

Procedure for when an allegation of abuse is made

The paramount concern of all members of the group is to ensure the safety and protection of the children. Any allegation of abuse should be treated with utmost concern and must be reported and investigated.

- a) If an allegation of abuse by a member of staff or another adult working within the provision is disclosed, or a member of staff suspects that abuse has occurred, the member of staff should immediately inform the designated Safeguarding Lead **Carol Shields** (in the absence of Carol Shields, **Joanne Cameron** is Deputy Safeguarding) The designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding (after consultation with Children's Services if necessary) will advise whether the allegation constitutes sufficient grounds for the initiation of child protection procedures.
- b) Dependent upon the allegation the designated Safeguarding Lead will discuss the allegation with the Safeguarding Trustee **Alan Haddon**
- c) As soon as possible after an allegation is made, the designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding should inform the parents or carers of the child/ren involved. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be consulted first within 1 day via The Front Door 0345 2000109.
If the allegation is regarding the Manager/designated Safeguarding Lead then the member of staff must inform the LADO and the Safeguarding Trustee **Alan Haddon**
- d) The designated Safeguarding Lead should only discuss the allegation with the accused person if LADO says so.
- e) The allegation should remain confidential. The reporting member of staff and the designated Safeguarding Lead should record their concerns immediately and these records should be stored securely in sealed envelopes with the seal signed by both parties. Records should include: the information (where possible in the child's/adult's own words), including, the time, date and place of the incident, persons present and what was said. This should be signed and dated by the reporting person and the designated Safeguarding Lead. This shall remain in the staff's file until the person reaches retirement age or for 10 years after they leave,
- f) Allegations of abuse, by any member of staff must be considered by Children's Services and the Police. Children's Services will notify the Police. OFSTED should also be informed, and a written report sent no later than the following working day.
- g) The LADO should be notified of all allegations against staff, where potential harm to a child is being reported.
- h) Consideration should be given to the suspension without prejudice of the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- i) Consideration should be given to the need for protective action in relation to children in the care of the alleged perpetrator.

- j) Following referral a strategy discussion will take place between Children's Services, Ofsted and Police and decisions will be taken about any immediate action required to protect the child.
- k) The designated Safeguarding Lead will be kept informed of who is dealing with the case. A Strategy Meeting (normally within 72 hours but would be within 24 hours if necessary) will be held involving representatives from OFSTED, Police and Children's Services which the designated Safeguarding Lead will attend. Any information about this will remain confidential.
- l) The Strategy Meeting will plan the investigation and determine any immediate action required, e.g., suspending the member of staff, supporting the member of staff, informing the other members of staff.
- m) The designated Safeguarding Lead will explain the process to the member of staff and advise him/her of his/her rights, including that of legal representation.
- n) Police/Children's Services enquiry may now take place. Following the enquiry, a final Strategy Meeting will take place to evaluate the outcome and plan further actions required.
- o) Where concerns are confirmed, relevant information must be passed to appropriate authorities, such Ofsted and DBS.
- p) Where the allegation is unsubstantiated the Chair of the Strategy Meeting will prepare a report of the enquiry for the senior manager to enable him/her to decide what further action, if any, should be taken. The member of staff concerned must be notified of the outcome. Consideration must be given to any support the staff member may need. The associated child and his/her parents should also be informed of the outcome, and consideration given to the provision of support or counselling for the child.
- q) If an allegation about abuse or neglect of a child is made outside of the work role, the procedures outlined above will apply.

This procedure is a summary of the information in the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children board Guidelines held on the Safeguarding children File. Further information about the process, Strategy Meeting and guidance for a member of staff who may be the subject of allegation of abuse are also on file.