



Safeguarding Children Policy and

Procedures

1. Introduction

The Dorset Children's Foundation (DCF) acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children and families.

They and their parents/carers need to feel sure that the people in charge of the activities and services provided are trustworthy, responsible and will do everything they can to keep the child or young person from harm (including abuse, injury neglect and privacy). Unfortunately, sometimes people who work or volunteer may pose a risk and may wish to harm them. Also, accidents can happen unless steps are taken to minimise them. **Therefore, safeguarding children and young people is everybody's business.**

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Protect children and young people who receive The Dorset Children's Foundation services from harm.
- Provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, culture, language, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

2. Definition and legal framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004 in line with the following:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused 2015

The Children Act 2004 considers that anyone up to the age of 18 is a child or young person.

3. DCF Values for Safeguarding Children and Young People

- All children and young people have the right to a friendly, secure, caring and safe environment whilst accessing the services and activities provided by DCF
- The needs of the child or young person are paramount and should underpin all safeguarding work, working to the policy and procedures agreed by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The primary duty of staff, volunteers and trustees, whatever their nominated role, and organisations contracted by DCF is to protect children and young people from significant harm.
- Staff who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Responsibility for safeguarding children and young people must be shared as they can only be protected effectively when all the relevant agencies and individuals accept responsibility and co-operate with one another.
- It is not The Dorset Children's Foundation's responsibility to investigate suspected abuse but to report concerns to the local contacts (see Section 11).
- DCF has a responsibility to promote non-abusive relationships and create anti-abusive environments.
- DCF has a responsibility to inform organisations we work with and children and young people, their parents and carers as appropriate, of its duty to follow up any safeguarding concerns and report suspected cases of harm when disclosed or observed.

4. Contact with Children and Young People

DCF through its work, will have direct contact with children and young people and could, therefore, be a danger to them and/or may become directly aware of concerns. Therefore, this policy will be directly relevant to these staff/volunteers.

Although some staff within DCF may not have unsupervised contact with children and young people they may become aware, or have suspicions, about harm to a child or young person through contact with the person concerned, or information from a third party. Again, we have a responsibility to respond to these accordingly. **Doing nothing is not an option.**

5. Preventing Opportunities for Harm

5.1 DCF will:

- Ensure we practice safe recruitment (see 5.2) in checking the suitability of appropriate staff and volunteers to work with children and young people.
- Maintain personal and sensitive information according to our own Confidentiality Policy, the Data Protection Act and GDPR
- Ensure that any organisation that we contract or partner with to deliver services to children or young people has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures

- Use procedures and policies for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of harm in line with those of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- Provide appropriate training to those working with children and young people
- Make sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Make this Policy available and each DCF project involving children/ young people will develop a friendly version appropriate to their ages and abilities to be agreed with the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.
- Have a designated and appropriately trained and informed individual to be the person with whom safeguarding concerns are discussed initially i.e. the Nominated Safeguarding Officer
- Ensure that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place

5.2 Safer Recruitment and Supervision of staff/volunteers/trustees

The Dorset Children's Foundation aims to prevent people with a history of relevant and significant offending from having contact with children or young people and the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people.

When undertaking pre-selection checks for all staff and volunteers, the following steps will be taken:

- All volunteers and staff should complete an application form. Application forms should be designed to elicit information about an applicant's past career (including any gaps), and to establish any criminal record
- We will conduct interviews before appointing where we will discuss role profile and request suitable proof of identity
- At least two references should be taken up, including at least one regarding previous work with children if applicable, and one from a professional that is unrelated to the applicant
- We will have effective measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of information received in relation to applicants is treated with the strictest of confidence
- If appropriate, DCF staff/volunteers will complete a Disclosure and Barring Service application, or a check will be made against the Update Service, if they are working specifically with children or young people. If the staff/volunteer is likely to be unsupervised at any time we will apply for an Enhanced Disclosure. A Standard Disclosure is only appropriate if the post holder is guaranteed not to have unsupervised access to check of the Barred Lists will also take place.
- If DCF is delivering a service specifically to children or young people through another organisation or in partnership, the Nominated Safeguarding Officer will check that the organisation has appropriate policies and procedures in place
- All staff positions are subject to a probationary period depending on contract length
- We reserve the right to refuse employment to, or terminate any person's employment, if we consider they may pose a risk to young people

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved or who has approached us to become part of our charity, guidance will be sought from other similar organisations. All decisions will be made in the best interests of children and young people.

