

Child Protection Policy

This should be read in conjunction with the Procedures and Guidance

Owner/s:	Director of Children Young People and Families
Author/s:	Emma Williams-Daly/Helen Cable
Issuing Team/Dept:	Children Young People and Families
Version No:	1.5
Date Approved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDs • Services and Campaigns • Trustee Board 	28 May 2015 17 June 2015 20 July 2015
Review Frequency:	Full review every 3 years, annual interim checks to identify amendments required due to changes in external legislation
Next Review Date:	2016
Circulation (primary location):	Intranet / Internet

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Protecting children is everyone's responsibility. Deaf and disabled children are particularly vulnerable to child abuse, so it is especially important to keep a watchful eye for signs of abuse or neglect.
- 1.2 Although very little research has been done in the UK regarding the vulnerabilities of deaf children, we know from studies around the world that deaf children are more vulnerable to neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse than children in the general population (Sullivan, Vernon, & Scanlan, 1987)
- 1.3 Research indicates that deaf children are more than twice as likely to be abused as hearing children – e.g. “20% of deaf children had been abused compared to a prevalence rate of 9% among the non-disabled child population” (Sullivan and Knutson, 2000).

- 1.4 Children with communication disorders are more likely to be physically and sexually abused than children without these disorders (Sullivan & Knutson, 1998)
- 1.5 As a result of this research we are aware that children whose families are receiving a service from the NDCS and/or local groups are deemed to be especially vulnerable to abuse because of their deafness and in some cases other disabilities, and are less likely to be taken seriously when they disclose abuse. Workers have a duty to be vigilant in monitoring their welfare.
- 1.6 This policy applies to everyone who works for the NDCS or a local group, whether in a paid or voluntary role. Even if you are not sure about what is happening, you **MUST** take advice if you are worried.

2. Using the Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Guidance

- 2.1 The NDCS Child Protection Policy and the Procedures and Guidance documents should support your work in protecting children. It will help you to develop good practice and safeguard children.
- 2.2 In order to do this effectively, you should also undertake awareness raising or child protection training appropriate to your role. Some roles will require you to undertake more detailed training.
- 2.3 Throughout this document, certain words, phrases and names of policies are highlighted in order to help you find the information you need.
- 2.4 This **policy** tells you about protecting children and the principles the organisation supports.
- 2.5 The **procedures and guidance** document tells you what you must do if you have a concern about a child, what your responsibilities are and how to respond even if it is out of hours.
- 2.6 The **procedures and guidance** document also tells you how to respond if you think a child may be abusing another child and what to do if you think an adult working with children is unsafe to do so.
- 2.7 The **procedures and guidance** document tells you how NDCS is creating a safer organisation and includes information about employee and volunteer recruitment, induction, training and reporting concerns.
- 2.8 The **procedures and guidance** document contains some more detailed guidance including definitions and indicators of abuse and harm to children. There are some slight differences in the different parts of the UK in how harm to children is defined. These are explained, but should not prevent you from acting if you are worried. There is also some information about some of the signs which might indicate that a child is suffering abuse or neglect. It explains the role of some other professionals in assessing and responding to concerns about child abuse so that you know what is likely to happen after a child protection referral is made.

- 2.9 The **procedures and guidance** document gives some of the **forms, flowcharts and contact information** which should help you with your responsibilities.
- 2.10 There is a **form** to help you record clearly any concerns about a child and what you have done.
- 2.11 There are **flowcharts** to explain:
- how to report concerns about possible child abuse
 - what happens when the report is referred on by the Designated Person, Designated Safeguarding Manager or Safeguarding Advice Team to one of the statutory agencies dealing with child protection
 - how to report concerns about an employee or volunteer who may be harming a child and the process for managing allegations.
- 2.12 There is also an explanation of the role of the Designated Person(s) and Designated Safeguarding Manager in NDCS.
- 2.13 You should also read the **Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People** document. It explains clearly how all staff are expected to conduct themselves in relation to children. It should be fully used in the induction of new staff and volunteers and in the continuing supervision or appraisal of all staff and volunteers.

