Safeguarding the Welfare of Children
in
Early Years and Childcare Settings.

A handbook to support the course
‘Introduction to Safeguarding Children’

Version1: April 2012
Introduction

Aims and Objectives

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References
This book is designed as a resource to help you ensure you comply with current guidelines. Its aim is to enhance the learning you have acquired from your Introduction to Safeguarding Children and Young People course. This resource and details of all relevant courses are available on CPD online.

Additional information

Please note the Suffolk County Council Awareness Raising course available online is designed for those who do not have regular contact with children and young people. All Early Years and Childcare practitioners in regular contact with children and young people are required to keep their training up to date. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) recommends you refresh the introductory course every three years.

The content is designed to:

- ensure understanding of the power of assumptions, stereotypes and personal values;

- develop your understanding of your roles and responsibilities towards safeguarding children;

- support you in recognising concerns and how to respond to them;

- ensure you have knowledge and understanding of the legal framework as it affects you as a professional childcare practitioner;

- ensure you know what you must do if you have evidence that suggests a child may be abused or neglected;

- ensure you know how to respond appropriately to children and the adults in their lives about your concerns; and

- ensure you know how to get support for yourself in carrying out your responsibilities.
Section One
Good Practice

Becoming more aware of what safeguarding children means in your every day practice.

Attitudes, Values and Stereotypes

- Your attitudes and behaviours will influence the way you relate to children, their families and colleagues.

- Children learn from a very early age how to relate to other people. They learn by imitation and observation (social referencing). It is therefore important that we model desirable values and attitudes to influence their treatment of others or understanding of the world.

- Avoid stereotypes. Children from all sorts of families, environments and life styles may be abused or neglected.

- Institutions and groups can sometimes deliberately or inadvertently discriminate (institutional discrimination). This is most likely to occur because of workplace policies, procedures or practices that exclude some people and make them feel unwelcome or uncomfortable. It is important to check that this does not apply in your setting. Please refer to EYFS practice guidance about Inclusive Practice and the Equalities Act 2010.

- Children at a very early stage of their development develop their sense of self identity and self-esteem. They react to and are influenced by, what goes on and is said around them (attitudes towards their gender, race, culture, lifestyles, attractiveness, intelligence, family members). If a child experiences discrimination and/or abuse it may have a long term damaging affect on their developing identity, feelings of worth and self-esteem.

- Children are ‘Children First’, and all children need safeguarding; only some are in need of protection.
Making Professional Judgements

As an Early Years and Childcare practitioner, you will at times have to make professional judgements about the care, welfare and protection of the children in your care; it is important that professional judgements are based on:

- what you have seen (observed); been told (disclosed) or directly heard a child, young person or parent saying;

- the facts alone and not your own values, attitudes, assumptions and / or stereotypes;

- your knowledge of child development and relevant theory;

- your knowledge of the child and family;

- your understanding of safeguarding and indicators of concern

Objective Judgements

We are helped to make sound objective judgements by:

- becoming self aware;

- reflecting upon and evaluating our practice;

- developing observation, listening and recording skills;

- exercising non-judgemental and anti-discriminatory practice;

- ensuring inclusion at all levels including parents as partners;

- Value your ability to make professional judgements. It is better to refer a concern, even if it turns out to be unfounded, than not to do so and to discover later that a child has been further harmed or neglected.
Keeping Children Safe

Safeguarding children means

- keeping children safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation;
- keeping children safe from accident, injury and death;
- knowing how to deal with bullying and discrimination;
- being safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of the setting; and
- having security, stability and being cared for.


In practice this means ensuring we have appropriate knowledge and understanding of:

- child protection policies and procedures;
- maintaining health and safety (risk assessment);
- respecting diversity, equal opportunity and inclusion;
- partnership with parents;
- working together for positive behaviour.

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

We must:

- always work in an open and transparent manner;
- build balanced relationships;
- ensure any manual or physical support is provided openly and in accordance with National guidance;
- treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
We must never:

- use physical force against an individual unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect the child, some other child, person or property;
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- allow or engage in any form of sexual touching;
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult even in fun;
- reduce a child, young person or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control;
- allow allegations made by children, young people or vulnerable adults to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- do things of a personal nature for children, young people or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves;
- invite or allow children, young people or vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home unsupervised (unless you are registered to do so (e.g. home based carers: childminder, foster carer, respite carer).

Practice to be avoided:

- spending significant amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- taking children to your home where they can be alone with you;
- giving lifts alone in your car;
- having parents/carers as friends on social networking sites or use personal mobile phones to contact them.

