



Safeguarding Children's Policy

January 2024

Signed: *S D Adams.*

Role: Chairperson

Date: 15 March 2024

Gateshead Youth Council

Child Protection Policy

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Introduction

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility.

Policy Aims

This policy aims to enable the Gateshead Youth Council (GYC) to demonstrate its commitment to keeping all children and young people at risk whom we encounter in the course of our work safe. It is acknowledged that significant numbers of children and young people at risk are abused, and GYC acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

This policy is in place so that all staff, including trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional staff, agency staff, and anyone working with or on behalf of GYC, can work to prevent abuse and know what to do when a concern arises.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Data Safeguarding Adults Policy and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's policies and procedures, which can be found here: <http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/lscb/Child-protection-procedures/OurProcedures.aspx>

Policy Statement

In England, the HM Government refers to a child in the document Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) as someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. GYC believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We all have a responsibility to promote the physical and mental welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

GYC will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and different learning abilities and the barriers they may face, for example, with communication or the impact of discrimination.

Policy Implementation

To meet our commitment to keeping children and young people safe, we will:

- Listen to children and respect their views and concerns;
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead, including appointing a Trustee Lead in safeguarding, who will take responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level within the GYC.
- Make sure all staff and volunteers understand and follow safeguarding procedures;
- Ensure that children and young people who use our provision know about GYC safeguarding procedures.
- Build a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and children know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable with sharing any concerns they may have.

GYC is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which all children and young people who attend our service are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation. We will:

- Respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of children that may occur. Our Child protection procedures comply with all the relevant legislation and the guidance issued by the local Safeguarding Partners www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk as per 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.'
- Request enhanced DBS(Disclosure Barring Service) check for all staff and volunteers who have contact with children and young people within our service.
- Ensure that all staff hold appropriate safeguarding training, that training is then documented by GYC, and that training is scheduled for refreshment annually.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Complaints
- Whistle Blowing
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Data Protection (GDPR)

- Recruitment and Selection.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Defining Child Abuse & Neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

Recognising Child Abuse & Neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour;
- Deterioration in a child's general well-being;
- Unexplained bruising or marks;
- Comments made by a child which give cause for concern;

- Reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, e.g. in the child's home, or that a girl may have been subjected to (or is at risk of) female genital mutilation and/or
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a young person makes a disclosure to a member of staff or volunteer, that member of staff or volunteer will:

- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out.
- Listen to what the child is saying but do not question them.
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously.
- Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Give reassurance that you will take action.
- Record and report the incident as soon as possible. (Inform Safeguarding Lead and then record on My Concern)

It is not for staff to decide whether or not a suspicion or allegation is true. All suspicions or allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to this procedure.

If a member of staff or volunteer witnesses or suspects abuse, they will report the matter straightaway to the safeguarding lead.

If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Children's Services directly on the contact details provided below. If they do not do so, we will explain that GYC is obliged to, and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting;
- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (e.g. much older);
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (e.g. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength);
- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

If peer-on-peer abuse is suspected or disclosed

We will follow the same procedures as set out above for responding to child abuse.

Extremism and Radicalisation

GYC recognises that some children may be at the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, e.g.:

- Feeling alienated or alone;
- Seeking a sense of identity or individuality;
- Suffering from mental health issues such as depression;
- Desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause;
- Associating with others who hold extremist beliefs.
-

Signs of Radicalisation

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- Changes in behaviour, for example, becoming withdrawn or aggressive;
- Claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified;
- Viewing violent extremist material online;
- Possessing or sharing violent extremist material.
-

All staff members must complete online training in Prevent Duty as part of their induction training programme, and a record of the training is retained in their personnel file.

If a member of staff or volunteer suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they will record any relevant information or observations and refer the matter to the Designated Child Safeguarding Lead.

Female Genital Mutilation

Under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2013, it is an offence to:

- To subject a girl or woman to FGM in the UK;
- To assist a girl to perform it on herself;
- For UK nationals or permanent residents to perform FGM abroad;
- Or to assist anyone to perform FGM abroad.

Safeguarding girls at risk of harm through FGM poses specific challenges because the families involved may give no other cause for concern with regard to their parenting responsibilities or relationships with their children. However, there remains a duty for all professionals to act to safeguard girls at risk of FGM under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Any member of staff or volunteer who has information that a child is potentially or actually at risk of significant harm should immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will inform Children's Social Care and the police according to their statutory responsibility.

All staff at GYC are required to complete the online training 'Female Genital Mutilation: Recognising and Preventing FGM' via Virtual College as part of their induction training programme, and a record of this training is to be stored on their personnel file.

