

Child Protection Procedures

What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously to individuals or in groups. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Recordings must be kept secure and in accordance with organisation procedures.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.

Reassure the child that:

- You are glad they have told you;
- They have not done anything wrong;
- What you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.

Children should not be required to provide multiple accounts of events within the organisation

You must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Encourage young people and adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out if they are uncomfortable with any practices within your organisation by being open to criticism and making them aware also of the Moorsbus CIC & Friends of Moorsbus Compliments and Complaints leaflet
- Recognise that caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people

- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- Reach conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise safeguarding issues
- Show favouritism to any individual

What you should do if you suspect abuse

You may become concerned about a child for a number of reasons, for example:

- They have not spoken to you or avoid speaking to you
- They are upset
- Because of your observations, or you are given information from another party about a child.
- It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify concerns and result in appropriate action.
- If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Moorsbus Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. They should make a note of your concerns and any actions agreed following your discussion with the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. (They will check the Local Authority website for contact details of the Child Safeguarding team, see below) .

Remember: If it's not written down then it did not happen. Also be sure to concentrate on facts not opinions.

Informing parents

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns; however, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- a. delay in sharing relevant information with an appropriate person or authority would increase the risk of harm to the child or young person
- b. asking for consent may increase the risk of harm to the child, young person, you or anyone else. It is good practice to be open and honest at the outset with the parents/carers about concerns, and the need for a referral.

All reasonable efforts should be made to inform parents/carers prior to discussing concerns with Children's Social Care; however, this should not be delayed if concerns cannot be discussed with the parents.

Where the child expresses a wish for his or her parents not to be informed, their views should be taken seriously and a judgement made based on the child's age and understanding, as to whether the child's wishes should be followed (see <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definitionchild-rights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>).

Consultation with Children's Social Care

Where concerns have been highlighted to the Safeguarding Lead, they will contact the Customer Contact Screening Centre to discuss the concerns with Children's Social Care. Please see below for contact information.

You may also wish to consult with Children's Social Care in the following circumstances:

When you have been unable to contact the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy and you believe the child is at risk of harm

When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether safeguarding concerns exist

When there is disagreement as to whether safeguarding concerns exist, or

When the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

Making a Referral to Children's Social Care

In order to make a referral to Children's Social Care, the Customer Contact Screening Centre should be contacted in the first instance. This will usually be by the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy. The Customer Contact Centre can be contacted by the following methods:

During Office Hours - By Phone: 01609 780780 - Email: social.care@northyorks.gov.uk

Outside Office Hours Emergency Duty Team (evenings, weekends + bank holidays): 01609 780780

(IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO LOOK UP, AND REPORT TO, A DIFFERENT LOCAL AUTHORITY, SUCH AS REDCAR & CLEVELAND, DEPENDING ON WHERE THE CHILD LIVES)

Confirmation of Referral

A written confirmation of the referral must be completed and submitted within 24 hours. This will normally be completed by the Safeguarding Lead. Where possible, North Yorkshire CYPS request that you use their "Referral Form to Children's Social Care or Disabled Children's Service" to ensure that all relevant information is provided to ensure that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible.

When contacting the Customer Service Centre the staff should:

- Clearly identify themselves, their agency/relationship with the child (ren) and family,
- Give details of where they can be contacted.

- Provide as much relevant family information as possible and, clearly stating the name of the child, the parents/carers and any other children known to be in the household, the dates of birth and addresses and any previous addresses known
- Provide details of any special needs or communication needs of either the child or any family member
- State why they feel the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Share their knowledge and involvement of the child(ren) and family
- Share their knowledge of any other agency involved
- Indicate the child's, parent's/carer's knowledge of the referral and their expectations
- Ensure they record within their agency files the concerns and action taken

Contact Details

Helen Gundry **Lead Person for Safeguarding Children:**

Moorsbus CIC & Friends of Moorsbus **BRCC Lead Deputy Person for Safeguarding Children**

Helplines

Help for adults concerned about a child Call NSPCC on 0808 800 5000

Help for children and young people Call ChildLine on 0800 1111