



Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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PART ONE: - POLICY

1. Introduction

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to participate, have fun and be safe, in the services provided for them and the activities they choose, or their parents/carers choose for them.

Dacorum Borough Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council who is the lead safeguarding agency for children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Council will also work with Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Boards as required under the Children Act 2004, and the amendments made in to this act in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, and in line with the multi-agency policy, procedure and practice for working with adults at risk of abuse or neglect in Hertfordshire (June 2014).

2. Safeguarding Policy Statement

Dacorum Borough Council is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and protecting them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by, or on behalf of, the Council.

We will endeavour to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe from abuse and suspicion of abuse, reports will be responded to promptly and appropriately. We will act in the best interest of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and we will proactively seek to promote the welfare and the protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults living in the community at all times.

Dacorum Borough Council will ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults through its Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and will take any concern reported by a Member, employee, volunteer grant funded or contracted service provider or child/vulnerable adult seriously and deal with it sensitively.

Referrals made by a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/vulnerable adult cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the agency and individuals who made that referral will be made known. This is because individuals may be required to give evidence and on occasion be required as a prosecution witness.

Dacorum Borough Council will not tolerate harassment of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/vulnerable adult who raises concerns of abuse and it will be addressed through the most appropriate course of action or under the most appropriate policy.

3. Definitions

The phrase children and young people in this document refers to: Any person under the age of 18 years.

The phrase vulnerable adult refers to: - Any person over the age of 18 who is, or may be in need of care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is, or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Lord Chancellor's Department, 1997)

When using the term 'parents' in the context of this document it will be in the broadest sense to include parents, carers and guardians.

The phrase 'Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded or contracted service providers' is used to refer to all Borough Councillors, employees and people working on behalf of the Council either paid or voluntarily.

Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations will be expected to have policies and procedures in place commensurate with the level of contact and involvement with children and young people. As a minimum, any organisation receiving funding from the Council, will be expected to have a statement of policy and procedure regarding safeguarding in place. This needs to be understood by employees and volunteers and available to service users. Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations with minimal contact with children and young people may wish to adopt the Council's Policy (Appendix 7).

The phrase 'contracted service provider' used subsequently in this document will refer to those organisations that have appropriately adopted this policy.

Abuse covers physical, emotional, sexual abuse and mental abuse including bullying and exploitation.

This policy is inclusive of all children and young people irrespective of the age, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual preference. Children and young people, no matter what their circumstances have the right to be protected from abuse.

The details for the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults are dealt with in a separate policy which can be found on the Council's website or is available from Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1HH and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board website under the multi-agency policy, procedure and practice for working with adults at risk of abuse or neglect in Hertfordshire (June 2014).

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/hcc/healthcomservices/acspolicies/safeadults/>

4. Aims

Dacorum Borough Council will promote the welfare of children and young people by:

- ❖ Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children and young people by listening to them and minimising risks that may affect them.
- ❖ Preventing abuse by adopting good practice and creating a safe and healthy environment to avoid situations where abuse, or allegations of abuse may occur.
- ❖ Ensuring that Members, employees and volunteers understand the relevant Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.
- ❖ Monitoring accountability and governance through the Council's procedures and through the Community Safety Partnership's Responsible Officers Group.
- ❖ Raising awareness among members and officers of the safeguarding duty the Council has in relation to the Children Act 2004 where Hertfordshire County Council has the lead responsibility.
- ❖ Ensuring that contracted, commissioned and grant funded services have policies and procedures commensurate with the level of involvement they have with children and young people.
- ❖ Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate reporting, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- ❖ Promoting and supporting the National Campaign – Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and “Say Something If You See Something” to raise awareness and reporting of child sexual exploitation.
- ❖ Supporting the National Prevent agenda by working with partner agencies to identify and support Children and Young People who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

To achieve these aims, Dacorum Borough Council will endeavour to:

- ❖ Ensure that training appropriate to the level of involvement with children and young people is available for Members, employees and volunteers and where appropriate contracted service providers which includes training of staff to raise awareness of the Prevent agenda and those vulnerable to radicalisation.
- ❖ Respond appropriately to any concerns reported
- ❖ Develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents and accidents
- ❖ Develop and implement effective procedures for recognising, responding, recording and referring any allegations or suspicions of abuse to Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire's Children's Safeguarding Board and the District sub group.