Procedures

DBS Checks

As GYC children and young people on an ongoing basis, our provision currently falls within the scope of "regulated activities" with children that would require a staff member or volunteer to hold an enhanced DBS check.

Some regulated activities are irrelevant to GYC's provision, but others cannot be ruled out and, therefore, must be prepared accordingly.

At least one staff member with a valid enhanced DBS check must always be present while children are on site, and any staff member or volunteer who undertakes unsupervised activities with children must also hold a valid DBS check. If these are not in place, the activity cannot proceed.

According to current DBS guidance, the regulated activities for children are as follows.

| Activity | Period Condition |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Teaching, training or instruction, care or supervision of children | More than 3 days in a 30 day period |
| Moderating a web service wholly or mainly for children | More than 3 days in a 30 day period |
| Advice or guidance wholly or mainly to children | More than 3 days in a 30 day period |
| Driving a vehicle for children | More than 3 days in a 30 day period |
| Healthcare or Personal Care (e.g. assistance eating, washing, using toilet, dressing) | Once is enough |
| Registering to be a foster carer or private foster carer | n/a |
| Registering to be a childminder or childcare provider, including voluntary registration | n/a |

For further information on regulated activities with children and young people, please refer to:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739154/Regulated_Activity_with_Children_in_England.pdf

Reporting Concerns or Incidents

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure or concern about radicalisation will be recorded on the My Concern safeguarding software as soon as possible after the event.

<https://www.thesafeguardingcompany.com>

The record should include:

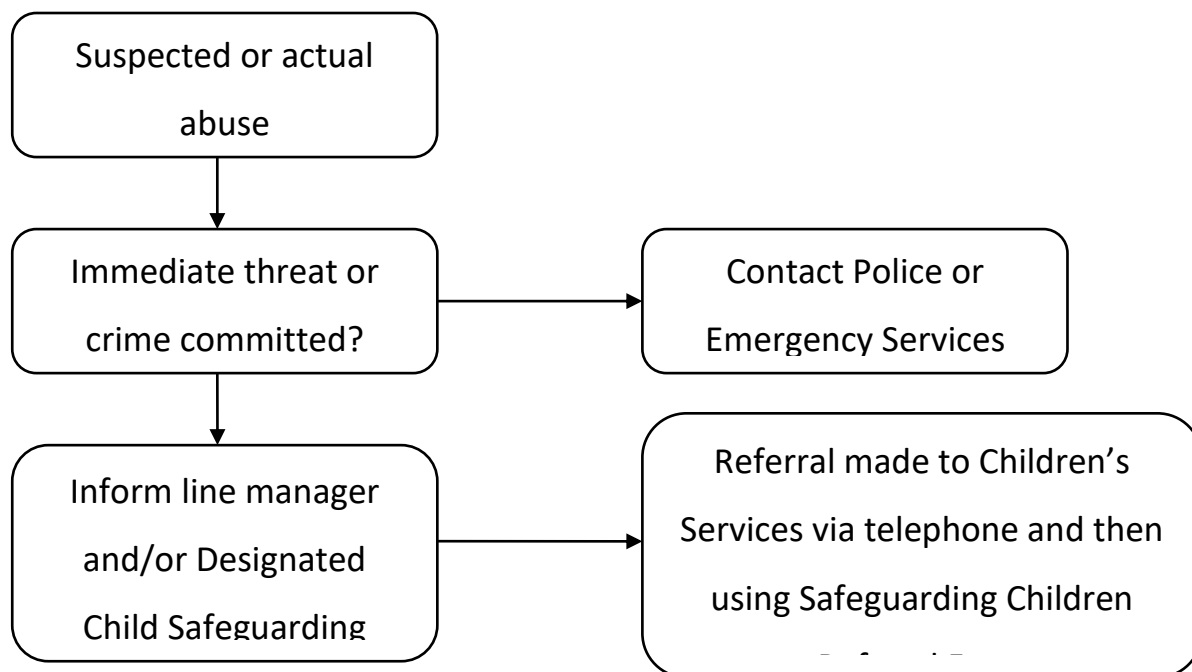
- Date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern;
- Date and time at which the record was made;
- Name and Date of Birth (if known) of the child involved;
- A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, wherever possible, you must use the child's own words;
- Name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to GYC's Designated Child Safeguarding Lead, who will decide on the appropriate action.

For concerns about child abuse, the Designated Child Safeguarding Lead will contact Children's Services if the staff member is unable to do so. The Designated Child Safeguarding Lead will follow up on all referrals to Children's Services in writing within 48 hours using the form provided at <https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9298>.