The above may not apply to registered home based carers such as childminders. However such practitioners need to be mindful of good lone worker practices and ensure their policies reflect how they deal with the above.
Beware Avoidance

Doing something about our concerns is not always easy and there is a temptation to avoid the issue, perhaps without realising that we are doing so:

- this does **not safeguard children**.
- failure to pass on concerns may allow the situation to deteriorate

Unfortunately there are no pain free ways of dealing with concerns.

- Do not delay or keep quiet because you fear getting it wrong, or that you are being over sensitive;
- Seek support from your designated safeguarding person and/or speak informally to The Access Team via Customer First.

Dealing with our Emotions

Each of us will respond differently to situations we find ourselves in and each of us has to find the best way to deal with how we feel. It is likely that you will be affected emotionally by the abuse of children. However it can be made easier if we

- know where we can get support;
- know the correct procedures to follow;
- understand ourselves and have some stress busting techniques at hand;
- don’t become over familiar with parents; and maintain a professional relationship with them;
- it is part of our professional role to keep children safe from actual and potential abuse/neglect.
Working with Parents/Carers

- Partnership with parents/ carers is vital and essential to good practice, but the protection of your relationship with them should not delay you in making a referral or consulting with the Access Team about concerns you may have regarding their child(ren).

- You will be able to discuss most concerns openly with parents, but do approach this carefully and ensure you and they have enough time.

- Be factual, stay calm and seek support.

- You do not have to discuss your concerns or share your record of concern with a parent/carer if you feel yourself, the child or other children in your care to be at risk of harm, or that to do so may affect a police investigation.

- If a parent or carer tells you they are abusing/neglecting their child(ren) you must refer this to Customer First (0808 800 4005). In some cases it may be possible to support the parents in making the referral themselves. You cannot maintain their confidentiality.

- If someone approaches you and makes allegations of abuse/neglect about a child in your care you should advise them to make a referral to Customer First. Record the conversation in your record of concern, remembering to sign and date the record. If you are concerned that they will not refer themselves then tell them you intend to do so.
Section 2
The roles and responsibilities of a childcare practitioner

Introducing you to your roles and responsibilities towards safeguarding children.

It is the practitioner’s responsibility

- to put the welfare of the children in your care first (Children Act 1989: Parliament principle);

- to be familiar with and work to the Every Child Matters: five priority outcomes; Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a positive Contribution and Achieve economic well-being (Children Act 2004: outcomes framework).

To be familiar with and comply with the legal requirements set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and associated regulations as prescribed in the Ofsted requirements of The Early Years Register and The Childcare Register (Compulsory and Voluntary) Ofsted 2011

- to be familiar with and comply with the law as it relates to professional childcare practitioners;

- to be familiar with and follow the procedures and protocols agreed by Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board (www.suffolkscb.org);

- to develop your skills of observation, as this tool will provide factual information and help you stay focused, clear and objective;

- to ensure you keep yourself up to date;

- to be familiar with and follow your organisation’s (setting’s) policies, procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children;

- to know who to contact to express concerns about a child’s welfare and/or development both inside and outside your setting;

- to be aware that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, and it is important you do
nothing that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate allegations of abuse; or discussing with anyone other than your designated person or their deputy;

• to refer any concerns you have about a child’s welfare to the designated person for safeguarding children and/or social services or, if the child is at immediate risk, the police;

• to value your professional judgments. It is better to refer a concern, even if it turns out to be unfounded, than not to do so and to discover later that a child has been further harmed or neglected; and

• to ‘blow the whistle’ on colleagues who behave inappropriately and ensure that the designated person/manager is aware of your concern and is taking action.

• take a concern further if the designated person or their deputy does not deal with it appropriately.

It is the setting’s responsibility

• to be prepared to provide information concerning a child’s welfare to a member of the Access Team, Social Worker or other appropriate professional during an investigation/assessment;

• to maintain accurate records that are kept in a safe, locked place, ensuring confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998;

• to nominate a designated Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator and a deputy;

• to ensure that recruitment practices are fair and open but safeguard children (please refer to Safe Recruitment Practice Guidance if the setting does not have a copy contact the Suffolk Families Information, Advice and assistance service on 0845 60 800 33 or e-mail childcare.planning@suffolk.gov.uk

• to ensure all staff are appropriately inducted and receive appropriate training;
• to work proactively in partnership with other agencies and take a professional attitude towards the role of the setting in the lives of children and their families;

• to value their staff’s ability to make professional judgments, acknowledging that it is better to refer a concern, even if it turns out to be unfounded, than not to do so and discover later that a child has been further harmed or neglected;

• to have a clearly written Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy that includes how they handle allegations about staff;

• to provide staff with support so they feel confident in dealing with safeguarding issues;

• to encourage staff to ‘whistle blow’ if they witness inappropriate behaviour by other staff; and

• to be open to staff’s right to disagree with a decision or action and note this in the appropriate record.

