Safeguarding Children: Key Information

The Children Act 2004 states that ‘Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility’

1 Types of Abuse – Definitions

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- It is a criminal offence to cause visible injuries to a child.

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 (e.g. rape or buggery) 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, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)
- Woman can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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.
- 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 and clothing, 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-takers);
  - Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse:
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.
- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. . . It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
• It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Above from: Working Together 2010

2 What to do if you are Concerned about a Child

If your organisation has concerns that a child is in need of protection they have a responsibility to make a referral to the Greenwich Contact and Referral Team on 0208 921 3172.

The contact and referral team are responsible for:
• Responding to information or referrals about children who are or maybe children in need.
• Carrying out assessments of children and their families who may require services or our intervention to prevent impairment to health or development.
• Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in need, including taking action to protect children from harm. Intervening early in a child's life or as soon as potentially serious or complex needs are identified, in order to prevent them from causing problems that affect a child’s welfare and life chances.
• Supporting disabled children and their families.
• Responding to concerns about the welfare of children outside our of normal office hours.

If you make a telephone referral you will need to follow this up in writing within 48hrs using the inter-agency referral form which is available from the contact and referral team.

For further information regarding this service please see their website http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/HealthSocialCare/ChildrenFamilies/ProtectingChildren/ChildrenAtRisk.htm

3 Safeguarding Children in Contact with Voluntary Organisations

Every organisation working with children and young people, whether they are paid or voluntary has a ‘duty of care’ to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm.
• This ‘duty of care’ rests upon the individual to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child or young person involved in any activity, or interaction for which that individual is responsible.
• Any person in charge of, or working with children and young people in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care.
• The Children Act 2004 places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. This includes the need to
ensure that all adults who work with, or on behalf of children and young people in these organisations are competent, confident and safe to do so.

- Everyone working with children and young people should be familiar with local procedures and protocols for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.
- Adults have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to a designated member of staff in their organisation and/or report any concerns to the local Children's Services/Police.
- Anyone who has a concern or is in doubt should refer to the document ‘What to do if you're worried a child is being abused’ www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00182/ and follow that guidance.

4 Safer Organisations

Safeguarding children is not just about the protection of children in their families but also about how organisations in contact with children take steps to ensure that a safe environment is created. There is now considerable research on how organisations can take steps to create a ‘safe environment’. In reviewing your organisation do you have the following in place?

- Clear child protection policy and procedures
- Safe recruitment, checking C.V’s, references and CRB checks.
- Clear expectations of staff and volunteers with regard to their personal conduct
- On-going training and supervision for staff and volunteers.
- Easy access to advise, guidance and consultation
- Listen to the concerns of service users with an open mind.
- A complaints process that is well publicised
- Accurate and up-to-date record keeping
- Regular audits of work
- Leadership and clear lines of accountability

The key issue is that your organisation promotes a ‘culture’ of safeguarding children.

For more information or support regarding any of the above, please contact GAVS or Amanda Harry, Development Officer, Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board on 0208 856 9932 amanda.harry@greenwich.gov.uk