



Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As part of Homemaker, Money Advice Plymouth is committed to ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to protect children and young people from harm. The organisation recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. To that end, staff will receive training in and remain alert to the possibility of child abuse and neglect in their day to day interactions with all clients.

Whilst Homemaker does not undertake work directly with children under the age of 16, it may support young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are living independently. Staff are also likely to come into contact with children as a result of providing support to their parent(s), carers or other family members.

Homemaker's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure follows the guidance issued for non-statutory agencies in "What to do if you're Worried a Child is being abused" as well as HM Government guidance on "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (both March 2015)

The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004

Define a child as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection.

Homemaker will ensure that;

- The welfare of the child remains paramount
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/ or sexual identity have the right to be protected from harm
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff (paid/ unpaid) working in the organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to their line manager or designated Safeguarding Officer.

In addition, Homemaker will ensure that all staff and volunteers:

- Have been checked for suitability for working with children and understand the responsibilities and limits of their role in safeguarding children
- Are alert to the possibility of child abuse and neglect in all environments in which work and have contact with children, either directly or indirectly

- Have access to training opportunities to promote their knowledge
- Receive regular supervision where they have an opportunity to discuss casework issues relating to safeguarding
- Know how to report any concerns they have about possible abuse or neglect

- Are vigilant about their own actions so they cannot be misinterpreted e.g not being alone with children without alerting others to the reason, ensuring all allegations, however minor, are passed on immediately to the line manager
- Promote and maintain links with local statutory agencies in relation to both general and specific child protection matters

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

- **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.
- **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 seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, including witnessing incidents of domestic violence and abuse between parents/partners or other adults in the household. 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **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 on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **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 it may involve a parent failing to provide (abandonment), protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) and/or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

What should you do if a young person reports abuse?

If someone discloses that they are being abused, then upon receiving the information the staff member should:

- React calmly
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Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously

- Be careful not to be deemed to be putting words into the child's mouth: the easiest way to do this is by not asking questions and just listening. If you need to ask a question, ensure that it is an 'Open' one.
- Do not promise confidentiality

- Inform the child/ young person what you will do next
- Make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information.

It is not the individual staff member's responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not: however they must advise the child or the third party (where doing this will not put the child at further risk) of their intention to pass on the information to someone else who does have responsibility for dealing with their concerns and protecting the child.

Procedure for staff where abuse is suspected or disclosed

Whether there has been a disclosure from a child or another person or if the staff member has evidence or a concern that a child has been/is being abused or neglected, then the staff member should immediately bring these concerns to the attention their line manager or designated safeguarding officer.

They should provide a written report of their concerns at the earliest opportunity, the contents of which should be discussed with their manager/the safeguarding officer but must include:

- The child's known details including name, date of birth, address and contact numbers
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, specific factors and any other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or others injuries occurred
- Accounts from others, including colleagues and parents
- If the abuse has been reported by a third party, then the staff member should record as many details as they can obtain.

Emergency action

Should a frontline worker deem a child is in immediate danger, for example in the course of a visit, **they should dial 999 without delay**. In such situations, staff should not spend time trying to contact their line manager to seek advice on how to proceed if this would place the child in greater danger. The Police are the only agency with statutory powers for the immediate protection of children.

Safeguarding Referrals

All safeguarding referrals/enquiries in Plymouth are now handled by the Plymouth Children's Services **Advice and Assessment Service** rather than being made direct to children's social care.

The Advice and Assessment Service is the enquiry (referral) point for professionals and members of the public who may have concerns about a child's welfare. It is the central resource for all safeguarding and child protection enquiries for the whole of Plymouth.

Procedure for Referrals PCC Advice and Assessment Service (Designated Safeguarding Officer only)

If Homemaker's Safeguarding Officer considers that the child is, or may be a child in need, then they should refer the child to the Advice & Assessment Service. This may include a child whom you believe is, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm. If the child is already known to children's social care, the allocated social worker would be informed of any concerns.

- Upon receipt of a new referral, the Advice & Assessment Service will follow their own process to determine response times and action required. How? Do we need a response and if so how long to wait?
- Timescales for acknowledgement of referrals will be in line with their own response times following Initial Risk Assessment of case
- A information relating to the referral should be placed in Homemaker's own Safeguarding file along with details of any further information relayed, including the nature of the allegations, the name of the duty worker and the date it was alerted.
- The Safeguarding Officer should continue to keep a written record of any further contact with the Assessment Service, discussions about the child, decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions. Details of the child's lead worker in the relevant agency – for example, a social worker, GP, health visitor or teacher should also be noted in the Safeguarding file
- Once the outcome of any referral is notified, Homemaker should be informed of any ongoing action to be taken or otherwise regarding the child. This should be recorded in Homemaker's own Safeguarding file.