- ❖ Promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people within services including in the planning of services.
- ❖ Maintain a good level of safe working practice at all times to minimise risk to children and young people that come into contact with Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded and contracted service providers.
- ❖ Support all County and National initiatives to promote the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- ❖ Hold regular Safeguarding and DBS meetings with designated officers from across the Council

5. Scope of the Policy

This Policy and Procedure cover all Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded and contracted service providers (who have appropriately adopted this policy). However, few Members, employees or volunteers will be working directly with children and young people as part of their duties or activities for or on behalf of the Council. Safe working practices, as detailed in the following procedure, should be used on all occasions where Members, employees, volunteers or contracted services come into contact with children or young people.

There are some areas when using Safe Working Practice is of particular importance: -

- ❖ Working in Adventure Playgrounds
- ❖ School talks and events
- ❖ Work experience placements
- ❖ Community engagement including working with youth councils, diversionary activities and events.
- ❖ Housing visits for repairs, existing or new housing applicants
- ❖ Revenue and Benefits home visits
- ❖ Visits to any home for inspections or enforcement purposes. This will include all visits eg: Planning, housing repairs, Regulatory Services and grant applications.
- ❖ Volunteers training and knowledge as required
- ❖ Parks and grounds maintenance
- ❖ Anti-social behaviour – enforcement and diversion

This list is indicative only and there may be other occasions when particular importance should be paid to safe working practices.

6. Obligations and responsibilities

Section 11, of The Children Act 2004 places certain obligations on the Council and a Hertfordshire wide action plan has been drafted to implement the obligations for safeguarding and the promotion of children's welfare in Dacorum which include the following:

- ❖ To have senior level responsibility for Safeguarding Children and Young People. The Chief Executive fulfils this role at Dacorum Borough Council.
- ❖ To have a senior officer lead for Safeguarding Children and Young People – Dacorum have a team of officers responsible for safeguarding which is led by the Group Manager Resident Services and supported by the Anti-social Behaviour Team Leader and the Supported Housing Team Leader .
- ❖ An elected member to champion Safeguarding – Dacorum's champion is The Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Resident Services
- ❖ Information to be available on intranet and Sharepoint
- ❖ All corporate, community and team plans must ensure that safeguarding is a key priority.
- ❖ A clear structure must be in place to deal with all issues around safeguarding
- ❖ A clear policy on safeguarding must exist and be supported by procedures.
- ❖ There should be a clear statement on information sharing with partners with regard to safeguarding.
- ❖ There should be an appropriate programme of training for all staff and a full record of training undertaken should be maintained.
- ❖ Safe recruitment procedures/guidance should be followed for the recruitment of all staff.
- ❖ A whistle blowing policy must be in place and staff should be aware of the procedure – there is an existing whistle blowing policy and a copy is available on share point.
- ❖ All records relating to children or young people must be stored in a safe and secure place and only named persons should have access to these files.
- ❖ Each service area that is responsible for contracting work out on behalf of the Council must ensure that via the service level agreements or contract that the above provisions of section 11 of the Children Act 2004 are complied with.
- ❖ Each service area is responsible for monitoring compliance by contractors of these provisions.

7. Housing

In discharging a range of duties in the management of their housing stock the Council will have regard to the above obligations and responsibilities. In addition to this there are also requirements under the following legislation: -

- ❖ The Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 section 213A ensures that a housing authority contacts social services (with or where appropriate without consent) when a family with children is ineligible or intentionally homeless. This section also ensures that housing authorities cooperate with social service to provide advice and assistance to help ineligible or intentionally homeless households with children.
- ❖ The Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities powers and duties to take action against bad housing conditions and Environmental Health Officers will assess the impact of health and safety hazards in light of hazards that occupants are vulnerable to and consider safeguarding children as part of this process.

8. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse has been found to be a significant indicator of child abuse. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 identifies a child witnessing the suffering of another, including domestic abuse in to the Children Act 1989 definition of significant harm.