5.3 Safer Practice in Direct Work

- All DCF staff and volunteers must follow the Code of Conduct for Staff. Each project working directly with children or young people will develop an additional Code of Conduct appropriate to their day to day activities setting out how to protect children and young people and those undertaking the work from allegations of harm, which must be agreed with the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.
- No DCF member of staff or volunteer or trustee will be alone with a child or adult at risk without alerting others to the reason, in the first instance their manager (in the case of trustees the Founders or if not immediately available another appropriate manager or member of staff).
- Members of staff, volunteers and trustees must not use inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All allegations of abuse against a worker/volunteer/trustee, however minor, must be reported to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer

If any allegation is made against a member of DCF staff/volunteer/ trustee concerning alleged harm of a child or young person the procedure to be followed will be in line with the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://pdscp.co.uk>, East Team: 01202 458873.

-
- Safeguarding also means reducing the risk of injury. Therefore, we will carry out appropriate risk assessments before undertaking events and activities that will be attended by children or young people. This will include balancing the danger of injury against the benefits for participants.
- When undertaking events/activities we will arrange for appropriate first aid cover and other health and safety measures e.g. firefighting.

6. Training

All DCF staff and volunteers have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. Staff receive safeguarding training relevant to their role, which is subject to necessary updates, monitored and coordinated by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding training for volunteers includes recognising the key signs and indicators of common types of abuse and how to report a concern.

7. Definitions of types of Harm

Child abuse is any action by another person, adult or child, that causes significant harm to a child. The abuse may be any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. Abuse (also called Significant Harm) can happen to a child at any age. Abusers can be adults but not just parents or carers, abuse often occurs within a relationship of trust e.g. a teacher, carer, family friend or youth leader. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.

The following is taken from Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (<https://pdscp.co.uk/parents-and-carers-2/abuse-what-is-it/>) and there is further detail at <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect#>

- **Physical Abuse**
is deliberately causing physical harm. It 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. In pregnancy an unborn child can be harmed by domestic violence. It also includes poisoning, giving a child alcohol or illegal drugs, drowning or suffocation

- **Emotional Abuse**

Is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule, shouting, lack of love and affection causes a severe adverse effect on a child's emotional development. It includes conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, over protection and limitation of exploration and learning. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person as in domestic abuse. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

- **Neglect**

Is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs whether physical or psychological and is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It's dangerous and children can suffer serious and long-term harm. Neglect is when a parent or carer fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), medical care, or protection from physical and emotional harm or danger. It also includes failure to ensure access to education or to look after a child because the carer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In pregnancy neglect may occur by the misuse of alcohol/drugs

- **Sexual Abuse**

A child or young person is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact including penetrative sex, oral sex, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching outside of clothing, or it may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in watching sexual activities, producing or looking at sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse and it can happen online. Abusers can be men, women or other children. Sexual abuse also comes in many forms including Sexual Exploitation and FGM.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. This illegal activity is done by people who have power over young people and use it to sexually abuse them. This can involve a broad range of exploitative activity, from seemingly 'consensual' relationships and informal exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation, gifts or cigarettes, through to very serious organised crime. Both girls and boys are at risk of sexual exploitation, and it is seriously harmful to children both emotionally and physically. Children and young people often find it very hard to understand or accept that they are being abused through sexual exploitation, and this increases their risk of being exposed to violent assault and life-threatening events by those who abuse them.

- **'Female Genital Mutilation'**

FGM is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons. It is also known as female Genital Cutting, Female Circumcision and 'Sunna'. It is a form of child abuse and is illegal in the UK.

- **Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure, or abuse is used. •

- **Child trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery**

Is a type of abuse where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Modern day slavery is not an issue from history or confined to certain countries. It is a global problem including the UK and is still happening today.

- **County Lines**

The police term used to describe gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas, market and coastal towns across the UK using dedicated mobile phone lines. The gangs exploit children and young people to store, move, sell and deliver their drugs, often making them travel across counties. They use children because they are cheaper, more easily controlled and less likely to be picked up by the police. Vulnerable children and young people, for example those who are homeless or living in care, have special educational needs or mental health problem, are targeted by gangs and are recruited, often via social media. Gangs also look for children with emotional vulnerability, such as those experiencing problems at home, absent or busy parents or bereavement, and then seek and fill that emotional gap and become 'their family' then take advantage of them.

- **Grooming**

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know for example a family member, friend or professional. Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know for example a family member, friend or professional. Groomers may be male or female and could be any age. Many children and young people don't understand they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

- **Radicalisation**

Is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces. The process of radicalisation may involve:

- being groomed online or in person
- exploitation, including sexual exploitation
- psychological manipulation
- exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information
- the risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts.

It happens gradually so children and young people who are affected may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into.

- **Harmful sexual behaviour**

The age of sexual consent in the UK is 16, so sex with any boy or girl under 16 is unlawful whether or not both people have given their consent. A child under the age of 13 cannot consent to sex. If someone is drunk, drugged, unconscious, or has been threatened or bullied then they cannot consent to sexual contact or activity, and sex without consent is rape. Sexual consent is something that has to be 'got' (received) as well as 'given'. A child needs to understand that consent is not just about saying 'yes' or 'no'; many of the signs that a person is uncomfortable with something are non-

verbal. Children and young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour harm themselves and others.