Urgent referrals

If the Safeguarding Officer believes that urgent action is needed because, for example, a child is in immediate danger or needs accommodation, then **they should phone the Advice & Assessment Service on 01752 308600/ 346984** and give as much information as possible. This information will be passed immediately to the manager who will decide the action needed and will normally respond within one hour.

Child protection conferences, core groups, reviews and meetings

Where child protection concerns have been identified and there is ongoing involvement of or investigation by statutory agencies, Homemaker will provide a written report in advance of any child protection conference, setting out the nature of involvement of staff at the agency with the family.

Homemaker's designated manager will consider, with the conference chair, who may wish to involve the police in these discussions, whether our own report can and should be shared with the parents, and if so, when.

Where invited to, Homemaker staff will be expected to attend the conference, and take a full part in decision making. Similarly, Homemaker staff will participate in any core group meetings or reviews concerning any family they are supporting.

Where children are witnessing domestic violence or abuse

Individuals experiencing domestic violence may find it difficult to leave an abusive situation for a number of reasons, including: fear of losing their children, fear of provoking more violence,

lack of knowledge of support and safe places available, low self-esteem and feeling personally responsible for causing the abuse etc. It may also be difficult for the abused person to leave the abusive relationship because they still have feelings for the abuser. It may take several attempts for the person to leave permanently.

All staff should advise new clients during their first contact that if the organisation has any concerns about the safety of someone in the household, including specifically any children, that Homemaker has a duty to report those concerns to social care services. It should also be explained that steps may then need to be taken to ensure the safety of the person(s) concerned.

The staff member **must** report any concerns immediately to the designated Safeguarding officer within Homemaker who will then initiate the procedures for Safeguarding children.

Where clients disclose they are experiencing domestic violence or abuse then staff should make information available about support services and available options whilst being alert to the fact that any such conversations may need to be carefully handled if the perpetrator remains in close contact or proximity.

Advice and support is available from many organisations, including the Police Domestic Violence Officer, ADVA, local Women's Aid Refuges and Outreach Support, Devon MALE (for men experiencing domestic violence) and Victim Support services. Those experiencing domestic violence may need to discuss the situation in order to clarify that they are not to blame for the situation.

Allegations against Homemaker employees

Any reports of suspected abuse towards clients by Homemaker staff will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly in line with the organisation's safeguarding procedures. Staff are urged to report any such concerns to their line manager or the Safeguarding officer immediately.

Information-sharing

- Homemaker staff should explain to families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put a child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.
- The designated Safeguarding officer must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.
- Where there is any doubt as to whether or not certain information should be shared, the designated officer will seek advice, especially where the doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others.
- Homemaker will ensure that any information shared is accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, shared only with those people who need to see it, and shared securely.

Promoting good practice

The vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. Homemaker staff should remain vigilant about their own actions towards children to ensure that they are not misinterpreted. As lone workers who will be visiting clients in their own homes, all staff should avoid placing themselves in situations where they could be vulnerable to accusations against them. Male staff should be particularly aware of their actions towards women and children and the potential for their actions to be misinterpreted. All staff should avoid situations when they are left alone with unattended children without good reason.

Where a Homemaker employee has reason to believe that a client is intending to make/has made unfounded allegations of abuse against them, then this must be raised immediately with their line manager in the first instance. Any such allegations will be investigated in accordance with existing policy and procedures.

Families who are homeless/threatened with homelessness

Under s12 of the Homelessness Act 2002, housing authorities are required to refer homeless persons with dependent children who are ineligible for homelessness assistance or are intentionally homeless, to children's social care as long as the person consents. If homelessness persists, any child in the family could be in need. In such cases, if children's social care decides the child's needs would be best met by helping the family to obtain accommodation, they can ask the housing authority for reasonable assistance in this and the housing authority must give reasonable assistance.

Where Homemaker is supporting a family with dependents who are either at imminent risk of homelessness or are currently homeless then this should be discussed with their line manager to determine whether or not a referral to children's social care is appropriate.

Reviewed/updated Jan2016/AC

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS THE 2 LISTS ARE A BIT DIFFERENT EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHY....MAY BE GOOD REASON

Devon & Cornwall Constabulary - 101, ring **999** in emergencies

South West Adult Placement Schemes (SWAPS) - **01626 360170** where there are concerns about a person living in an adult placement.

Organisations Related to Safeguarding Adults

Rape Crisis

This website aims to provide the basic information that survivors of sexual violence, friends and family need to access the services they need.

