

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

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Section 1- Introduction

Background

The Children's Act 2004 set out new arrangements for the protection of all children and young people (CYP), up to the age of 18. The Act was published following the green paper; *Every Child Matters* (September 2003) in response to the findings of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. It highlighted the need to change the way public agencies worked and outlined a framework for additional safeguarding measures for CYP and how those public agencies should work together to promote the welfare of CYP.

This policy will provide practical guidance to all Officers and Members who come into contact with CYP throughout the course of their work. The policy also applies to our partners and contractors and the Council requires them to adhere to the principles outlined herein.

The policy is also complimented by an additional guidance booklet for easy reference aimed primarily at employees who come into direct contact with children on a daily basis. This guidance can also be used by our partners and contractors where necessary.

Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Promote the welfare of CYP and the principles of working together with other public agencies to ensure the safeguarding of those CYP.
- Provide all Officers and Members with the knowledge and skills to recognise abuse/neglect and take appropriate action to safeguard and protect CYP.

The objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure all Officers and Members understand the definition of child abuse.
- To ensure all Officers and Members know how to recognise signs of child abuse.
- To equip Officers and Members with the knowledge and skills to report concerns or suspicions of child abuse or neglect they may encounter throughout course of their work and to ensure that all staff receive appropriate training on safeguarding CYP.
- To put in place procedures to deal with allegations against Officers or Members.
- To put in place procedures for safely recruiting staff.

Section 2- Recognising and Reporting Abuse

Categories of Abuse

There are different forms of abuse and they can be categorised as follows:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child or young person.

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 a 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-givers)
- 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. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's development 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 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 ill treatment to a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways.

How to Recognise Signs of Abuse

It is not the responsibility of Officers or Members to investigate suspected cases of child abuse, however there is a duty for Officers and Members to be aware of common signs and symptoms of abuse to enable them to report any concerns or suspicions.

Recognising signs of abuse is not always easy as different children respond in different ways, however below are some common physical signs and behavioural indicators that may be displayed. It is important to remember that these are just indicators and may not be confirmation that abuse is occurring:

Physical Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained bruising marks or injuries on any part of the body	Fear of parents/carer being approached for an explanation and inconsistent explanations for injury Aggressive behaviour/ severe temper outbursts Flinching when approached or touched Reluctance to get changed, e.g. wearing long sleeves in hot weather Depression Withdrawn behaviour Running away from home
Bruising which reflects hand marks or fingers (from slapping or pinching)	
Cigarette Burns	
Bite Marks	
Scalds	
Injuries which have a pattern to them	

Neglect	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children	Complaining of being tired all the time Not requesting medical assistance/ failing to attend appointments Having few friends Mentioning that they've been left on their own or unsupervised
Constantly dirty or smelly	
Loss of weight or being constantly underweight	
Inappropriate dress for the conditions	

Emotional Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<p>A failure to thrive or grow</p> <p>Sudden speech disorders</p> <p>Developmental delay. Either physical or emotional</p>	<p>Poor socialisation skills</p> <p>Constant eagerness to please</p> <p>Withdrawn behaviour</p> <p>Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking</p> <p>Being unable to play</p> <p>Fear of making mistake</p> <p>Self harm</p> <p>Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour</p>

Sexual Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas	Sudden, unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
Bruising or bleeding near the genital/anal areas	Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
Sexually transmitted disease	Having nightmares
Vaginal discharge or infection	Running away from home
Stomach pains	Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age/development age
Discomfort when walking or sitting down	Sexual drawings or language
Pregnancy	Bed-wetting
	Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
	Self-harm, mutilation and in extreme cases; suicide attempts
	Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia

Concerns about a child or young person may come to the attention of staff, volunteers or contractors in a number of ways;

- Through observation of the child or young person and recognition of some of the signs.
- The child or young person may disclose abuse.
- Information may be given by parents, other people or agencies.
- A child or young person may show some signs of physical injury of which there seems to be no satisfactory explanation.
- Something in the behaviour of one of the workers, or in the way the worker relates to a child or young person, alerts them or makes them feel uncomfortable in some way.
- Observing one child or young person abuse another.

