

Safeguarding policy

This policy aims to protect and ensure the safety of children and young people who attend the Projects and Programmes run by GoConnect Ltd and to enable GoConnect staff and volunteers to respond in an informed and confident manner to specific safeguarding concerns.

GoConnect Ltd is committed to practice which protects children and young people from harm. GoConnect's staff and volunteers accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm and endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Prioritising safeguarding as our primary concern which permeates all aspects of our work.
- Sharing information about Child Protection, policy, process and good practice with staff, volunteers, relevant local authority agencies, parents and carers.
- Proactively sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Principles

The following legislation underpins The All Wales Child Protection Policy & Procedures 2008.

Full details of this can be found here:

<http://www.awcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/All-Wales-Child-Protection-Procedures-2008.pdf>

Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004

The Children Act 2004 strengthens the arrangements for protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It places a duty on all local authorities in Wales to make arrangements to promote co-operation with a view to improving the well-being of children in their area, in relation to:

- Physical & mental health and emotional well-being.
- Protection from harm and neglect.
- Education, training and recreation.
- The contribution made by them to society.
- Social and economic well-being.

Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. We all seek to create an ethos which helps children and young people feel secure and able to talk freely, in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their concerns taken seriously.

All GoConnect staff and volunteers will:

Adhere to policy and ask for advice in any circumstances when they feel uncertain.

Participate in Safeguarding training when possible

Adhere to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures, copies available here:

<http://www.awcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/All-Wales-Child-Protection-Procedures-2008.pdf>

Refer children and young people to appropriate agencies as necessary.

Offer all possible support to children and young people and parents/carers.

GoConnect will:

Annually review and monitor this guidance.

Receive information on child protection activity from the relevant local authority it is working in so that confidentiality is not breached.

Prioritise safeguarding within staff induction.

Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the designated Safeguarding officers in the local authority they are working in.

Ensure that Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) procedures are administered effectively when required.

Ensure that all newly appointed staff and volunteers have an up to date DBS check.

Risk assess all newly appointed staff and volunteers prior to commencing employment and receiving the cleared DBS disclosure.

Adhere to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Respond immediately if an allegation is made against any GoConnect staff or volunteer and ensure that all disclosures made by children and young people are appropriately and rapidly responded to.

Ensure that any data required by the LA or Welsh Government for monitoring purposes is made available.

Ensure that all staff are fully aware of their Safeguarding responsibilities and provide annual training for all alongside daily and weekly safeguarding updates where appropriate.

Making a Referral

In accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance, if any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to Social Care or the police who have statutory duties and powers to investigate and intervene when necessary.

The Children Act 1989 defines abuse as when a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer 'significant harm'. For the purpose of the Child Protection Register four categories of abuse are identified.

Categories of abuse

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by a family member or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

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. This can include an unborn child.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment.

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

Physical abuse

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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill-health to a child whom they are looking after.

This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It involves conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it might occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

If required, advice can be sought from Social Care prior to making a referral. However this discussion should not delay any emergency action to protect a child. The golden rule is if undecided or unsure make a Child Protection Referral. If in doubt or unhappy with any advice given, including advice given to you by a designated Safeguarding officer, then you can always make a referral yourselves.

Making a referral will not necessarily initiate an investigation but will make Social Care and the Police, who have a statutory responsibility for making such decisions, aware of your concerns. When determining whether a referral should be made you may often need to find out some additional information. However, this needs to be done in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Procedures in order not to prejudice any possible criminal investigation. Your role is to inform not to investigate the concern, disclosure or allegation.

Do not worry if you are mistaken. You will always be taken seriously and you should always discuss your concern with somebody with experience and responsibility rather than ignore it

The Referral Process

A referral should be made to Social Care as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern becomes apparent. In accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines this should be within 24. Referrals may be made by telephone, in person, by letter, fax or electronically. Outside office hours referrals should be made to the Social Care Emergency Duty Service or directly to the Police. All referrals should be confirmed in writing within two days using a standard form where possible.