It is the designated person’s / deputy’s responsibility

• to be available and accessible to practitioners in the setting;

• to identify a deputy and keep them informed about any open records of concern;

• to support practitioners to express and record any concerns they identify about children/young people in their care;

• to ensure that the recording of concerns is objective, detailed, concise, precise and robust;

• to ensure that the recording, maintenance and storage of records of concern complies with the Data Protection Act 1998;

• to facilitate the referral process and ensure all pertinent and available information is passed on to the appropriate person/agency;
• to facilitate the safe handover of open records of concern to a designated person when a child or young person in their care moves on;

• close records of concern that require no further action and archive them safely.

• to enable practitioners to record any difference of opinion when deciding the appropriate course of action to take;

• to take seriously allegations made concerning staff and follow the appropriate procedure;

• to keep themselves and staff members up to date with developments in safeguarding practice and procedures.

• to facilitate the Common Assessment Framework process

• to ensure the setting complies with guidance concerning recruitment, induction and training.

It is the **Early Years and Childcare Consultants** responsibility:

• to support practitioners / settings in promoting the safeguarding and welfare of children in their care;

• to ensure settings/practitioners comply with Ofsted registration requirements and any relevant practice guidance;

• to provide settings with advice and information about safeguarding policies and procedures;

• to take seriously allegations made concerning staff/settings and follow the appropriate procedure;
• to enable settings to keep up to date by monitoring and reviewing their practice and by providing information related to changes in practice guidance.

To contact an Early Years and Childcare Consultant phone the Suffolk Families Information, Advice and assistance Service 0845 60 800 33 or email childcare.planning@suffolk.gov.uk
Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board

“The Safeguarding Children Boards (SCB) are independent statutory bodies, they do not provide services directly to children and their families. Their purpose is to ensure that organisations work together to ensure that children are safe from harm and that their welfare is promoted. They aim to ensure that the services provided are efficient and effective.”

SCBs focus on:

• keeping children safe from abuse and neglect including harm from parents and family members, professionals, strangers, other adults and other children they know;

• ensuring that children’s needs are met if, for reasons other than abuse or neglect their health and development is likely to be impaired;

• developing policy, procedure and guidance for everyone whose works in anyway involves safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children;

• raising awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and how best to do this;

• monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by everyone involved;

• ensuring that the safeguarding and welfare of children is taken into account when planning services;

• undertaking reviews where a child has died or has been seriously harmed, where abuse or neglect is suspected. This includes giving advice on lessons learned.

Use this website to keep up to date:
www.suffolkscb.org

Ref: Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board: Trainers Manual 2010/11
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit

CEOP is the agency tasked with policing the web. Its role is to safeguard children and young people from online sexual exploitation; grooming; bullying and age inappropriate content on web sites.

The CEOP website offers parents and practitioners advice about keeping their children safe on line. CEOP trains local ambassadors who run workshops and training in schools and other child centred organisations. It also provides materials for use by practitioners with children and young people.

Suffolk has an E-safer strategy with 3 aims

- **Creating E-safer communities**: promoting e-safer policies, procedures and activities;
- **Building E-safety skills**: ensuring all children in Suffolk remain safe and act responsibly whilst using developing technology including the internet;
- **Raising awareness**: ensuring everyone is aware of the potential child protection issues when using technology and is able to access advice and support.

Use this website to keep up to date:  
[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)
Section 3
Policies and Procedures
Ensure you have an understanding of the policies and procedures required in Early Years and Childcare settings.

Safeguarding Children Policy

Early Years and Childcare practice guidance states that they must have an effective safeguarding policy and procedure, which must be implemented and which deals with:

- The setting’s general commitment to safeguarding children;
- confidentiality and information sharing
- recording Concerns;
- how the setting will deal with concerns about a ‘child in need’
- how the setting will deal with concerns about a ‘child in need of protection’: abuse/neglect
- how the setting intends to facilitate the CAF process for children with unmet need;
- the settings commitment to being involved post-referral or during an assessment e.g. attendance at Case Conference or Core Group meetings;
- staff recruitment, induction and training;
- the role of the designated person for safeguarding and their deputy;
- how the setting will deal with allegations against staff (see below).
It is best practice that you have policies that deal with

- Mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices
- Social Networking Sites
- Disciplinary procedure
- Intimate Care procedure
- Continence procedure
- Students, visitors and parent helpers

You are also required to have:

- Complaints policy and procedure

You can (optional) consider the following support materials

- Staff recruitment and interview checklists
- Induction Records
- Staff Supervision Records
- Code of conduct for staff
- Safeguarding Audit

Advice about policies can be obtained from the Early Years and Childcare Consultants. Contact the Suffolk Families Information Service for information, advice and assistance 0845 60 800 33 or email childcare.planning@suffolk.gov.uk
Allegations against Staff

It is important that allegations against staff are dealt with promptly and appropriately:

- Determine the nature of the allegation. Is the concern about conduct or alleged abuse/neglect of a child?

- If the concern is about conduct, it is important you follow your complaints and disciplinary procedures.

- If the concern is about abuse/neglect of a child the following procedure must be acted upon. Failure to comply is a criminal offence.

Remember: if you do not feel clear about the nature of the concern and how it should be dealt with, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Procedure

1. Inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of the allegation being made.

2. Make a referral for the child(ren) who are involved in the allegation to Customer First (0808 800 4005)

3. Inform Ofsted

4. Committee led organisations should inform the Chairperson.

5. Under no circumstances should the setting conduct interviews or investigations themselves.

6. Open and maintain a record of concern.

7. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to suspend staff during an investigation. It may be necessary for home-based carers to cease business. Seek advice from the LADO before acting.

If you have a concern about a child and want to discuss it informally, contact Customer First and ask to speak to a member
of the Access Team. The LADO only deals with allegations against staff.

North
Clapham House (Maureen Lamont)
Clapham Road
Lowestoft Tel: 01502 405097/405188

West
West Suffolk House (Susanna Bedford)
Western way
Bury St Edmunds Tel: 01284 758590/758816

South
St Edmund House (Tina Wilson)
Rope Walk
Ipswich Tel: 01473 581871/583155

The Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act came into force in March 2000. It deals with the processing of personal information such as information held about a person’s health and financial status. The Act applies to all paper records and records held on computer. Anyone holding personal records for whatever reason must comply with the eight enforceable principles.

Information must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed.
  Be clear you have a *justifiable* and *objective* reason for holding the information you seek.

- Processed for a limited purpose.
  You must make *clear* to parents/carers the purposes for which information is held (e.g. emergency contacts, to ensure you comply with a child’s health needs, to keep a record of their progress etc.)

- Adequate, relevant and not excessive.
  Only hold as much information as is necessary for its purpose.

- Accurate.
  Ensure all recording is *precise* and objective.

- Not kept longer than necessary.
Only keep information for as long as the child is in your care or as is required for insurance purposes. Either pass information back to parents or in the case of open records of concern pass on to the setting or school the child moves to.

- Processed in accordance with the subject’s data rights. You have a duty to ensure confidentiality, to ensure that only relevant people have access to information and, where information is shared, that the relevant permissions are gained either by you or those responsible e.g. Social Care Services or the Police in the case of allegations of abuse or neglect.

- All information must be kept in a secure (locked) location, only accessible to specific staff and those to whom it pertains.

- Not transferable to countries without adequate protection. Do not send information abroad unless you are sure it is safe to do so and you have adequate permissions.

_Every setting should have a policy that addresses the eight enforceable principles._

**First Party Disclosures**

This is when a parent or child tells you something that concerns you. In this instance you can share information without consent, record the information without a parents signature or knowledge; if to do so might expose the child to further harm.

**Third Party Disclosure**

This is where another person tells you of their concern about a child. You must record this conversation and the action you took. Advise the person with the concern to refer it to Customer First or help them do so. If they refuse to refer you must tell them that you intend to make a referral yourself in order to safeguard the child.

**Informed Consent**

If we wish to share information about children or young people in our care we must ensure we have the informed consent of someone with parental responsibility. In order to comply with the
Data Protection Act we have to ensure we have explained the following:

- The purpose of the information
- How the information will be shared
- Who the information will be shared with
- How the information will be stored and for how long

Remember: You do not have to have informed consent to share information if you are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected, or if required by the court of police.

If a professional approaches you for information, they are responsible for obtaining informed consent unless any of the below apply. The setting/practitioner may share information without consent when

**Informing without Consent**

- the child or young person is at risk of significant harm (abuse/neglect);
- the child or young person is at risk of harming themselves or someone else;
- the child or young person needs urgent medical treatment;
- information is required by the court as part of a legal proceeding;
- information is requested by the police if investigating a serious crime;
- sharing information is required to undertake a statutory function e.g. Social Care Services;
- the disclosure prevents the child or young person from committing a criminal offence that could place others in jeopardy or place the practitioner at risk of collusion.

