



# **Children's MARS Guidance and Checklist for Child Protection Policies - Voluntary and Community Organisations**

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## **Contents Page**

[Introduction](#)

[Help with preparing a child protection policy](#)

[North Lincolnshire Children's MARS](#)

[Operation of the Policy](#)

[Checklist](#)

[Draft Child Protection Policy](#)

## **Introduction**

The North Lincolnshire Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding Board (Children's MARS) would recommend that every organisation whose staff works with children in a paid or voluntary role should have a Child Protection Policy. Each policy will need to reflect the activities of the organisation and the individuals involved. It is therefore important that each organisation design its own policy. It is impossible for the Children's MARS to be prescriptive in respect of a policy. The enclosed checklist and draft procedure are designed for guidance only.

## **Help with preparing a child protection policy**

The Children's MARS Board would recommend accessing support for developing your policy, for example information is available from the NSPCC at [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform).

If you are part of a national organisation, you should contact them as there may already be a procedure, or they may be able to offer advice specific to your organisation.

## **North Lincolnshire Children's MARS**

The Children's MARS Board has prepared the attached guidelines and draft policy to assist you. The Children's MARS Board would recommend that you include all the elements in the guidance which are relevant to your organisation. There may be aspects which you need to add owing to the nature of your organisation.

## **Operation of the policy**

A policy must be agreed by the entire organisation. It must be known and accessible to everyone. Parents and young people should be consulted. Ideally, everyone in your organisation will be involved in drawing the policy up. To be effective it must give clear instructions on what action is to be taken, when and by whom. It must be supported by adequate supervision and training. The Children's MARS board would recommend that your organisation appoint a child protection officer/designated/senior person.

A Child Protection Policy should help prevent abuse and protect children.

## Check List

The Child Protection Policy should be a statement of intent that demonstrates commitment to safeguarding children involved with the organisation.

It should:

- Be written in a clear and easily understandable way
- Publicised, promoted and distributed to the relevant audience
- Recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- Approved and endorsed by the relevant management body
- Be mandatory for staff and volunteers
- Be kept under review

The policy should include:

- The name and address of the organisation
- The date the policy was agreed and the next review date
- The values of the organisation
- Policy statement
- Definitions of abuse
- What you should do if you suspect abuse
- Recording
- Maintenance of records
- E-safeguarding and acceptable use policy for electronic equipment
- Whistleblowing procedure
- Contact information

The Children's MARS Board would recommend that a designated/ senior person or persons should be identified with a clearly defined role in relation to child protection and who is responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. They should have appropriate training in relation to child

protection. They should be identified as a person who members of your organisation can talk to about child protection. There is an e-learning work book on safeguarding awareness on the Children's MARS website which can be accessed by any member of the organisation. To see details of safeguarding training available visit:

<http://www.northlincscmars.co.uk/training/>

It is recommended that your organisation has a complaints process for dealing with complaints.

To safeguard children, the Children's MARS Board advises that your organisation has policies or procedures for recruiting staff or volunteers who have contact with children and for assessing their suitability to work with children.

It is recommended that your organisation has a code of conduct, or your organisation can use or refer to the Children's MARS Guidance on Code of Conduct for Employers, Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Young People which is available at <http://www.northlincscmars.co.uk/policies-procedures-and-guidance/>

## **DRAFT CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Name of Organisation

Address

Date Policy Agreed

Date of Next Review

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

The values held by this organisation are... *This organisation* recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse. (*Name of organisation*) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. We will:

- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and neglect
- Provide parents and children with the opportunity to voice their concerns
- Have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse and neglect

## THE POLICY

*Name of organisation* recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and/or neglect. Accordingly *name of organisation* has adopted the following policy guidelines. The policy sets out agreed guidelines for responding to allegations of abuse/neglect, including those made against staff and volunteers. These guidelines have been prepared in accordance with North Lincolnshire Children's MARS Policies and Procedures that can be found on the [Children's MARS website](#). They will be kept under review and be supported by appropriate training.

The policy applies to all *staff and volunteers (delete if not applicable)* who act on behalf of the *name of organisation* and who work with children. Every individual has a responsibility to inform the designated person in respect of child protection or their deputy of concerns relating to safeguarding children. The designated person should decide if the concerns should be communicated to North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the police. However all *staff and volunteers (delete if not applicable)* can contact North Lincolnshire Children's Services directly if necessary.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE ([Working Together 2018](#))

A concern should be raised if any of the following circumstances have or are happening to a child:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (including Child Sexual Exploitation)
- Neglect

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation 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**

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victims needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

## NEGLECT

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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to .... *designated child protection person* via *add phone number* ..... who is nominated by *name of organisation* to act on their behalf in referring concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect to North Lincolnshire Children's Services. In the absence of the designated person, the matter should be brought to the attention of the *deputy designated child protection person* via *add phone number*. If it is an emergency, and the designated person(s) cannot be contacted, then North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the police should be contacted on the numbers given below. For further information, see [Helping Children and Families \(Threshold Document 2016-2020\)](#) and [Children's MARS Policy and Procedures Assessing Need and Providing Help](#).
2. If allegations relate to the designated person, then the deputy designated person, North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the Police should be contacted.
3. Concerns or allegations should not be discussed with anyone, other than those named above.
4. It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to North Lincolnshire Children's Services or the police if they have concerns or an allegation has been made. However this policy should be followed where possible.

## **RECORDING**

- Write down exactly what the child has said in their own words. Write down the conversation held, where it was held, when and what was happening beforehand. Alternatively write down what you have observed, details of any witnesses, location, and your specific concern if you believe that a child has been abused or neglected. Record dates and times of the events and when the record was made. Keep all notes secure.
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to the designated person or the deputy designated person.
- Allegations against staff or volunteers will be investigated following local procedures. For further information see the Children's MARS Procedures for Managing Allegations against people who work with children that can be found on the [Children's MARS website](#).

## **MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS**

Organisations must consider and develop clear guidelines for the retention, storage and destruction of their records where these relate to child welfare concerns or concerns about possible risk posed by employees (whether paid or voluntary).

## **E SAFEGUARDING AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

Include details relevant to any electronic equipment used especially where equipment can be used to access the internet.

## **WHISTLE BLOWING PROCEDURES**

Provide details pertaining to your registering body or Voluntary Umbrella body if applicable.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

CONTACT DETAILS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSON FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

DEPUTY DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSON FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

ANY NATIONAL OR SUPPORT BODY FOR YOUR ORGANISATION

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN SERVICES, CHURCH SQUARE HOUSE, CHURCH SQUARE, SCUNTHORPE DN15 6XQ 01724 296500 or 01724 296555 (EXTENDED HOURS)

POLICE NON EMERGENCY 101

POLICE EMERGENCY 999

LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER, INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE 01724 298293