- **Bullying and cyberbullying**

Is behaviour that hurts someone else. It usually happens over a lengthy period of time and can harm a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying includes:

- verbal abuse, such as name calling
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or glaring
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- controlling or manipulating someone
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls

Bullying can happen anywhere at school, at home or online. When bullying happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices. Online bullying can also be known as cyberbullying including:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name

8. Children and young people not using a DCF service

If DCF staff/volunteers/trustees become concerned about a child or young person using a service of an independent organisation, then they must talk to the organisation about their concern so that the organisation can implement their own safeguarding procedure. The DCF staff member/ volunteer/trustee are to record their concerns and what they said to the organisation and give this to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.

If the organisation does not take satisfactory action, within an agreed time frame, then the staff member/ volunteer/trustee must report this to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer who may decide to contact the organisation again or make a direct referral as in Step 5 below.

If a colleague working in another organisation shares a concern with a member of staff/ volunteer/trustee then they should encourage that colleague to use their own organisation's Safeguarding Procedures. If a member of the public shares a concern, then encourage them to directly contact the Council or the Police (see 11. Contacts). In both cases remind them that if you consider it to be a serious and/or immediate danger of harm that you will have to implement the DCF safeguarding procedure as set out in Section 9. The DCF member of staff/volunteer/trustee must make a written record of the conversation and give it to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.

9. How to Report Suspected Harm

The first priority for all those working for DCF (trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, etc.) should be to ensure the safety and protection of any child or young person whilst using DCF's services. Therefore, if there is any concern, it is an individual's responsibility to act in a timely manner, if necessary immediately where there is an urgent need for medical treatment or immediate risk of harm. Where a worker, volunteer or trustee suspects a child or young person has or is being harmed they will follow the process below:

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout this process.

1. If you have concerns about a child or young person's welfare and they have disclosed information you should:

- Stay calm, treat them seriously, offer them support and listen to them but not press for more details. Don't ask leading questions, use **TED** ('tell me...', 'explain to me...', 'describe'...)
- Explain that you cannot guarantee confidentiality and that you have a duty to report to a manager
- Write down what they tell you using their own words ASAP
- Keep any evidence safe
- Do not attempt to discuss this with the person alleged to have caused the harm

2. If you believe the child or young person at risk is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed call the police and/or an ambulance on 999. If not go to 3.

3. Report **ASAP** to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer or Chair (e.g. if they are unavailable or the allegation concerns the Nominated Officer) within the same working day, and they will make a decision about further action. If no one is available you should decide whether to take further action because there is a risk of immediate, significant harm and report it yourself as in 5 and inform the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.

4. You need to record your concerns using as much information as possible such as what was said, what was observed, when, where and who else was there, date, time and place of disclosure/concerns.

5. Nominated Safeguarding Officer makes appropriate referral (see 9. Contacts) within 24 hours of disclosure or concern raised.

6. Followed up in writing within 48 hours with copy kept securely by the Nominated Safeguarding Officer.

10. Whistleblowing

DCF is dedicated to the highest standards of operation, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of our work are encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns. In the first instance if you have safeguarding concerns, or want to complain about a lack of action on a safeguarding concern, speak to the Nominated Safeguarding Officer or to the Lead Trustee. However, if you have continuing concerns you are encouraged to make use of our Whistleblowing Policy.

11. Contacts

DCF Nominated Safeguarding Officer: Patsy Hallmey patsy@thedcf.org 07796 902512

Founders: Patsy Hallmey and Scott Akam

Trustee with safeguarding responsibilities: Amy Collins amy@thedcf.org

For concerns about an immediate risk or harm to a child or young person ring the Police on 999

If you suspect that a child/young person is being abused or neglected then contact the BCP First Response Hub to request support, or to report a concern about a child or young person.

- Call 01202 735046 from 8.30am to 5.15pm, Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.45pm on a Friday. Or e-mail childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- Out Of Hours 5pm to 9am from Monday to Friday, all day Saturdays and Sundays and all bank holidays, including Christmas Day and New 01202 738256
ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Local online information on reporting a concern is available at <https://pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/applying-thresholds-andreporting-concerns/>

12. Other organisations that could help

Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://pdscp.co.uk>, East Team: 01202 458873.

Keeping children and young people safe in the voluntary and community sector (NSPCC) <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/voluntary-community-groups>

NCVO Safeguarding <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Chair of DCF Board
Name:
Signature:
Founder

Name: Patsy Hallmey Scott Akam
Signature:

Policy agreed: 13th October
2021
Reviewed: October 2022