**Information Sharing**
The seven golden rules for Information Sharing

1. Remember the Data protection act is not a barrier to sharing information.
2. Be open and honest.
3. Seek advice if you're not sure.
4. Share with consent where appropriate or over ride this in the public interest (see informed consent and sharing without consent above).
5. Consider safety and well-being.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure.
7. Keep a record.

The Key question for Decision Making

1. Do I have a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing the information?
2. Does the information allow a living person to be identified?
3. Is the information Confidential?
4. Do I have consent to share?
5. Is there sufficient public interest to share the information? E.g. to safeguard a child.
6. Am I sharing the information appropriately and securely?
7. Have I properly recorded my decision to share or not to share information?

Please refer to Information Sharing Practice Guidance or the Information Sharing Pocket Guide (DfE). All settings should have a copy. Information sharing guidance is also available on www.suffolk.gov.uk

Section 4
Recognising Concerns

*Enable you to recognise concerns and how to respond to them*

For those children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard the child(ren) or young people, and where necessary, to help bring perpetrators of crimes against children to justice all agencies and professionals should:
• Be alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect;

• Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and young people;

• Share and help to analyse information so that an informed assessment can be made of the child’s/young person’s needs and circumstances;

• Contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard the child or young person and promote his or her welfare;

• Take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for children and young people against specific plans;

• Work co-operatively with parents, unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the child or young person’s safety.

*From: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 p.32, 1.14*
Indicators of Concern

Children are unique and varied individuals, and their response to any trauma in their lives, including abuse and neglect, will be as individual as they are.

Children can experience behavioural and emotional responses to difficulties in their lives such as parental separation and bereavement, as well as to abuse and neglect. The difference will be that in the first case you are likely to know and understand why any changes in their behaviour have taken place.

Child abuse and neglect can happen to any child in any family, setting or organisation. Children are more likely to be abused by people they know (including siblings and other children) than by strangers.

Indicators that a child is at risk of suffering, or is actually suffering, abuse and neglect can manifest itself in many ways, physically, socially, emotionally and behaviourally. It is important to focus on what is causing you concern and record those concerns.

Sometimes you may see bruises or marks that concern you; you should take particular note of bruising on non-mobile babies and children and check out the reason behind the injury with the child and parent. Your need to complete an incident record is a useful way to approach this subject with parents. If you remain uncomfortable, or the explanations don’t add up, refer.

Adult or children can make you concerned because you are uncomfortable with what you are observing, hearing or being said to you.

Sometimes you will be concerned about the attitude of the adults in the child’s life to their health, well being development or medical needs.

Please refer to your learning from the Introduction to Safeguarding Children and Young People Course and www.suffolkscb.org.uk for further information on Indicators of concern.
Family Issues and Parenting Capacity

It is important that professionals recognise when parents and carers are under stress; early identification is vital for the current and future well-being of the child and their family.

If you have concerns you should discuss them with your designated person or their deputy. It may be possible to engage the family in the CAF process. If you have concerns about the likelihood of significant harm you should refer to Customer First as a Child in Need.

Parental Responsibility

The Children Act 1989 emphasises the role of parents in the health, well-being and protection of their children. Parental Responsibility is a legal status and it is conferred on parents in the following circumstances:

- Birth mothers automatically have parental responsibility;
- Birth fathers who are married to birth mothers have automatic parental responsibility;
- Birth fathers that are not married to the birth mother obtain parental responsibility when the birth parents jointly register the baby’s birth;
- The court transfers parental responsibility to adoptive parents;
- If a child is domiciled with another person e.g. relative; they can apply to the court for parental responsibility.

Early Years and Childcare practitioners need to be aware of who has parental responsibility as in law only these persons can make decisions about the care of their child(ren); sign legal documents and give informed consent for the sharing of information.

Sources of Stress

Many families under great stress succeed in bringing up their children in a warm, loving and supportive environment in which the child’s needs are met. Sources of stress within families may however, have a negative impact on a child’s health, development and wellbeing, either directly or indirectly or because when experienced during pregnancy can result in delays in physical and
mental development of infant’s, or because they affect the capacity of parents to respond to their child’s needs.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010: DCSF Chapter 9 page 261

Issues such as

- Social exclusion
- Divorce and Separation
- Bereavement
- Poverty and financial difficulties
- Housing problems and homelessness
- Anti-Social behaviour / bullying
- Cultural issues e.g. forced marriage

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is the term used to describe relationships that are violent, argumentative, oppressive and controlling. Children that experience/witness such interactions between adults may suffer emotional harm. The term Domestic Violence as used in the description from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 below is talking about all forms of domestic abuse not just physical violence.