Details of each Local Safeguarding Children Board are held within GoConnect and are available for each member of staff or volunteer to ensure a timely referral takes place.

Whistleblowing

It is important that there is awareness of the procedures in place which enable GoConnect staff and volunteers to share, in confidence with the board, any concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour. All GoConnect staff are required to follow a code of conduct which sets out their duties in passing on any concerns about a colleague's behavior.

Code of Conduct

GoConnect values children and young people as individuals, respects their rights and upholds the United Nations Convention of the rights of the child. In doing so all concerned, including staff, volunteers, children and young people, follow guidelines on what is expected and what is not acceptable, with respect to their own behaviour. These issues are considered in GoConnect's Code of Conduct for working with young people, the lone working policy, the confidentiality statement and the health and safety policy.

Guidelines for staff and volunteers include the following:

Staff and volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. Meetings with individual children or young people should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed the door should be left partly open and other staff and volunteers informed of the meeting.

Physical contact with children and young people is to be considered in line with positive handling plans and professional judgement exercised at all times.

Staff and volunteers should not meet with young people outside organised GoConnect activities.

It must be recognised that whilst becoming a volunteer can be a most positive experience for a young person, adequate supervision and monitoring by GoConnect staff is essential, these opportunities should be carefully considered and responsibility should not be given to a young person that is beyond their capability.

Some children and young people involved with GoConnect projects and programmes are very vulnerable and have experienced a range of complex difficulties. Staff and volunteers should remember that on rare occasions children or young people may also be abusers, in which case child protection procedures should be followed for all.

GoConnect staff and volunteers should never:

Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games.

Allow children to use inappropriate language without challenging this.

Make sexually suggestive comments in front of, about, or to, a child / young person, even in fun. This includes conversations between colleagues where pupils may be within earshot.

Allow allegations made by a child to pass without being addressed and recorded.

Deter children / young people from making allegations through fear of not being believed.

Invite or allow a child or young person to their home.

Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.

Bullying whether between young people, staff or young people and staff will not be tolerated.

GoConnect Child Protection Log

In order to ensure that appropriate information is available regarding any child protection concerns that have been raised a log is maintained by the GoConnect:

The log includes:

Date / time of receipt of information.

Details of who the information was received from and given to.

Date / time / location of incident.

Name / DOB / address of young person.

Details of what happened / observed to happen.

The young person's own words [where this has been recorded]

Details of anyone else involved/witnesses.

What action was taken at the time.

Date and time of referral made

Date and time of log updated

Log signed and dated.

Details of referral made including the name of the duty officer who took the referral

Explanation of why a referral was not made, if it is not made.

Record of suggested action by Social Care, LA, Police including advice re child being sent home or remaining in school where applicable.

All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008

If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions, that a child may be suffering significant harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to social services or the police, who have statutory duties and powers to investigate and intervene if necessary.

What to do if a child or young person tells you they, or someone else, is being abused

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Do not appear shocked.
- Allow the child or young person to continue at his/her pace.
- Reassure the child/young person they have done the right thing in telling.
- Ask questions to clarify but at all times avoid asking probing questions.
- Explain that the information will need to be shared with others - do not agree to keep any secrets.
- Explain what will happen next and who the information will be shared with.
- Record in writing what was said using the child/young persons own words: note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and remember to sign and date it. Do this after you have spoken with the child as soon as you can, don't take notes while speaking to the child.
- Pass all detail immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, or Deputy Safeguarding Officer, if neither are available contact a member of the management team. These staff will decide the next course of action.

NEVER HOLD ON TO INFORMATION UNTIL THE NEXT DAY OR OVER THE WEEKEND. There is an out of hours service that is open 24hrs that anyone can use – these details are accessible through GoConnect. If the child is at immediate risk of harm, telephone the police.

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