General E-mail info@rapecrisis.org.uk

South West Sexual Abuse Listening Therapy (S.A.L.T)

142 Union St

PLYMOUTH, PL1 3HL

Tel: 01752 600599 Mon & Weds 10am – 1pm

email: email@saltsouthwest.co.uk

www.saltsouthwest.co.uk

Plymouth Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Twelves Company

The Millfields

PLYMOUTH, PL1 3JB

08458 121212

www.sarcplymouth.co.uk

Women's Aid England

A domestic violence helpline that gives support, help and information over the telephone

Tel: 0808 2000 247

Email: web@womensaid.org.uk Website: www.womensaid.org.uk/

Respond

Provides a range of services to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse who have learning disabilities, and training and support to those working with them.

Tel: 0808 8080700 (Helpline)

Email: services@respond.org.uk

Website: www.respond.org.uk/

Victim Support

A national charity for people affected by crime. An independent organisation that offers a free and confidential service, irrespective of whether or not a crime has been reported.

Tel: 0300 303 0554

Mon – Fri 9:30am – 6pm & Sat 9am – 12pm

Action on Elder Abuse

Provides a national information and advice service and guidance for the prevention of, and action on, the abuse of older people.

Tel: 0808 8088141 (Elder Abuse Response Helpline) Mon – Fri: 10am – 4.30pm

Fax: 020 8679 4074

Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk Website: www.elderabuse.org.uk

Voice UK

Helps anyone with learning disabilities who has experienced abuse or been subject of a crime via support, assistance and information. Available to people with learning disabilities, their families, carers and supporters.

The College Business Centre

Helpline number: **01332 291042**

Email: voice@voiceuk.org.uk Website: www.voiceuk.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

Has expertise in information and education for carers and professionals. Provides help lines and support for carers, quality day and home care and funding for medical and scientific research. Also gives financial help to families in need. Campaigns for improved health and social services and greater public understanding of all aspects of dementia.

Tel: 0300 2221122 (Helpline)

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

MIND

A mental health charity. Campaigning, community development, training, publishing and a comprehensive information service.

Helpline 0300 123 3393 (weekdays 9am - 6pm)

info@mind.org.uk

Independent Age

Provides and information and advice service for older people (60 and over) living in the UK their carers, friends, relatives and professionals on a wide range of subjects.

Tel: 0800 319 6789

Website: www.independentage.org

Adfam National

A helpline for the families affected by drugs and alcohol. Offering confidential support and information.

telephone 020 7553 7640

Email: admin@adfam.org.uk Website: www.adfam.org.uk

Alcohol Concern

Holds information on a wide range of alcohol-related subjects.

Tel: 0300 123 1110 (weekdays 9am – 8pm, weekends 11am – 4pm).

Email: contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk Website: www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/

Samaritans

Tel: 116 123 (National Helpline - 24 hours)

20 Oxford Place
Western Approach
PLYMOUTH, PL1 5AJ

Tel: 01752 221666

Drop in Callers, 12:30 – 21:00 Sunday –Friday
 15:30 – 21:00 Saturday

National Email: jo@smaritans.org.uk

National Self-Harm Network

Email: info@nshn.co.uk Website: www.nshn.co.uk

Headway, the Brain Injury Association

Promotes understanding of all aspects of head injury and provides information, support and services to people with head injury, their families and carers.

Tel: 0808 800 2244

Email: enquiries@headway.org.uk Website: www.headway.org.uk

Family Matters

Supports victims of sexual abuse

Tel: 01474 536661

Tel: 01474 537392 (Helpline)

Email: admin@familymatters.force9.co.uk Website: www.charitynet.org/~family-matters/

Safeline

Support for adults abused as children.

Helpline: 0808 800 5008 (women)

0808 800 5005 (men)

Text for help: 07860 027573,

Monday & Friday 10am to 4pm, Tuesday & Thursday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 10am to 12 noon

(texts charged at standard network rate)

Email: safeline@bigfoot.com Website: www.safelinewarwick.co.uk/

Survivors (UK)

Support for men who have been sexually abused or raped.

Tel: 02035983898

Helpline Webchat

Mon – Fri 10:30am – 9pm

Sat – Sun 10am – 6pm

Email: info@survivorsuk.org.uk Website: www.survivorsuk.org.uk/

Intercom Trust

South West support/information and advocacy, for LGBT people

Tel: 01392 201018

Tel: 0800 612 3010

Email: helpline@intercomtrust.org.uk

Website: www.intercomtrust.org.uk/

Men's Advice Line

National support for men experiencing domestic violence and abuse

Tel: 0808 801 0327

Email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Broken Rainbow

Information and advice for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.

Tel: 0800 999 5428

Tel: 0300 9995428

www.brokenrainbow.org.uk