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic violence (sic). Domestic violence includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic violence is likely to have a damaging effect on the health and development of children, who suffer emotional and psychological maltreatment, and it will often be appropriate for them to be regarded as children in need. Women are more likely to experience the most serious forms of domestic violence but it is important to acknowledge that there are female perpetrators and male victims and that domestic violence occurs in same sex relationships. Professionals should be aware to these possibilities...
Professionals in all agencies are in a position to identify or receive a disclosure about domestic violence. Professionals should ask direct questions about domestic abuse and be alert to the signs that a child or mother may be experiencing domestic violence or that a father/partner may be perpetrating domestic violence. Everyone working with woman and children should be alert to the inter-relationship between domestic violence and other issues such as drugs and alcohol misuse, deprivation and social exclusion, homelessness and housing needs, mental health difficulties, or child abuse and/or animal abuse.


If you know of, are told of, or suspect Domestic Abuse refer those concerns to Customer First.

Mental Illness of a parent or carer

A wide range of mental health issues/problems can affect parents and their families. This includes depression and anxiety, and psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Depression and anxiety are common. At any one time one in six adults in Great Britain may be affected. Psychotic disorders are much less common with about one in two hundred individuals being affected. Mental illness may also be associated with alcohol or drug use, personality disorder and significant physical illness. Approximately 30% of adults with mental health issues/problems have dependent children. Mothers are more at risk than fathers.

Mental ill health in a parent or carer does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child’s development. Just as there is a range in severity of illness, so there is a range of potential impact on families.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010: DCSF Chapter 9 page 265-266.

Parental problem drug and alcohol use

Parental problem drug misuse is generally associated with some degree of child neglect and emotional abuse. It can result in
parents or carers experiencing difficulty in organising their own and their children’s lives, being unable to meet children’s needs for safety or basic care, being emotionally unavailable and having difficulty in controlling and disciplining their children... The study of Serious Case Reviews found that in a third of cases there was a current or past history of parental drug misuse... significant proportion of children who live with parents who are problem drug users show no long term behavioural or emotional disturbance.


The impact of excessive alcohol consumption on parents’ capacity to look after their children will depend on their current mental state and personality, their experience and tolerance to alcohol and the amount of alcohol consumed... *Alcohol misuse by father or father figure can be related to violence and physical abuse of children while mothers with alcohol problems are more likely to neglect their children...* the adverse effects of parental alcohol misuse on children are less likely when not associated with violence, family discord or the disorganisation of the family’s day to day living.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010: DCSF Chapter 9 page 274- 275.*

**Parents with Learning disability**

It is important not to generalise or make assumptions about the parenting capacity of parents with learning disabilities. Parental learning disability is not correlated with child abuse or wilful neglect, although there is evidence that a *child may suffer neglect from omission where parents are not adequately supported or where there was no early intervention.*

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010: DCSF Chapter 9 page 278*

**Talking to Children and Young People**

*Ensure you know how to respond appropriately to children and the adults in their lives about your concerns.*

When dealing with a disclosure:
• **DO** stay calm.

• **DO** reassure the child.

• **DO** listen carefully and convey to the child you are taking what they have said seriously.

• Use **reflective listening techniques**. If you do not understand what a child has said, repeat it to them with a puzzled look – this will prompt further explanation. If it does not, do not push for more than the child is willing to say. The less you say, the better.

• **Inform the designated** (named) **Safeguarding Co-ordinator / person** of your concerns.

• **Record** what the child has said and how you responded as accurately as you can (word for word), and record all you can remember as soon as possible.

• **DO NOT** ask questions or attempt to investigate.

• **DO NOT** promise the child confidentiality. Be clear you will need to pass on your concerns to others who can help.

• **DO NOT** tell the child ‘everything will be all right’. Things may change for them, and it isn’t possible to predict the outcome.

• **DO NOT** tell the child what will happen next. Each case is unique, and may proceed differently.

• **DO NOT** use puppets, dolls or other resources to encourage children to talk.

• **DO NOT** make promises you cannot keep.
Definitions of Abuse

PHYSICAL
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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

EMOTIONAL
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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. 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.

SEXUAL
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving high levels of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (rape, 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 the production of, sexual online 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). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.
NEGLECT
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 and 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.

Definitions from *Working together to safeguard children, 2010*
Section 5
Recording concerns and referral

Ensure you know what you must do if you have evidence that suggests a child may be abused or neglected.