If a member of staff or volunteer thinks that the incident has not been dealt with properly, they may contact Children's Services directly.

For minor concerns regarding radicalisation, the Designated Child Safeguarding Lead will contact the local Safeguarding Partners. For more serious concerns, the Designated Child Safeguarding Lead will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101) or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns, the Designated Child Safeguarding Lead will contact the Police using 999.



Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff for volunteer:

- The allegation will be recorded on an Incident record form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will advise if other agencies (e.g. police) should be informed, and the Club will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff or volunteer pending a full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate, GYC will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Promoting awareness among staff and volunteers

GYC promotes awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through its staff training.

GYC ensures that:

- The Designated Child Safeguarding Lead receives appropriate training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty and is aware of the Channel Programme and how to access it;
- Safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff and volunteers;
- All staff and volunteers have a copy of this **Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy**, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.
- All staff and volunteers are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and concerns about radicalisation;
- All staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training that GYC documents; current provision is accredited online training provided by Gateshead Safeguarding Children's Board, specifically "Awareness of Child Abuse & Neglect – Core", and this training is refreshed on an annual basis;
- All staff and volunteers, as appropriate, receive basic training in the Prevent Duty, for which guidance is available at the following link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf.

- All staff and volunteers, as appropriate, receive basic training in recognising and preventing Female Genital Mutilation; please refer to: <https://fgmelearning.vc-enable.co.uk/Register/>
- All staff and volunteers, as appropriate, receive basic training in recognising and preventing Modern Slavery; please refer to: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655504/6.3920_HO_Modern_Slavery_Awareness_Booklet_web.pdf
- The staff know that GYC uses My Concern safeguarding software for reporting concerns, information and reports. Our Safeguarding Trustee Lead has access to this software, so they can review any new concerns and see actions taken.
- GYC's procedures align with the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023)'.

Use of Photographic or Filming Equipment

It is common for photographic or filming equipment to be used within groups and on other activities as part of the programme at GYC.

Written consent to take and use images of children must be obtained before the taking of photographs and/or video footage. Parents should be made aware of when, where and how the images may be used in order to give their informed consent. This includes comprehensive information regarding the use of images, e.g. in print, multi-media, broadcast; for what purpose, e.g. promotion, publicity, evaluation, audit, review; and, where possible, an indication of who the audience will be, e.g. the general public, the participating children and their families, other organisations and institutes.

GYC staff should never photograph or film any activity using their personal equipment.

The GYC administrator will keep a spreadsheet detailing consent received for any children participating in GYC groups. The staff lead in each group is responsible for ensuring that pictures are only taken of participants who have given consent.

National and International Emergencies and Crises

In times of national and international emergencies and crises, approaches to safeguarding may need to be reviewed. Will be updated to reflect any changes and implementations in such cases.

Contact Details

GYC Safeguarding Leads

GYC Safeguarding Lead is Valerie Ender, who can be contacted on 07758671339. Email: valerie@gatesheadyouthcouncil.org.uk

GYC deputy Safeguarding Lead Sue Adams can be contacted on 07880600599. Email: sue@gatesheadyouthcouncil.org.uk

Trustee Safeguarding Lead Sue Adams using the contact details above.

Safeguarding Partners

Gateshead Council

Children's Services

Phone: 0191 4332653 (830am to 5 pm)

Out of Hours Contact: 0191 477 0844

Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership

Phone: 0191 433 3210

<https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9170/Contact-us->

Gateshead Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Michelle Farry

Lado@gateshead.gov.uk

Phone: 0191 433 8031 or 07597 527 210

Police

Phone: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)

Anti-Terrorist Hotline

Phone: 0800 789 321

NSPCC

Phone: 0808 800 500

GYC - Incident Reporting Form

| | |
|---|--|
| Your Name | |
| Your Position | |
| Child's Details <i>Name, DOB, Address (if known)</i> | |
| Other Relevant Details About Child <i>Family Circumstances, Physical & Mental Health, Communication Difficulties, etc.</i> | |
| | |
| Parent / Guardian / Carer's Details <i>(if known)</i> | |
| Details of Concerns, Allegations or Incident <i>E.g. A disclosure made to you by child; a disclosure or concerns from a third party; your own concerns.</i> | |
| | |
| Date & Time of Concerns, Allegations or Incident | |
| Details <i>State exactly what you observed or were told, and how you responded. Provide as much information as possible, including any other witnesses. Where possible, use the person's own words.</i> | |

[illegible]

Signature.....Date.....

Signature of Safeguarding Lead.....Date.....