**Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy**

**Families Need Fathers Both Parents Matter Cymru**

FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru (henceforth “the charity”) is an organisation engaging with parents who seek support with childcare arrangements they make after separating from the partner who lives with their children. The charity is dedicated to helping parents and their families continue to provide the love, care and support their children need after separation. Children have the right to be properly cared for and protected from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents and anyone else looking after them (Article 19 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). It is the policy of the charity to safeguard and promote children’s welfare and protect them from harm in the course of any work undertaken by any representatives of the charity with, or on behalf of, parents.

**Safeguarding Officer**

The Safeguarding Officer, and deputy, are defined in the General Safeguarding Policy and this responsibility extends to this Policy, including the role of Child Protection Officer for the charity.

**The Charity’s Policy and its Legislative Background**

In Wales, Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is further underpinned by the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

Volunteers and staff of the charity do not usually engage directly with children, although a child’s welfare is always the paramount consideration and the protection of the child is the first priority in any arrangements. Our policy to meet this objective has been developed in line with:

* The All Wales Child Protection Procedures (currently here: [Wales Safeguarding Procedures - Children in Wales](https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/safeguarding/wales-safeguaring-procedures/))
* [Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004](https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/safeguarding-children-working-together-under-children-act-2004)
* The charity’s professional link with the regional Child Protection Coordinators in the relevant local authority and the corresponding Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB).

Each Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in Wales has a co-ordinator. Their details are listed here: <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/in-your-area/safeguarding-children-boards/>

The Local Authority is the prime authority for dealing with child protection investigations, although concerns may be reported to a police officer or an officer of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Regard should be given to NSPCC guidance for Wales available here <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/wales/legislation-policy-guidance/>

The charity shall take steps to protect children by:-

* Taking account of the Welsh Government’s Code of Practice [Safe from Harm: Safeguarding Children in Voluntary and Community Organisations in Wales (2007)](https://www.cysur.wales/media/t43bzzma/safeguarding_children_in_voluntary_and_community_organisations.pdf) when recruiting staff and volunteers for specific roles. This may include Disclosure and Barring Checks when appropriate.
* Maintaining a professional, working knowledge of [The Protection of Children Act 1999](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/14/2002-03-12).
* A robust Induction procedure for staff and volunteers in relation to the role they undertake.
* Ensuring relevant staff and volunteers, if appropriate for their role, are trained in child protection procedures (this includes recognition of signs of abuse).
* Informing anyone who may use or provide any service of the charity of this child protection policy and procedure (including local authority social services intake and assessment team; Local Safeguarding Children’s Board; police).
* Adhering to the Confidentiality policies specified in the charity’s other policy and procedural documents, and reiterating this at support meetings when appropriate, including the specific exclusion if there are any matters discussed or otherwise identified that in the opinion of the charity presents a child protection risk.
* Having a working knowledge of the Codes of Practice issued under Section 145 of the [Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents/2015-04-01) relevant to child protection.

**Procedure**

There are two routes:

1. A disclosure about a child
2. A disclosure about professional abuse

**Route 1**

In the event of a member of staff/volunteer having a concern/suspicion that a child has suffered abuse / neglect or if someone tells them that they or another child or young person is being abused / suffering neglect:-

The member of staff shall act without delay and (as is appropriate to the age/stage of the individual child),

* Shows that they have heard what they are being told and that they take the allegations seriously;
* Encourages the child to talk but does not prompt or ask leading questions;
* Avoids making the child tell their story several times to different people;
* Explains what actions they must take (using agreed procedures);
* Does not promise to keep what they have been told a secret or confidential, but explains that they will share information only on a ‘need to know’ basis.

(The charity takes seriously its responsibility to disclose information to the relevant people or organisations, and reporting concerns is not seen as a betrayal of trust).

The member of staff/volunteer shall,

* Write down, using the exact words as far as is possible, what they have been told, and this shall be done within 24 hours;
* Make a note of the date, time, place and people present in the discussion;
* Avoid confronting the alleged abuser;
* Report the concerns to the designated child protection officer of the charity as soon as possible and without delay.

The designated child protection officer reports the concerns immediately to the Duty Social Worker at the local authority office.

**Route 2**

If the behaviour of a colleague, or any adult (including members of the public) towards children or young people causes concern, then:-

It is important to differentiate between cases involving issues such as poor professional practice and cases that give rise to child protection concerns (including cases involving abuse of trust). Whilst the former may be handled through disciplinary procedures or other avenues, child protection concerns should always be dealt with through local child protection procedures in line with this guidance and, in particular, the guidance contained in Chapter 8 (Handling Individual Cases) of the [Safeguarding Children: Working Together to Safeguard Children under the Children Act 2004](https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_14350-5_0.pdf).

* The procedure above is implemented (adapted to who is making the disclosure).
* The designated child protection officer /other considers the options for removal /suspension without prejudice from duty of the member of staff pending decisions made at the Strategy Discussion.
* The member of staff is informed and written records of discussions and decisions are made in line with the Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

**Making the Referral**

The charity shall make a referral to Children’s Services as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern about a child becomes apparent, and at least within 24 hours. The referral should be made by the designated Child Protection Officer for the charity (or deputy) unless making the referral by any staff member or volunteer is necessary to avoid any undue delay that might lead to harm of the child.

Outside office hours, referrals are made to the Social Services Emergency Duty Team or the Police.

The Duty Social Worker taking the referral is given as much of the following information as possible by the referrer, using the agreed referral form,

* The nature of the concerns;
* How and why those concerns have arisen;
* The full name, address and date of birth (or age) of the child;
* The names, addresses and dates of birth / ages of family members, along with any other names which they use or are known by;
* The names and relationship of all those with parental responsibility, where known;
* Information on any other adults living in the household;
* Information relating to other professionals involved with the family, including the name of the child’s school and GP;
* Any information held on the child’s developmental needs and his / her parents’/caregivers’ ability to respond to these needs within the context of the wider family environment;
* Any information affecting the safety of staff;

The designated Child Protection Officer is responsible for ensuring that child protection concerns are taken seriously and followed through, remaining accountable for their role in the child protection process. If they remain concerned about a child they will make representations to the Intake and Assessment Team duty officer of the relevant Social Services Department.

**Record Keeping**

The charity shall keep accurate, concise and clear records in straightforward language to underpin good child protection practice.

The charity’s arrangements for retention, storage and destruction of electronic and paper records of child protection matters meet the relevant regulations (including Data Protection Act 1998) and requirements made by the Information Commissioner’s Office – see the Data Protection and GDPR Compliance Policy.

In the context of child protection, the charity shall keep the records conforming to the following good practice,

* Use of clear, straightforward language;
* Records are signed, dated and timed;
* Are concise, legible and comply with professional standards and requirements;
* Are accurate in fact and distinguish between fact, opinion, judgement and hypothesis;
* Are organised and include detailed recording and chronologies and summaries including all contacts;
* Are comprehensive;
* Clearly record judgements made and actions and decisions taken;
* Clarify where decisions have been taken jointly across agencies or endorsed by a manager;
* Record both formal and informal supervision discussions;
* Record directions given and agreements or disagreements made in consultation with supervisors or Managers.

The child protection officer attends any multi-agency meeting held (e.g., Strategy Discussion) and provides reports as necessary and appropriate. The Strategy Discussion considers risk associated with any allegation and should determine whether or not a member of staff will be suspended from duty without prejudice (reference Staff Disciplinary Procedure). Decisions are recorded in writing.

**This Policy was last reviewed and approved by the charity’s management team on…**

**9th February 2021.**