- Ensure you have a separate accident book and incident book in which you record concerns those types of incident. **Not all children require a record of concern**, only those where you have a clear, evidence-based concern.

- An incident record is where we record injuries a child arrives at the setting with or events that occur at the setting that are non-accidental e.g. one child biting another.

- An accident record is where we record accidents that happen in the setting.

- A record of concern is where we record concerns about a child’s welfare or development (Child in Need) or where we suspect abuse and/or neglect (Child in Need of Protection).

- Children require individual records of concern that are kept separately from other information you have about them e.g. registration form.

- All records of concern must be kept confidential in a safe secure place.

- Record the facts such as dates, times, what you saw or what you were told.

- Always sign and date everything. Ensure you number the pages. DO NOT remove pages. If you take rough notes attach these to the final draft. If you make a mistake do not use correcting fluid or scribble out. Put a line through the mistake and initial.

- Record what the child has said and how you responded, as accurately (word for word) as you can.

- Monitor and evaluate your records of concern. Are they still live; has the issue been resolved; do you need to keep them any longer; have you passed on what you need to safeguard the child?
If you close a record of concern it does not need to be passed on to the next setting. If it is still in use it must be passed on with the child to their new setting.

- Parents do not need to sign records of concern. You should share them where they concern issues related to the child’s development or general well-being, but you are not obliged to share them where you are concerned about abuse or neglect; particularly if to do so might expose the child to the possibility of further or continuing harm.

- Your records could be used in court, so it is vital that your recording is precise, detailed, accurate, clear, objective and factual. It must be based on evidence, not opinion, unless you are making a professional judgement on the basis of your knowledge and understanding. If you are, note this in the record.

- Please use a body map when recording a concern about a physical injury to a child.

**Content of a Record of Concern**

**Front page:** Child’s name, any other name(s) they are known by, address, date of birth, persons with parental responsibility, setting details including names of designated person and deputy.

**Every entry:**

- dates and times
- where the observation/conversation took place
- who was involved/consulted
- what if any consultation was had with the parent; if not why not
- the specific details if the concern including a body map if appropriate
- any action taken and by whom
- if information has been shared, with whom and why, if not why
- attach any draft or original notes
- signatures of all those involved including parent if applicable
Body Map (please ensure you show left and right)

Referral
All professionals have a duty to refer cases where abuse is known to have occurred or is suspected. No professional has the right or responsibility to withhold information or to respect a child/young person’s wish for confidentiality.

Children in Need

Children in need are children that the Local Authority has a duty towards both in terms of family support and child protection. The law defines children to be in need if

- he/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority;
- his/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or
- he/she is disabled.

Reference Children Act 1989, Section 17(10), (11)

If you have concerns about a child or young person’s health or development:

- If you do not suspect abuse or neglect or significant harm liaise with the SENCO and check out it is not an issue for them to deal with.
- If you do not suspect abuse or neglect or significant harm consider engaging the family in the CAF process (please see page ).
- If you do not suspect abuse or neglect but are concerned about significant harm and feel it warrants a social care service response refer via Customer First (0808 800 4005)

If you are unsure how to proceed contact the Access Team for advice via Customer First and / or consult the document; Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Suffolk: Social Care and Common Assessment Framework Thresholds Guidance obtainable online at www.suffolk.gov.uk

Children in Need of protection
Children in need of protection must be responded to promptly and appropriately by the local authority - generally Social Care Services or the Police, although we all have a duty to protect children. The local authority must respond if they are:

- informed that a child who lives or is found in the area
  - is the subject of an emergency protection order; or
  - is in police protection; or

- have a reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in an area is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

The local authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare.

Reference *The Children Act 1989, Section 47*

**Remember:** The setting may be asked to assist in the assessment process, be asked to join a core group, or attend a case conference. You have a duty to provide such information when requested unless you have justifiable reasons not to do so.

**Remember:** Follow up telephone referrals with the Multi Agency referral form.

If you have a concern or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected follow the SCB flow chart and refer to Customer First or if the child is at immediate risk contact the police.

