

# the root of it

## Safeguarding Policy

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### **Aims**

We recognise that all members of our team play an important part in protecting the children and vulnerable adults we work with.

This policy is written to reflect that in our day to day work all members of our team ensure that they are aware of safeguarding procedures.

This policy covers staff, associates and volunteers.

### **Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Our designated safeguarding officer is Richard Curtis, Managing Director.

It is not the role of the designated safeguarding lead to undertake an investigation into the concerns or allegation of harm. It is the role of the designated safeguarding lead to collate and clarify details of the concern or allegation and to provide this information to the Local Authority Access and Assessment Team, or Locality Team if Children's Social Care is already involved, whose duty it is to make enquiries in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

### **Definitions of harm**

#### **Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child or individual. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to someone. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of an individual such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving them 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 a 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 individuals frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of an individual, though it may occur alone.

### Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or vulnerable adult 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 children.

### Neglect

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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Recognition of harm

The harm or possible harm of an individual or child may come to your attention in a number of possible ways;

- Information given by the individual or child, his/ her friends, a family member or close associate.
- The child's behaviour may become different from the usual, be significantly different from the behaviour of their peers, be bizarre or unusual or may involve 'acting out' a harmful situation in play.
- An injury which arouses suspicion because;
  - It does not make sense when compared with the explanation given.
  - The explanations differ depending on who is giving them (e.g., differing explanations from the parent/carer and child).
  - The child appears anxious and evasive when asked about the injury.
- Suspicion being raised when a number of factors occur over time, for example, the child fails to progress and thrive in contrast to his/her peers.
- Contact with individuals who pose a 'risk to children or others'. This may be someone who has been convicted of an offence listed in Schedule One of the Children and Young Person's Act 1933 (Sexual Offences Act 2003), or someone who has been identified as continuing to present a risk to children or vulnerable adults.
- The parent's behaviour before the birth of a child may indicate the likelihood of significant harm to an unborn child, for example substance misuse, or, previous children removed from their carers.

## Managing a Disclosure

- Listen to what the person has to say with an open mind.
- Do not ask probing or leading questions designed to get the child to reveal more.
- Never stop someone who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, as well as what was said.
- Do not ask them to write a statement.
- Never promise the child or individual that what they have told you can be kept secret. Explain that you have responsibility to report what they have said to someone else.
- The designated lead for safeguarding within your organisation must be informed immediately.

## Raising concern

If a Root Of It team member has any concerns about a child or individual they are working with, the Team Member has a duty to report those concerns. Consent should be sought from the family (including the child or individual where appropriate) unless this increases the risk of significant harm for the child or individual. It should be noted that parents, carers or child may not agree to information being shared, but this should not prevent referrals where child protection concerns persist. The reasons for dispensing with consent from the parents, carer or child should be clearly recorded and communicated with social services.

The Team Member will contact the school they are working with or social services directly. All concerns will be reported directly to the Child Protection Liaison Officer at the school if you are working for a school.

Team Member's will need to provide information on what you have seen, what you have heard from others and what has been said to you directly.

They must also follow that up with a completed Root Of It Safeguarding concern form, which must be returned to [richard.curtis@rootofit.com](mailto:richard.curtis@rootofit.com) within 24 hours.

If a Team Member is in doubt, anonymous advice should be sought from social services.

## Responsibilities

All team members who work with children, young and vulnerable people must ensure they not only understand but also act in line with this policy.

Any team members who are not able to evidence relevant safeguarding training will be expected to inform The Root Of It Headquarters, who will arrange for training to be undertaken.

Breach of this policy or unauthorised disclosure may result in disciplinary or legal action being taken.

## Allegations against staff members / volunteers

If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the group or organisation including:

- Behaving in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed n individual;

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children
- Behaved towards an adult or adults in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with adults

The nature of the allegation or concern should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for dealing with allegations within the organisation immediately.

The member of staff who has a concern or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for The Root Of It will report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if it relates to a child or vulnerable adult.

## Checks

To meet our responsibilities all of our staff have been vetted, their qualifications and references checked and a Disclosure and Barring Service or Criminal Records Bureau check has been seen by us.

A person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups. If The Root Of It knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups they will also be breaking the law. If there is an incident where a member of staff or volunteer has to be dismissed because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or would have been if they had not left, The Root Of It will notify the DBS.

## Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Safeguarding suitability checks are confidential.

The company will disclose any information about an employee, visitor or contractor for whom checks have been undertaken on a need to know basis only.

Information must be shared with police and Social Care where the child/young person/vulnerable adult is or may be at risk of significant harm

We ensure that individual's and/or parent's confidentiality must not be breached and that information is shared on a need to know basis.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

April 2015