

## **Child Protection Policy and Procedure**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Willow Road Community Centre Management Committee are committed to ensuring that all those associated with the Centre have a positive enjoyable experiences. Consequently we are committed to ensuring to that all young people who take part in activities within the Centre are kept free from harm. We will ensure that:

- Everyone is treated with respect
- Activities take place on a safe and secure environment
- Adults who work with young people are checked and cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau
- Opportunities exist for young people and parents/primary carers to talk to us about any concerns they may have
- Young people and parents/primary carers feel comfortable and confident enough to discuss attitudes and behaviours they do not like
- Adults associated with Willow Road Community Centre Management Committee will take appropriate action when young people or parents/primary carers express concern about abuse
- No adult is left alone with individual young people

### **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

Child abuse means harming a child. Child abuse is not a new problem and, although it still occurs, there is evidence to suggest that its occurrence can be significantly reduced by:

- learning more about the problem
- giving young people self-protection strategies
- knowing how to listen to young people carefully
- knowing what action to take when allegations of child abuse are made

There are four types of child abuse, namely:

Physical abuse: is the intentional, non-accidental use of physical force on the part of a parent/primary carer or care giver that aims to hurt, injure or destroy that child.

Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children too frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse: is the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect: is when chronic inattention is given to the child by their parents/primary carers or care givers in the areas of medical, educational, stimulative, environmental, nutritional, physical or emotional needs.

## **POSSIBLE SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE**

Adults associated with Willow Road Community Centre will look out for the following possible signs of child abuse. However, it is understood that not all young people manifesting these symptoms will necessarily be suffering abuse. Caution, sensitivity and common sense will shape precisely how adults respond to these symptoms.

### **If a young person:**

- Becomes withdrawn or isolated
- Becomes aggressive or starts seeking attention
- Becomes afraid of certain people
- Develops chronic medical problems such as stomach pains or headaches
- Acts in sexually inappropriate ways toward adults or peers
- Becomes anorexic or bulimic
- Fails to thrive
- Is often hungry
- Has regular accidents
- Has poor personal hygiene
- Is regularly tired
- Is reluctant to go home
- Wears inappropriate clothing
- Develops poor social relationships
- Exhibits inappropriate emotional responses
- Exhibits dramatic changes in mood or behaviour
- Engages in drug or alcohol abuse
- Runs away
- Feels depressed
- Has bumps, bruises or wounds
- Has unconvincing explanations for bumps, bruises or wounds
- Tells of a friend with a problem of abuse

we will take steps to establish whether the young person is suffering abuse in liaison with the relevant leaders of groups working out of the centre.

### **If child abuse is suspected, adults associated with Willow Road Community Centre will:**

Ensure that the appropriate officers within Willow Road Community Centre Management Group (Diane Evans or Margaret Hardy) are made aware of the issue/situation.

Ensure that the allegation/suspicion is taken seriously and that it is reported and recorded.

Ensure that the appropriate authorities or charities are advised about the allegation/suspicion (e.g. Social services, the Area child Protection Committee, Northumbria Police, The NSPCC, Childline).

## **ADVICE ABOUT INITIAL DISCLOSURES DERIVING FROM YOUNG PEOPLE**

Adults will:

- Reassure the young person that they are doing the correct thing by telling an adult
- Reassure the young person that it is right to talk
- Not blame the young person for the abuse suffered
- Listen to the young person carefully
- Take the young person's word because young people rarely lie about child abuse
- Promise to support the young person
- Inform the young person about what you will do
- Contact the Social services or the Police if it is felt that the young person is likely to be at risk if they return home
- Thank the young person for confiding
- Report and record the allegation.

**Adults will not:**

- Promise confidentiality to the young person, otherwise nothing can be done about the allegation and the problem of abuse will persist
- Be judgemental or show anger, disgust or disbelief
- Ask direct questions of the young person
- Minimise the effects of the alleged abuse
- Become unnecessarily involved
- Over dramatise or criticise
- Confront the young person with the abuser or abusers
- Tell off the young person for not confiding earlier
- Try to force the young person to forget

**When recording allegations of, or suspicions about, child abuse adults will try to provide the following information:**

- Name of the young person
- Age
- Address
- Any special factors (e.g. the young person has a disability. Lives apart from the biological mother/father, has alleged abuse in the past, etc.)
- Are you reporting your concerns or someone else's?
- Brief description of what has prompted your concerns, including dates, times and specific incidents if possible
- Are there any physical or behavioural signs that prompted, or support, your concerns?
- Have you spoken to the young person who is said to suffer the abuse? If yes, what was said?
- Is anyone alleged to be the abuser?
- Have you consulted anyone else?

**If allegations are made by a young person against a person not associated with the Willow Road Community Centre, Social Services will be immediately notified and action taken on their advice. The decision as to whether to notify the young person's parents/primary carers will be made in consultation with Social Services.**

**If allegations are made by a young person or parent/primary carer against another young person attending the Willow Road Community Centre, Social Services will be immediately notified and action taken on their advice. If there are genuine grounds for concern, the parents/primary carers of both children will be notified. If it proves impossible for both young people to remain within an activity run at the Willow Road Community Centre as an enquiry into the allegations is undertaken, the young person accused of the abuse will not be allowed to attend. The outcome of the enquiry will determine whether the young person accused of the abuse is allowed to return to any activity run within the Willow Road Community Centre.**

**If allegations are made by a young person or parent/primary carer against and adult/officer associated with the Willow Road Community Centre, Social Services will be immediately notified and action taken on their advice. If there are genuine grounds for concern, the adult/officer associated with the Willow Road Community Centre will be immediately notified of the allegation made against them and they will not be allowed to work in any shape or form with the young people within the Willow Road Community Centre. Other adults/officers associated with the Willow Road Community Centre are advised that they should not discuss with the accused any aspect of the alleged incident/s or the enquiry that follows disclosure, as this may seriously affect the outcome of the enquiry. The outcome of the enquiry will determine whether the adult/officer accused of abuse is allowed to continue work within the Willow Road Community Centre.**

**Early Police intervention may be required in cases of extreme abuse.**

Advice about police intervention will be taken from Social Services.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Once a year adults/officers associated with the Willow Road Community Centre Management Committee will meet to discuss the extent to which practice conforms with the content of the policy. Three years following adoption of the policy, adults/officers associated with Willow Road Community Centre Management Committee will meet to discuss whether the policy needs revising in the light of new child protection legislation and best practice advice.

<b>Adopted</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>Updated</b>	<b>Updated</b>
<b>September 2004</b>	<b>29 April 2009</b>	<b>April 2012</b>	<b>September 2017</b>
Chair: Rev. Brian Holmes	Chair: M. Imsirovic	Chair: Diane Evans	Chair: Diane Evans