Child abuse thrives on secrecy and needs to be handled in a sensitive, accepting way. In order to achieve this adults may have to overcome certain

barriers and this will be delivered through the training provided. Some difficulties Officers/Members/Partners/Contractors may need to address;

- Sometimes it may be hard to believe what they are saying.
- It may be difficult that the suspicion may be about someone that is known.
- 'The fear of getting it wrong'
- The fear of what consequences there may be for 'getting it wrong' for the child or young person, for the family and for themselves.
- Worry that it may make it worse for the child or young person.
- Believe that the services are stigmatising.
- Simply do not want to become involved.
- Do not have the necessary information on what to do or who to contact.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns or Suspicions

It is the role of Children's Social Care and / or the Police to investigate allegations or concerns. The role of staff in other organisations such as the Council is to help to identify concerns and pass them onto the relevant agency. All staff and volunteers working in partnership with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) have a duty to follow LSCB procedures.

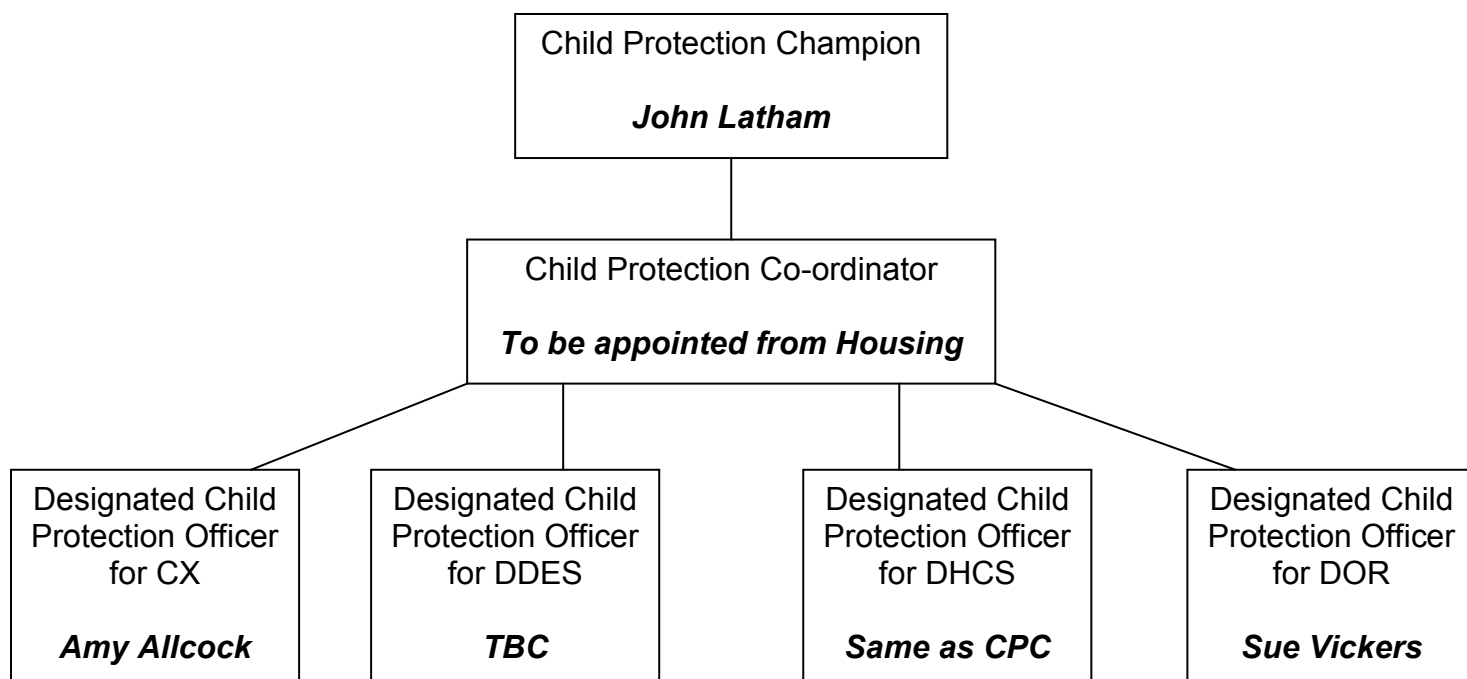
If Officer/Member/Partner/Contractor has a concern about a child or young person, they should:

- Record as much information as possible about the situation – this may be from the child or young person, parent, carer or other workers. The Child Protection Incident Reporting Form is attached at Appendix 2 and will prompt the reporter to include vital information needed for further investigation.
- Be open about the concern and make it clear that you will have to tell others.
- Report the issue and their observations / conversations immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC), who will then discuss the case with the reporter and take the necessary action. (see below for the role of the child protection co-ordinator)
- Given the sensitivity of child welfare issues the procedure set out here should be followed and no other officers should be involved. Officers/Members/Contractors/Partners should also ensure that standard file notes are not retained detailing such concerns. Instead, any notes of concerns or conversations held on such matters should be retained separately and passed to the CPC on informing of potential concerns.

- In case of an emergency, where the child is in immediate danger, please dial 999 before filing a report in the normal way.

Role and Structure of the Child Protection Team Within the Council

The Child Protection team within the City Of Lincoln Council is structured as follows:



The Child Protection Champion will represent the authority on Child Protection matters at an external and strategic level and will feedback relevant information to the authority.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) has the operational responsibility for receiving all child protection concerns and incident reports for the authority. They will discuss the report with the Designated Child Protection Officer and/or the person who reported the incident and will be responsible for completing the Common Assessment Framework form (CAF form). The CPC will decide on the next course of action and deal with any referral that needs to be made to Child Services. A record of every report at each stage of the process will be kept by the CPC. If the CPC decides to make a referral to Children Services, it will be acknowledged within 24 hours with a view to how the case will be progressed. This response will also be relayed to the reporter. If a response is not received from Children's Services within 3 working days, the CPC will chase them up. The CPC will also be the Officer required to attend any case conferences or multi-agency meetings that may arise.

The Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) for each directorate will be the first port of call for Officers or Members who have a child protection concern. Reporting Officers or Members can make their report to their Designated Child Protection Officer, who can then pass the report to the CPC

to action. The Designated Child Protection Officer can also offer advice and guidance on the policy and procedure and discuss any initial concerns.

Section 3- City of Lincoln Council Employees

Having Contact with Children and Young People

Those Officers and Members who come into regular contact with CYP should be aware of what is appropriate in particular situations and should heed the following:

- Officers should not knowingly visit or enter a property unless in the company of an adult who resides at a property. No member of staff should enter a property where only a child is present. If a child left alone is suspected of being below an age when an adult should supervise him/her, the Child Protection Co-ordinator should be contacted.
- Children should not be asked to leave a message for their guardians and direct contact must be made with the guardian before it can be assumed that a message has been received.
- Officers must avoid being left alone in a room with a child or young person. This may happen if the adult present is distracted by, for example, a telephone call in another room. Under such circumstances, the officer concerned must mention the situation to the adult concerned and if the adult is intent on leaving the officer alone with a child or young person, the officer must leave the property.
- Officers must avoid touching children or young people in any way in the course of undertaking a visit or coming into contact with children or young people as part of normal duties. Similarly, inappropriate language must not be used which could be interpreted as being either sexually suggestive or offensive.

Categories of Job Roles

Due to the diverse range of job roles within the council, it is important to deliver training and guidance to Officers and Members, which is suitable to their needs and appropriate for the level of contact they may have. Heads of Service are therefore required to allocate each post in their service areas to one of the following categories, so that appropriate training and support can be delivered:

Category 1

This category includes Officers who may have day-to-day contact with children throughout the course of their work. Typically, this will include officers who are not office-based but visit customers in their own homes or involved in delivering services out in the community. This group needs to have more in-depth training, a good understanding of the policy and procedures and a detailed understanding of their own responsibility for the protection of CYP.

Category 2

This category includes Officers who have involvement out in the community on a more ad-hoc basis or front-facing, in-house services that have direct contact with the public but can access advice and guidance easily from their workstations. This Group will need to be aware of their responsibilities, the policy and procedures and will need to undertake training to equip them with what to do if they are faced with a situation.