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**Flowchart for Referral**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspicion/allegation of abuse by: child disclosure, observation, report by another person, anonymous communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECORD Sign and date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consult
Your organisation or group should have a policy for child protection. If appropriate, speak with the person nominated to be the child protection advisor/coordinator. All can speak informally with Children and Young People’s Services

IMPORTANT: Any consultation should not delay a referral

Record Sign and date

Action
DO NOT INVESTIGATE
Refer to Children and Young People’s Services and/or Police. You or your ‘co-ordinator’ should make the referral. Parents and carers should be advised that you are doing this unless this might put the child at risk or cause any delay in referring

Record Sign and date

Confirm
DO NOT INVESTIGATE
Verbal referrals must be followed by a written referral within 24 hours

Record Sign and date

Commitment
You may be required to provide other information, as required

Record Sign and date

REMEMBER
DO NOT DELAY – CHILDREN’S SERVICES AND POLICE ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE
The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

CAF is a tool for professionals from whatever background to use if they identify children and young people with unmet needs that cannot be met by themselves or their agency, or by a single-agency referral, or where the need is not a safeguarding issue.

The CAF form is consensual, which means parents agree to engage in the CAF process. The CAF assessment helps professionals decide if they need to seek help from outside their organisation and/or a multi-agency response.

The aim of the CAF process is to make sharing information between professionals about children and their needs easier and more productive. The assessment focuses on the needs of the child or young person and gathers information that helps identify what those needs are.

The CAF form is a standard national form that will be used by all professionals to record the result of the CAF process.

A multi-agency forum in Suffolk called The Team around the Child (TAC or Team around the Family (TAF) meets to discuss the assessment and decide an action plan to address the unmet needs. The TAC or TAF also appoint a Lead Professional to act as a single point of contact for the child, young person and their family and professionals.

The CAF Co-ordinator organises the TAC/TAF and maintains a database of all the children who have been through the CAF process. Each locality has its own CAF co-ordinator.
The CAF, Initial and Core Assessments undertaken by Social Care staff are all based on the Framework for assessment of Children in Need and their Families. This is an approach to assessment that involves thinking about the individual child’s needs; how parents and carers deal with these needs and the factors in their history and wider life that support or prevent them managing the child’s needs for themselves.

Appendix One
Legal Framework
Appendix One: Reference Legal Framework

Children Act 1989

Data Protection Act 1998

Protection of Children Act 1999

The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Children Act 2004

The Day Care and Child Minding (Disqualification) (England) Regulations 2005

The Childcare Act 2006

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

Equalities Act 2010

All the above available on www.opsi.gov.uk/acts

Printed Works

Are you ready for your inspection? A guide to inspections of provision on Ofsted Childcare and Early Years and Childcare registers.
Ofsted, 2009, Ref: 090130 www.ofsted.gov.uk

Aiming High for Disabled Children 2007
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/social care/ahdc

CAF Form: www.suffolk.gov.uk/caf

Early years: firm foundations
Ofsted 2005, HMI 2436
Every Child Matters
Information and publications
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Multi Agency referral Form: www.suffolk.gov.uk

www.suffolk.gov.uk

Safe from harm: a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children involuntary organisations in England and Wales

Safeguarding Children: A guide for childminders and nannies.
NCMA/NSPCC www.ncma.org.uk

Safeguarding Disabled children: Practice Guidance 2009, DCSF


www.suffolk.gov.uk

The Common Core of skills and knowledge for the Children’s Workforce

The Protection of Children in England; A progress Report.
The Lord Laming, March 2009 TSO, ISBN 9780102958928

Working Together to safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2010
DCSF 2010, ISBN 97818477757159

What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused
DfES 2006, ISBN 9781844788675

Guidance for Safer Working practices for Adults working with children and Young People, DFE.
Websites

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
www.ceop.gov.uk

Department of Health
www.doh.gov.uk

Department for Education (formerly Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Employment and Skills)
www.ded.gov.uk

Every Child Matters
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Home Office
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Safe and Sound
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/early-years-safe-and-sound-0

Safe Child
www.safechild.co.uk

SAFE (Safer Activities for Everyone)
www.oursafesite.com

Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board
www.suffolkscb.org.uk
Support Organisations

Childline
Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.co.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
http://ceop.police.uk/

Families Need Fathers
www.fnf.org.uk

Information Commissioners office (Data Protection)
Helpline: 01625 545740

National Childminders Association
Tel: 0800 169 4486
www.ncma.org.uk

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
Tel: 0808 800 5000

One in Four
www.oneinfour.org.uk

Parentlineplus
Tel: 0808 800 222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Women’s Aid
www.womensaid.org.uk Helpline 0808 2000 247
ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD? TELEPHONE AND REFER!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Designated Person</th>
<th>Location and Telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Deputy</td>
<td>Location and Telephone number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children’s Services
Customer First 0808 800 4005
Freephone: 24 hour line

Suffolk Police
Main Switchboard 01473 613500

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999

Suffolk’s Guidance and Procedures for safeguarding children are available at www.suffolkscb.org.uk