9. Preventing Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill is recommending a number of new areas for Local Authorities including a requirements that frontline staff should understand Prevent, be able to recognise vulnerability to radicalisation, and know where to go to seek further help. Training will be available for front line staff – this will be provided by the Resident Services Team.

10. Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Dacorum Borough Council is not a Children's Services Authority, therefore the scope for working directly with children and young people is limited and the majority of direct work takes place within Children's Services in the Adventure Playgrounds.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks can only be sought where the criteria is met. A list of the relevant posts are maintained and reviewed by Human

Resources and, where necessary, the application of a DBS forms part of the safe recruitment process.

There is a group of employees for whom an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is necessary. This relates to services where there is a regulated activity, or regular contact which may be unsupervised such as the officers at Adventure Playgrounds where children and young people are concerned or Supported Housing Officers where vulnerable adults are concerned.

It is a requirement of the Licensing of Hackney Carriages and for Personal Licenses that an enhanced DBS check forms part the application process. Details regarding this are contained within the relevant licensing policies available from the Licensing department at the Council.

Contracted, commissioned and grant funded organisations will need to undertake any checks commensurate with the level of their involvement with children, young people or vulnerable adults and have their own safe recruitment procedures.

11. Recognising potential incidences of abuse

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place even for those experienced in working with abuse cases. Dacorum Borough Council acknowledges its' members, employees, volunteers, grant funded and contracted services are not experts at such recognition.

It is important therefore to recognise that it is not Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted services responsibility to decide whether or not abuse is taking place, but to report where they have concerns or suspicions, or where an allegation has been made and be aware of what the signs could be.

In addition it is not the role of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service to investigate or judge any allegation.

It is everyone's responsibility is to REPORT concerns or allegations to the relevant officer (see Safeguarding contacts list at appendix 1) . The Lead Designated Safeguarding Officers should be advised of all referrals for the purposes of recording and reporting.

PART TWO: PROCEDURE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

(A separate document deals with Safeguarding vulnerable adults)

1. Prevention

1.1 Safe Working Practice

When dealing with children and young people the corporate codes of conduct /customer care standards of behaviour should always be maintained as it is possible to reduce situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.

As a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider (in this document this reference relates to those contracted service providers that have adopted this policy and procedure) you should apply best practice and follow these guidelines:-

- ❖ Where ever possible, always be publicly open when working with children and young people.
- ❖ Avoid any situations where you and a child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- ❖ Never leave children and young people unattended whilst they are in your care;
- ❖ Wear a name badge, employee identification badge and/or uniform to be easily recognised by children and young people;
- ❖ You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of their activity or the service they undertake with the Council.

Members, employees, volunteers grant funded and contracted service providers should never in the course of their duties:

- ❖ Engage in rough, physical and sexually provocative games or activities;
- ❖ Share a bedroom with a child or young person;
- ❖ Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact;
- ❖ Allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- ❖ Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person even in fun.
- ❖ Allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- ❖ Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- ❖ Enter areas designated only for the opposite sex.

- ❖ Solicit personal information other than that required for health and safety reasons, such as data required for registration purposes to attend facilities or applications for courses etc. on courses. This information must be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of all current Data Protection legislation.

Occasions may arise where an employee and/or volunteer does things of a personal nature for a child or young person particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. These duties should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the child/young person involved.

If a child or young person is accidentally injured as a result of your actions, seems distressed in any manner, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, such incidents should be reported as soon as possible to another colleague and documented. Parents/carers and line managers should be informed of all incidents.

All Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers should be aware that they should not be in a situation where they are ever alone with a child and to always have a responsible adult or other children or young people with them in a group.

To be aware they do not:

- ❖ Spend any time alone with Children and young people away from others.
- ❖ When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- ❖ Take children or young people alone on car journeys, however short.
- ❖ Take children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you.

1.2 Safe working procedures

Good standards of maintenance, hygiene and safety should be maintained at all times within Council buildings where children and young people use and have access to our services.

In order to support its Health and Safety Policy the Council ensures that general safety arrangements are supplemented by comprehensive safe working procedures within each service area.

Such procedures will incorporate an identification of hazards, assessment of risks, use of personal protective equipment, training, supervision and safe systems of work. These will be regularly reviewed by responsible officers.

