

# POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Solihull  
Life  
Opportunities

St Andrew's Centre  
Pike Drive  
Chelmsley Wood  
Birmingham  
B37 7US

Charity No. 1102297  
England Company No.  
5025939

## Safeguarding (formerly Child Protection)

**Category:** Service Users

### Introduction

Child protection relates to all members of our services, either learning disabled members or young volunteers aged 18 years of age and below. Its purpose is to ensure that children and young people aged 18 years of age and below are safeguarded and protected from harm whilst involved in activities organised by Solihull Life Opportunities, and any concerns relating to their well-being outside of the activities of Solihull Life Opportunities are registered and dealt with in an appropriate manner to ensure their overall safety and well-being.

### Policy Statement

#### **Solihull Life Opportunities Board of Directors accepts that:**

- All children have a right to be safeguarded at all times.
- All children, regardless of ability, have a right to be listened to and their views respected.
- Where there is a conflict of interest between parent and child, the interest of the child should always be put first.
- Child abuse occurs in all religions, all culture and all social classes.
- Categories of abuse include physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of every worker and volunteer working for by Solihull Life Opportunities.

#### **In view of the above, the Board of Directors will ensure that:**

- All users and referrers to SoLO's services are aware that we have a Safeguarding Policy that they can see on request and, wherever

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Organisation: Solihull Life Opportunities

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Amended: April 2007 Approved by: SoLO Board of Directors Date: April 2009

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possible the policy will be displayed (e.g. within buildings based projects)

- **SoLO** is committed to working together with the Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and to comply with their procedures.
- All **SoLO's** staff, volunteers and contracted services will be made aware of this policy and the requirement to follow its guidelines.
- **SoLO** undertakes to provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers to implement this policy.
- **SoLO** undertakes to reduce the risk of engaging staff and volunteers and contracted services that may be unsuitable to work with children through their recruitment policy.
- **SoLO** will inform Solihull LSCB of its policies and procedures.
- **SoLO** will review this policy bi-annually or in response to new guidance.

This policy is also linked to

- SoLO's whistle blowing policy to ensure that any concerns that involve staff are correctly managed and that staff are aware of the code of conduct.
- Working with vulnerable adults where the projects serve young people aged 18+ as well as children.

## Procedures

### 1. Recruitment

- Two written references will be taken up on all new employees and volunteers, including one work or equivalent. Only those with satisfactory references will be appointed and references will ask specific questions about an individual's suitability to work with children.
- Two proofs of identity will be required including recent photographic evidence and proof of address.
- All staff and volunteers will be required to complete a six-month probationary period.
- Staff and volunteers working directly with children will be required to undergo a satisfactory check via the criminal records bureau and complete a declaration form as to their suitability to work with children.
- Safeguarding training will be a necessary part of the induction process for all staff and volunteers (where contact with children is an integral part of their duties, otherwise Working with Vulnerable Adults Training

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would be substituted). For existing staff and volunteers, training will be encouraged in Safeguarding and offered twice yearly. An audit will be in place for those who have not attended and Project Leaders will be requested to refresh the training on project. Incidents and lessons learned will inform training.

## **2. Encountering incidents of suspected child abuse. Child abuse can occur in many ways.**

The available UK evidence on the extent of abuse among disabled children suggests that disabled children are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect (Working together to Safeguard Children 2006)

### **Disabled children may be more susceptible to abuse because of factors such as:**

- They have fewer outside contacts than other children;
- They receive intimate personal care, possibly from a number of carers, which may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour, and makes it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries;
- They may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse;
- They may have communication difficulties which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening;
- They may be inhibited about complaining because of a fear of losing services;
- They may be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation; and/or
- They may be more vulnerable than other children to abuse by their peers.

### **Below are listed the categories of abuse identified in Working Together 2006 (working together to safeguard children)**

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate

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expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

(Jones, DPH (2003) Communicating with vulnerable children: a guide for practitioners, pp.1-2, London, Gaskell.)

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**If a Staff member or volunteer has any concerns regarding a child's welfare in relation to any of the above, they should share them immediately with their line manager at the earliest opportunity ( the full guidelines to sharing concerns can be found in Government guidance "What to do if..." and LSCB procedures).**

### **Concerns may also arise for staff or volunteers from:**

- Something a child says
- Something said by others about a child

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**Staff/volunteer response to a disclosure of information should be:**

a) When the disclosure involves something a child says about themselves

- Listen carefully and hear the conversation through.
- Avoid questioning as much as possible.
- AVOID LEADING QUESTIONS.
- NEVER MAKE PROMISES TO KEEP SECRETS.
- Discuss with Line Manager at the earliest possible time (not to be left until the next session).
- Record it

b) When the disclosure is something said by others about a child

- Listen carefully and hear the conversation through.
- Avoid comment and questions.
- Discuss with Line Manager at the earliest possible time (not to be left until the next session).
- Record it

In the absence of your line manager you feel that delay would be harmful to the child's welfare, before taking further action, seek advice from any one of the following, bearing in mind that any information given is based on the 'need to know' principle:

- Project Manager
- Chief Executive Officer
- Member of Board of Directors
- Children's Social Services – Telephone: 0121-788 4300

IF it is RECOMMENDED THAT YOU DO SO, OR THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD DICTATES IMMEDIATE ACTION, **YOU should make a referral to Children's Social Services or out of hours contact EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM (EDT) OR Children's Social Services (TELEPHONE: 0121-605-6060)**

In **ALL** cases, whether or not a referral is made to EDT, a clear, factual, detailed written account, on a SoLO incident form, must be made as soon as possible after the event and no later than by the end of the day in question. Information contained should clearly differentiate between facts and opinions. This form must be forwarded immediately to the Chief Executive Officer, countersigned, and retained in a locked cabinet. This written account may be used as evidence in any legal action that is taken. The Chief Executive

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Officer should immediately give a verbal report to the Chairperson or another management board member.

NB. All information in this area is strictly confidential and must be shared on a “**need to know**” basis.

## **Additional Information**

- This policy was written using information from the HM Government Document “Working Together to Safeguard Children” A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 2006.
- Advice was sought from the Local Safeguarding Board.

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