3. Policy statement and overview

- 3.1 NDCS recognises that the welfare of all children and young people is of paramount importance.
- 3.2 All children have the right to be protected from abuse. NDCS will not unfairly discriminate in any way, for example on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 3.3 Safeguarding their welfare is the responsibility of every NDCS and local group worker¹, whether salaried or voluntary, whatever their role or status. It is also the responsibility of our partners, in the UK and overseas.
- 3.4 The procedures apply to the UK, though legislation differs slightly between England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, it is NDCS policy that we will expect our partners overseas to develop child protection policies consistent with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the child protection legislative framework of those countries. We will support our partners' policies and procedures through the work of Deaf Child Worldwide.

¹ The term 'worker' refers to roles in the organisation which involve work with children whether on a paid or voluntary basis. Local groups affiliated to NDCS are expected to adopt this definition.

3.5 NDCS uses the following definition of safeguarding:

- **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**
- **Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes²**

3.6 And the following definition of child protection:

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm,³

3.7 NDCS staff, volunteers and local group workers have a responsibility to report concerns of suspected abuse or poor practice to a designated person for child protection within their department/group.

3.8 NDCS and its affiliated local groups are committed to promoting the seven key themes found in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and reflected in the objectives for children's services in the four countries of the UK:

- a) being healthy
- b) staying safe including being free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation, accidental death or injury, bullying, discrimination, crime and anti-social behaviour
- c) having a nurturing place to live
- d) enjoying, learning and achieving
- e) making a positive contribution and being listened to
- f) achieving economic well-being
- g) security, stability, and a respect for the human rights of children

3.9 This policy is intended to ensure that NDCS staff and volunteers play their part in the achievement of these objectives.

3.10 Any child, whether deaf or not, with whom a staff member or volunteer may come into contact in the course of NDCS duties has the same right to be protected from abuse or neglect.

3.11 Each child should be treated as an individual, encouraged to express their own needs and wishes, and be listened to by the worker.

3.12 Children's complaints and concerns should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

3.13 NDCS and local group workers will work co-operatively with all agencies who share responsibility for protecting children from abuse.

² Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

³ Working Together to Safeguard Children. 2015

- 3.14 NDCS encourages working in partnership with children, parents and carers, whenever possible, where there are concerns or suspicions about child abuse.
- 3.15 All workers who have direct contact with children and their families will be recruited, trained and supervised to ensure that they are properly equipped to:
- a) identify where there may be a concern
 - b) know how to obtain speedy and professional advice
 - c) refer concerns appropriately to specialist workers as necessary
 - d) contribute to the maintenance of a safe working environment
 - e) protect themselves from allegations of abuse
- 3.16 NDCS and local groups will ensure that those who work with children and their families are subject to the appropriate level of criminal records and other checks prior to their appointment, in line with government policy (see **NDCS Safer Recruitment and Vetting Policy**)
- 3.17 All workers are required to work within the **NDCS Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children.**
- 3.18 NDCS and its affiliated local groups are committed to respond to any allegations of abuse by staff or volunteers promptly and to implement the appropriate complaints, disciplinary and appeals procedures as necessary.
- 3.19 Information sharing will be compliant with current data protection and human rights legislation.
- 3.20 This policy and the procedures and guidance document will be reviewed annually for legislative changes and fully every three years.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 This policy and the procedures and guidance document adopts the following definition(s) throughout:

Child/children – The definition of a child in England and Wales and Northern Ireland is a person aged 0 years to their 18th birthday. In Scotland a child is a person aged 0 years to their 16th birthday, though there are variations to this in relation to different functions. In child protection guidance, in all of the UK countries, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years. In Scotland, in some circumstances, a 16 or 17 year old is considered a ‘vulnerable adult’.