

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Connect IoW CIO is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all its Service Users. As such we need to be mindful of the fact that issues surrounding the wellbeing of vulnerable children may come to light or be disclosed whilst we are supporting our Service Users

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people under our care from harm
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Connect IoW CIO including the Leadership Team, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and Service Users

We follow regulations from HM Government outlined in “Working Together to Safeguard Children”. Significant points raised in this document are:

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – it is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

For children who need additional help, every day matters. Academic research is consistent in underlining the damage to children from delaying intervention. The actions taken by professionals to meet the needs of these children as early as possible can be critical to their future. Effective safeguarding systems are those where:

- The child’s needs are paramount
- The needs and wishes of each child, be they baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates
- All professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children
- All professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children’s social care
- High quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child’s needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child
- All professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes
- When things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and are transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

Children have said that they need

- Vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- Understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- Stability: to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- Respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- Information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans

- Explanations: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- Support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- Advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances, and if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. In order that organisations and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that every individual working with children and families is aware of the role they should play and the role of other professionals

Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and for consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour of professionals. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. A child-centred approach is supported by:

- the Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004). This Act requires local authorities to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked after (section 22(4) Children Act 1989), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3)(d) of that Act);
- the Equality Act 2010 which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their individual needs; and
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information

All members of Connect IoW CIO should ensure that they understand the importance of safeguarding the children we are supporting and realise that it is imperative that children feel safe with us at all times

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, and a lead for safeguarding

- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work or one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Procedures for safeguarding Service Users during their supported hours with us

1. It is important that Service Users can feel safe and protected while they are with us, and that their parents/carers can be confident of this. Children need to know that they are being listened to, and that they are respected
2. Our nominated child protection lead is our Deputy Designated Lead (DSL)
3. Ensure that you have read the Support Plan and Person Centred Risk Assessment of every Service User that you come into contact with. This is the only way that you can ensure that you can keep yourself and the Service Users you support safe to the best of your ability. Anyone unaware of information held in the individual service user files could face disciplinary procedures
4. Staff should follow the Reporting of Incidents procedure which outlines how to report any concerns and who to report them to
5. Ensure that training remains up to date so that staff feel confident in identifying potential signs of abuse
6. Person Centred Risk Assessments and Service Plans are updated regularly. It is the employees responsibility to ensure that they keep themselves up to date with any new information pertaining to service users. It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to make sure that any new information pertaining to Service Users is shared in a timely fashion
7. Staff should ensure that they take an active role in building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and children know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns
8. If anything happens which gives you any cause for concern then this must be noted and passed to the DSL at the earliest opportunity

Connect IoW CIO take issues surrounding the safeguarding of children extremely seriously. This policy is directed by guidelines set out by the local authority for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Supporting Documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Comments Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Reporting of Incidents
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Information Sharing

- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Electronics-Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti-Discriminatory Practice
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy

Staff Training

Safeguarding training required by all staff at any level:

- Introduction to Safeguarding Children
- Managing Allegations and Working with the LADO
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities

Training required by Leadership Team:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children Level 3

Training required by Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies)

- Designated Safeguarding Lead Level 3

Safeguarding Officers:

DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and CCO (Chief Compliance Officer)

Kathryne Mason

For more information please refer to:

Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board & Children's Trust Thresholds Chart (April 2014)

Contact Information:

To report any child welfare or safeguarding concerns the **Inter Agency Referral Form (IARF)** can be used. This can be found at <https://childrenandfamiliesportal.hants.gov.uk/s4s/FormDetails/FillForm?formId=279>

The contact number for Isle of Wight Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is **0300 300 0117**

For urgent child protection enquiries professionals can call **0300 300 0901** or **01983 282 353**

For any queries relating to safeguarding concerns, safeguarding checks, who a child's social worker is or to escalate safeguarding concerns then Isle of Wight Council's Children's Social Care should be contacted on **0300 300 0901**

The contact number for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is **01962 876 364**

The contact number for the NSPCC Helpline service is **0808 800 5000** or email help@nspcc.org.uk

The contact number for ChildLine is **0800 1111**

Any concerns from staff members should be sent to our designated email account which exclusively handles concerns and potential safeguarding referrals at concerns.connectiow@gmail.com. This account is monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Policy last review date: 17.10.2025