's lives.........They have a duty of care to children and young people which includes safeguarding their welfare and protecting them from harm."* Important one to include because it emphasises the point that child protection and safeguarding is the <u>responsibility of everyone</u> who comes into contact with children; it is not just the responsibility of front line workers. This is important as it gives the message that it is not acceptable to overlook possible signs of child abuse on the grounds that "this is not my area", "it is not my job to deal with this".

e) **Understanding Child Abuse**: This section should include types of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) and a definition/description of each one. Signs and symptoms of abuse should also be included here. Some organisations also choose to include bullying and the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children in this section.

f) **Procedures** of what to do when becoming aware of suspected abuse on a child: This should include relevant organisational escalation procedure, Local authority numbers, the names of designated people in the organisation.
NB: A risk assessment needs to be completed and if as part of this assessment it is deemed that a child may be at further risk/or concerns will be silenced if parents are informed, then parents should not be informed before referral to Children Services is made. A policy needs to state that clearly.

g) **Recording**: why it is imperative to record (protects child/organisation), must be timely, relevant, record facts and separate from opinions. Clear links to recording forms and where they can be found should be included here.

h) **Confidentiality and Duty to Share Information Section**: All decisions about information sharing following a child protection referral are made by local statutory child protection agencies within Section 47 /17 protocols.   In any

child protection policy/guidelines, there needs to be clear guidance about when to share information with other agencies and on what basis. (For example, concerns that a child is being harmed, or could be at risk of harm would over-ride the requirement to maintain confidentiality.) The requirement to share information on a "Need to know" basis should be stated. Statements like "Confidentiality will be maintained at all times" should be avoided since this is not always possible.

i) **Safe Recruitment**: What is the organisation policy on safe recruitment for staff and volunteers. Reference to the organisation requirement to carry out relevant DBS checks should be included.

j) **Whistle-blowing**: A child protection policy should have a statement about "whistleblowing" within services, institutions and the organisation as a whole.

Useful links with resources

http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx (includes an online multi faith safeguarding hub with useful information/resources/examples of best practice from people of faith)

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/factsheet-writing-organisational-child-protection-policies-procedures.pdf (NSPCC guidance on how to write a child protection policy)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people (charity commission's guidance on safeguarding and child protection for charities)

http://www.partnersinsalford.org/sscb/documents/Safeguarding_Children_in_Jewish_Establishments.pdf (Good paper from Salford on Safeguarding Children in Jewish organisations)

http://www.londoncp.co.uk/

London Child Protection Procedures

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