1.3 Operational Procedures and Standards

The safety of children and young people taking part in any meeting/activity and/or organised session on Council premises is paramount. If children and young people

are attending Council premises or events without the supervision of a parent/carer/guardian, the following practices must be applied: -

- ❖ All children and young people must be supervised at all times by an employee or volunteer who has undergone the appropriate DBS disclosure.
- ❖ Standard risk assessments are conducted prior to the organisation of any meetings, courses or activities.
- ❖ All employees, volunteers, members or contracted services must be aware of the procedure for the arrival and departure at any meeting/activity/course undertaken with the Council and any particular control measures identified in the risk assessment process.
- ❖ Any Supervisor or volunteer working with children and young people should familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures relevant to the area in which they work and take responsibility for those children and young people should an emergency arise.
- ❖ A DBS checked employee/volunteer must accompany a child or young person should they wish to leave the main group for whatever reason (e.g. first aid).
- ❖ All relevant safety checks must be made on the facilities and equipment prior to the start of each day or session.
- ❖ Parental consent should be sought – see form at appendix 3
- ❖ All emergency contact details/medical information must be kept current for each child or young person.
- ❖ The correct ratio of adults to children and young people should be applied as published in guidelines by Ofsted.

Notwithstanding the above procedures, there will be a need for specific operational procedures relative to each site, service and activity.

1.4 First Aid and accidents

Child welfare is of paramount importance and although usual, parental consent for the administration of first aid is not always possible or necessary but without the relevant consent it must be a last resort. See the guidance attached in appendix 6.

All accidents and incidents must be recorded in accordance with the Councils accident reporting procedures.

1.5 Photography

When taking photographs of any child or young person precautionary measures should be taken and the appropriate authority sought from parents or guardians. Measures and a consent form are contained in appendices 4 and 5.

1.6 Off Duty Contact

Employees, elected Members, volunteers grant funded organisations and contractors must maintain a professional relationship with children and young people during any off-duty contact, continuing to follow the guidelines and policies set out for

contact during work and where relevant should adhere to the ICT usage guidance as detailed in Appendix 7

1.7 Breach of safe working practice and procedures

Dacorum Borough Council take its responsibility very seriously. Employees who breach any of the code above will result in investigation and may be a matter of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal and the possibility of criminal investigation where there is evidence of illegal activity.

Volunteers in breach of the above will have their services terminated with immediate effect. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the volunteer will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face criminal investigation.

If a Member does not adhere to the policy, there may be grounds for reporting their behaviour to the Standards Committee, who may require an investigation under the Member Code of Conduct. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the Member will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face criminal investigation.

2. Recognise, Respond, Refer

2.1 Recognise - How?

It is not the role of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant-funded or contracted service provider to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse is actually taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect Children and young people by referring concerns to the appropriate agency.

This procedure for reporting a concern or allegation informs all Dacorum Borough Council, Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers (that have adopted this policy and procedures) of the actions they should take if they have concerns about, or encounter, a case of alleged or suspected abuse of a child or young person.

Recognising a safeguarding concern can also relate to the environment that a child or young person is living in and this is often referred to as neglect. Visiting Officers may have concerns about what they see when carrying out an inspection or home visit to a property or whilst carrying out their duties.

Some of the more obvious signs of abuse, neglect or bullying could be:

- ❖ Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- ❖ Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- ❖ Cigarette burns

- ❖ Bite marks
- ❖ Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food
- ❖ Constantly dirty or smelly condition
- ❖ Inappropriate dress for conditions
- ❖ Fear of parents or carers being approached for explanations
- ❖ Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- ❖ Flinching when approached or touched
- ❖ Reluctance to get changed, for example long sleeves in hot weather
- ❖ Neurotic behaviour e.g. Rocking, hair twisting
- ❖ Being unable to play
- ❖ Fear of making mistakes
- ❖ Self-harm
- ❖ Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- ❖ Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- ❖ Sexual knowledge which is beyond their development age
- ❖ Sexual drawings or language
- ❖ Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- ❖ Not allowed to have friends
- ❖ Neglect – unacceptable living conditions

Vulnerable adults can also be subject to financial abuse (see Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy).

2.2 Child Sexual Exploitation

In addition to the above the following signs can be a sign of child sexual exploitation which can take place up to the age of 18 years old.

