

Rutland Parent Carer Voice (RPCV) Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This policy provides clear guidance to Rutland Parent Carer Voice (RPCV) members, representatives, and volunteers about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and young people. It also informs parents and carers of the measures taken to promote the welfare and protect children and young people.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the principles of:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2006)
- Every Child Matters (2004)
- Non-Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Disabled Children (2009)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Principles of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

- All agencies and individuals share the responsibility to protect children from harm.
- Effective information sharing, collaboration, and understanding between agencies and professionals are essential.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Every child has the right to:
 - Be healthy
 - Stay safe
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic well-being
- All children, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is the responsibility of RPCV to report any concerns about a child's welfare, though the determination of abuse lies with external child protection professionals.
- Volunteers will be recruited using safe practices, including references and DBS checks.
- Members and volunteers will receive induction and safeguarding training to fulfill their duties.

Types of Abuse and Recognition

There are four recognized types of abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse**
This involves causing physical harm, such as hitting, shaking, poisoning, or fabricating illness.
2. **Emotional Abuse**
Emotional abuse includes persistent maltreatment, causing severe impacts on a child's emotional development, and may involve overprotection, age-inappropriate expectations, or bullying.

3. **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse includes any sexual activity imposed on a child, whether through physical contact or non-contact activities like viewing sexual images or grooming.

4. **Neglect**

Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs, which may affect their physical or emotional development.

Safeguarding Disabled Children and Young People

Disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to factors like communication barriers or dependency on others.

Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse

If a child, young person, or vulnerable adult discloses abuse:

DO:

- Take the allegation seriously and act as if you believe the child.
- Reassure the child they are not to blame.
- Be honest about who you need to inform and why.
- Keep the child informed about what is happening.
- Report the matter immediately and document everything.

DON'T:

- Make promises you cannot keep, such as maintaining confidentiality.
- Interrogate or doubt the child.
- Do nothing.

Referrals to Parents/Carers

RPCV should usually inform parents/carers of any referrals, except in cases where doing so could endanger the child or others, such as suspected sexual abuse, forced marriage, or female genital mutilation (FGM).

Reporting Procedures

In emergencies, contact the police or seek immediate medical attention. For other concerns, report to the Safeguarding Advisor or relevant authorities as soon as possible. Document all details, including names, dates, actions taken, and to whom the matter was reported.

Safe Recruitment and Training

RPCV will vet volunteers, ensuring they are suitable for roles that involve contact with children and families. Regular child protection training will be provided to maintain awareness.

Whistleblowing

RPCV supports whistleblowing to protect children and young people. If a steering group member has concerns about a colleague's behavior, these should be reported in confidence to the Safeguarding Advisor.

Allegations Against Steering Group Members or Volunteers

- If an allegation is made against a steering group member, they will be asked to temporarily step down until the issue is resolved.
- If an allegation against a volunteer is proven, they will be asked to leave the organization.

Safeguarding Advisor's Role

The Safeguarding Advisor will guide individuals on reporting procedures, make referrals when necessary, and ensure that all actions comply with safeguarding legislation.

Conclusion

RPCV is committed to safeguarding children and young people, working within the legal framework, and supporting all parties in fulfilling their responsibilities to protect vulnerable individuals.