Category 3

This category includes Officers who are office-based and non customer-facing. This group will be the least likely to come into contact with child protection issues, however need to be aware of the policy and procedures and need basic training to understand their potential role and responsibility should it arise.

Directors, Heads of Service, Service Managers and Team Leaders

Directors and Heads of Service should be placed in category 1.

Service Managers and Team Leaders should receive the appropriate level of training to be able to manage staff in their teams and should receive the level above their staff where possible.

Staff Training

Child Protection Team

Officers undertaking a specific Child Protection Role within the authority, namely the Child Protection Champion, the CPC and the DCPO's will undertake both computer based learning modules and a face-to-face training session to ensure that that team has the necessary knowledge and ability to deal with cases that may come to light throughout the course of the Council's daily work. Additionally the CPC will undertake a more intensive 4-day training course to enable them to deal with all eventualities and advise staff in a number of different scenario's and with a more detailed knowledge.

Directors, Heads of Service, Service Managers, Team Leaders & Category 1

These Officers will undergo face-to-face training delivered by the Training Co-ordinator, in-house to ensure that Officers are prepared and able to undertake their Child Protection duties within their roles.

Category 2 &3

Officers in these categories will be briefed by their directorate's DCPO and will be provided with the relevant information.

Human Resources Officers

A number of the Human Resources officers will also undertake the Safer Recruitment training, which can then be embedded into our HR processes to ensure the Safeguarding Children guidelines are also met at the time of recruitment.

Recruitment

There are several aspects to protecting CYP from unsuitable people and safeguarding at the point of recruitment is essential. An organisation's policy on safeguarding CYP must ensure that the following are in place:

All Officers, including temporary workers and volunteers who come into contact with families and or vulnerable people should be subject to a careful selection and vetting process. This must include the following:

- Completion of an application form
- Checking the person's identity by their birth certificate or passport, preferably by something that has their photograph
- Taking up 2 references, which are seen before the interview and verified by a follow up phone call
- Checking qualifications
- A face to face interview by at least two people
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment or inconsistencies
- Require applicants to complete a self-disclosure about previous convictions and follow this up with appropriate safeguard checks.
- Obtain full disclosure through the enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB check) where required

Checks should be carried out on all people applying to work with children, including volunteers where they will have unsupervised contact and or regular contact). The CRB will provide checks of:

- Police criminal records via the Police National Computer
- PoCA list (The Protection of Children Act List) and List 99 – lists of people who are disqualified from working with children and young people.
- Local Police information

Checklist for Recruiting Officers

Recruiting Officers must:

- check if their Officers and contractors meet the criteria to be checked by the CRB. Information and guidance on which staff legally require a

CRB check along with general information on the CRB is available at www.crb.gov.uk.

- prevent unsupervised access to children and young people until a CRB check has been completed (e.g., no appointment until references have been reviewed)
- Seek advice from Personnel Services and the relevant Head of Service about recruiting someone with a criminal record or other types of offences if you are concerned
- Provide a supervised probationary period for new people to and a comprehensive induction period that includes training on child protection procedures.
- Ensure all posts which require CRB checks must be re-checked at least every 3 years.

And with reference to Contractors:

Ensure all contractors used by the Council who could come into contact with families or vulnerable people satisfy this criteria. This includes obtaining written evidence that contractors employees meeting this contact criteria have had CRB checks.

How to Deal with Allegations Against City Council Employees

All organisations must have in place procedures for dealing with allegations made against any adults. This shows the commitment of the organisation that safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously. Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff should comply with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board Policies.

If an allegation is received against an Officer who works with children that causes concern, in particular, they have:

- ***behaved in a way that has harmed a child or young person, or may have harmed a child or young person***
- ***possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young person; or,***
- ***behaved towards children and young people in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children and young people.***

You will need to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer for Managing allegations through Lincolnshire Children's Services Customer Services Centre.

The Council will then need to consider its response to the allegation. Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation, but the Council will need to consider the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to children and the possibility of tampering with evidence, as well as the interests of the person concerned and your

organisation. The Council will follow their own procedures for allegations against staff and the CPC will be informed of the outcome.

N.B. Still awaiting guidance from the County Council on this area in particular