

## Child Protection and Safeguarding

Connect IoW CIC is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all its service users. As such we need to be mindful of the fact that issues surrounding the wellbeing of vulnerable children may come to light or be disclosed whilst we are supporting our Service Users

We follow regulations from HM Government outlined in “Working Together to Safeguard Children”. Significant points raised in this document are:

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – it is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

For children who need additional help, every day matters. Academic research is consistent in underlining the damage to children from delaying intervention. The actions taken by professionals to meet the needs of these children as early as possible can be critical to their future. Effective safeguarding systems are those where:

- The child’s needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- All professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- All professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children’s social care;
- High quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child’s needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child;
- All professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes;
- When things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and are transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

Children have said that they need

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanations:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views

No single professional can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances, and if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. In order that organisations and practitioners collaborate

effectively, it is vital that every individual working with children and families is aware of the role they should play and the role of other professionals

Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and for consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour of professionals. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. A child-centred approach is supported by:

- the Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004). This Act requires local authorities to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked after (section 22(4) Children Act 1989), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3)(d) of that Act);
- the Equality Act 2010 which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their individual needs; and
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, by doing so, recognises children's rights to expression and receiving information

All members of Connect IoW CIC should ensure that they understand the importance of safeguarding the children we are supporting and realise that it is imperative that children feel safe with us at all times.

#### **Procedures for safeguarding Service Users during their supported hours with us**

1. It is important that service users can feel safe and protected while they are with us, and that their parents/carers can be confident of this
2. Ensure that you have read the Support Plan and Person Centred Risk Assessment of every service user that you come into contact with. This is the only way that you can ensure that you can keep yourself and the service users you support safe to the best of your ability. Anyone unaware of information held in the individual service user files could face disciplinary procedures
3. Person Centred Risk Assessments and Service Plans are updated regularly. It is the employees responsibility to ensure that they keep themselves up to date with any new information pertaining to service users
4. If anything happens which gives you any cause for concern then this must be noted on a Concern Form and passed to the Director at the earliest opportunity

Connect IoW CIC take issues surrounding the safeguarding of children extremely seriously. This policy is directed by guidelines set out by the local authority for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

For more information please refer to:

*Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board & Children's Trust Thresholds Chart (April 2014)*

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Policy last review date: 21.09.2024