- ❖ Regularly going missing from home
- ❖ Truancy from school
- ❖ Friends with significantly older people
- ❖ Being collected from home or school by people you don't know
- ❖ Unexplained injuries or bruising
- ❖ Unexplained gifts or money
- ❖ Secretive mobile phone use
- ❖ Sexually transmitted infections
- ❖ Associating with other young people who are vulnerable or are known to be involved in sexual exploitation
- ❖ Drug or alcohol misuse
- ❖ Evidence of sexual bullying or vulnerability through the internet or social networking
- ❖ Self-harming
- ❖ Suicide attempts
- ❖ Overdosing
- ❖ Eating disorders

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and 'Say Something If You See Something' are national campaigns. Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, HM Government 2009 tells us "Sexual exploitation is not limited to particular geographical areas and all Local Safeguarding Children Boards should assume it is an issue in their area".

2.3 Prevent – Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

Children and young people are vulnerable to exposure to or involvement with groups or individuals who advocate violence as a means to a political or ideological end. Examples of extremist causes that have used violence to achieve their ends include animal rights, the far right and international terrorist organisations such as Al Queda.

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include family members or friends, direct contact with groups and organisations or, increasingly through the internet. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

Work to safeguard children and adults, providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity, is at the heart of the revised *Prevent* strategy. Channel is a national programme which forms part of Prevent and further information can see obtained from the link below.

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/TAM/2012/201210TAMChannelGuidance.pdf>

Potential indicators identified in the Channel guidance include: -

- ❖ Use of inappropriate language
- ❖ Possession of violent extremist literature
- ❖ Behavioural changes
- ❖ The expression of the extremist views
- ❖ Advocating violent actions and means
- ❖ Association with known extremists
- ❖ Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

If you have any concerns about any situation or a discussion with a child, young person or vulnerable adult always speak to your Designated Safeguarding Officer or a Lead Safeguarding Officer – Appendix 1. Remember it is not your responsibility to make any decisions or investigations – it is your responsibility to respond and refer by discussing with a Designated Officer.

In the case of concerns about child sexual exploitation or where practitioners are unsure whether the social care threshold has been met or safeguarding needs are

unclear the Targeted Advice Service (TAS) has a consultation line. It is however an expectation that practitioners would have contacted their Designated Safeguarding Officer before contacting the TAS. See Appendix 1 for contact details.

2.4 Respond and refer – How?

To a child or young person disclosing

Children and young people who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to, and taking seriously what a child or young person is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them.

Create a safe environment by:

- ❖ Staying calm and not rushing into actions that may be inappropriate.
- ❖ Confirming you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing.
- ❖ Reassuring the child or young person and stressing he/she is not to blame.
- ❖ Listening to what the child or young person tells you, show you are taking what is being said seriously.
- ❖ Where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere on your own.
- ❖ Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain you will have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening;
- ❖ Ensure you are quite clear about what the child or young person says so you can pass it on to the professionals. Use open questions to encourage the child/young person to use their own words but do not press for detailed information.

NB The law is very strict and an abuse case can be dismissed if it appears the child/young person has been led or words have been suggested.

Record exactly what the child/young person has said to you, on an incident referral form (Appendix 2) as soon as possible after the incident. As far as possible use the child's/young person's own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion and record:

- ❖ The child's/young person's name, address, date of birth.
- ❖ The nature of the allegation.
- ❖ A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- ❖ Your observations (e.g. a description of the individual's behaviour and physical and emotional state).
- ❖ Exactly what the child/young person has said and what you said. Record the account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- ❖ Any action you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and resulting action, including any contact with your immediate line manager, internal protection officer). Where possible include names, addresses and telephone numbers;
- ❖ Sign and date what you have recorded.

- ❖ The form should then be given to the appropriate designated officer for the safeguarding of children/young people the first instance.
- ❖ **Do not** take sole responsibility – consult the designated officer in your service area or in their absence one of the designated lead officers should be contacted as detailed in appendix 1.

Where there are concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or radicalisation always discuss with the designated Lead Officers or the Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

NB: In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with cases or suspicions relating to abuse. Your role is to recognise, respond and refer to your designated officer. See appendix 1 for contact details.

All referrals must be reported to the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officers for recording and reporting purposes.

2.5 Allegations against members, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers.

Should an employee, elected member, volunteer or contracted service provider become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of an incident of abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

- ❖ Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child/young person and therefore report it
- ❖ Make a written record on an incident referral form (Appendix 2) of any details of which you are aware, as part of your report.
- ❖ Do not approach the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim yourself.
- ❖ Report the allegation to your designated officer or to the Lead Safeguarding Officer by completing the referral form giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details.
- ❖ In a case where your manager may be involved, report it to the Lead Safeguarding Officer, Group Manager – Resident Services, directly and/or the Group Manager - People who is the senior officer for Human Resources. It is likely that they will need to get advice and support from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Hertfordshire County Council (contact details appendix 1).

Do not judge or investigate. As an employee, elected member, volunteer or contracted service provider it is important not to lose focus of your role. By reporting an allegation quickly, any necessary investigations and/or judgement can then be made by trained professionals;

It is paramount that you maintain confidentiality throughout this whole process. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary and only with specified persons) as any breaches could be damaging to both the alleged perpetrator, the child/young person and to any investigation that may follow.

Once the incident has been reported to the designated officer or Lead Safeguarding Officer they will inform Human Resources and the report will be suitably investigated. The Council's Conduct Procedure will be followed and, where appropriate, other relevant agencies such as the police will be informed

2.6 Dealing with other allegations

Should an employee, elected Member, volunteer or contracted service provider be informed by a third party that an incident of abuse may be occurring the procedure outlined above will apply. In no circumstances should you attempt to contact the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator yourself. Your role is to recognise and report any concern to your designated officer or to one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers.

2.7 ICT including Internet and email

The Adventure Playgrounds have a specific policy on e-safeguarding which relates to the children and young people who are service users which is visible to them and reviewed on a regular basis.

For Dacorum Borough Council systems please refer to Dacorum Borough Council's IT policies and refer any concerns to the designated Safeguarding Officers.

2.8 Complaints

Complaints about general service issues should be dealt with through the Council's corporate complaints procedures. Any complaint that makes a specific reference to concerns about a specific child or a young person and their welfare should be dealt with through the safeguarding procedure in the first instance. Where it is not clear where the responsibility lies the matter should be referred to one of the designated Lead Safeguarding Officers who will advise. (contact details on appendix 1)

2.9 Dealing with malicious accusations

Malicious complaints about an employee(s) and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding policies and procedures will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through Dacorum Borough Council's relevant disciplinary processes and where there is evidence of illegal actions the Police will be informed.

2.10 Confidentiality

When dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to abuse, confidentiality is of the highest importance as any breaches can have severe consequences and the protection of the persons involved is paramount.

It is important that only those persons who need to know are given the relevant information to protect the rights of the victim and alleged perpetrator. Employees, Members, volunteers and contracted service providers **must not**:

- ❖ Discuss any allegation of abuse of bullying, substantiated or not, with anyone from Dacorum Borough Council other than a designated Safeguarding Officer, Lead Safeguarding Officer or Director.
- ❖ Discuss any allegations of abuse or bullying, substantiated or not, with any member of an external agency, other than as part of a formal investigation.
- ❖ Discuss any allegation of abuse or bullying, substantiated or not, with any other interested party, including parents, carers and relatives of the child, or young person without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation. This person may be part of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Team.

This does not exclude any employee from the need or right to consult with a solicitor, trade union representative or other bona fide legal adviser.

Please make yourself aware of the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy document which is available on the intranet / sharepoint.

2.11 Sharing of information

Employees, Members, Volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers may be anxious about the legal and ethical restrictions on sharing information, particularly with other agencies. However, the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is essential. In many cases it is only when information from a range of sources is put together that a child or young person's needs or risk of harm can be seen.

The main restrictions on disclosure of information are:

- ❖ Common law duty of confidence
- ❖ Human Rights Act 1998
- ❖ Data Protection Act 1998

Each of these areas need to be considered separately. Other statutory provisions may also be relevant but in general the law will not prevent you from sharing information with other practitioners if:

- ❖ Those likely to be affected consent
- ❖ The public interest in safeguarding the child or young person's welfare override the need to keep the information confidential

- ❖ Disclosure is required or necessary under a court order or other legal obligation.

Sections 27 and 47 of the Children Act 1989 enables local authorities to request help from specified authorities (other local authorities, education authorities, housing authorities, NHS bodies) and place an obligation on those authorities to co-operate. A request could be for information in connection with an s17 assessment or an s47 enquiry. Neither provision would require an unjustified breach of confidence. But an authority should not refuse a request without considering all the circumstances.

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 enables any person to disclose information to a relevant authority for any purposes of the Act if they would not otherwise have the power to do so. Relevant authorities include local authorities, NHS bodies and police authorities. The purpose of the Act broadly covers the prevention and reduction of crime and the identification or apprehension of offenders.

All copies of the Safeguarding Reporting Form (appendix 2) must be sent to and retained by the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officers. These documents must be stored securely to ensure confidentiality and will be retained in accordance with Retention Policy Periods as defined in the organisations retention schedule. No other copies should be kept.

2.12 Dealing with the Media

All enquiries from the media regarding specific Safeguarding issues must be dealt with through one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers and the Team Leader – Communications and Consultation or Group Manager, People. See appendix 1 for the contact list.

3 Safe Recruitment, Contracts, Grants and Commissioning.

All recruitment and selection activity is required to comply with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and the Disclosure and Barring Service Policies.

It is the policy of the Council that no person shall work or volunteer to work with children and young people within or on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council who has been convicted or who has received a formal Police caution concerning an offence against children.

There is a list of posts for which Disclosure and Barring checks are required and under no circumstances should an employee commence work until the checks have taken place. Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks are also compulsory for volunteers where the criteria are met.

The Council also has a duty to protect any young people who undertake work, whether temporary, part time or full time for the Council. Students and schoolchildren under 18 years including those engaged in work experience are covered by the Health and Safety at work regulations.

For all contracted, commissioned, grant funded services, a risk assessment will be taken regarding the availability and the implementation of appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. Contracts and grants will be awarded when the Council is assured that satisfactory checks have been undertaken where appropriate. This will form part of the contract/tender/application process.

In addition to the initial checks, ongoing monitoring of continued compliance will be made and information relating to the following areas will be required on a regular basis: -

- Numbers of referrals to Hertfordshire County Council call centre/protected referrals
- Numbers of staff who have/have not been trained / refresher training
- Details of training provided – is the training accredited by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board
- Safe recruitment policy

4 Induction and training

Before a new employee starts their employment with Dacorum Borough Council they will be asked to read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and sign to acknowledge this.

Basic Safeguarding Awareness training will be provided as compulsory training for all employees as part of the formal induction process – this training is available as an e learning package on DORIS.

This will also apply to volunteers, grant funded and contracted service providers where this policy is adopted or agreed as agreed as part of the contract/grant/commissioning process.

Safeguarding and the Promotion of Welfare of Children and Young People training will be provided to all staff who have any level of interaction with children and young people within their job role.

Employees, volunteers, contracted service providers and members whose work brings them into significant contact with Children and young people will undertake the relevant level of Child Protection and safeguarding training which should be identified by team leaders and lead officers at appraisals. Advice on this can be given by the Designated Lead Officers.

Managers, Team Leaders, Employees and volunteers should be aware of their role and responsibilities under these procedures and be aware of the need to keep the training up to date. If there are any queries of if any advice is required regarding the level or type of training, please consult the Designated Lead Officer for advice

5 Review

This policy and procedures will be updated annually and fully reviewed every 3 years. The next full review will be February 2018 or in response to changes in legislation.



DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2015

DECLARATION

Dacorum Borough Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults and promoting their welfare.

Working as an employee, volunteer or contracted service provider of Dacorum Borough Council, or representing Dacorum Borough Council as an Elected Member, it is important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document.

By being made aware of the policy it is our intention to ensure that we all are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for the children, young people and vulnerable adults in our community.

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Declaration:

Having read and understood Dacorum Borough Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document, I accept the principles therein.

Signed: _____

Name (please print): _____

Position in organisation: _____

Date: _____