



Safeguarding the Welfare of Children; Child Protection Policy

Document Detail	
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Review Criteria	This document will be reviewed prior to review date if a legislative change or other event dictates
Supporting references	Children Act (1989 & 2004), Children and Social Work Act (2017), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance (Sept 2023)
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sola Clement

Introduction

This policy sets out LEAD's requirements in relation to safeguarding children from any form of abuse or significant harm. Children should be able to grow up in circumstances where they are safe and supported, so that they can achieve their optimal outcomes throughout childhood, their teenage years and into adulthood (Every Child Matters).

Abuse and neglect of vulnerable children and young people are increasingly acknowledged as a social problem in the UK and internationally. This requires everyone to be aware of and play a role in the prevention and detection of child abuse and the safeguarding of children.

All Healthcare Professionals have a professional responsibility and duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and must familiarise themselves with the policy. The statutory guidance entitled "Children Act" (2004) and "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018) apply to all children and young people up to the age of 18 years old. Individual staff are required to ensure that they are aware of the specific duties relating to their role. Raising the awareness of abuse and abusive situations or practices, together with safeguards clearly embedded within policy and procedures will ensure safety of patients and staff.

The protection of vulnerable children or children at risk of abuse must be managed in accordance with the relevant laws and guidance but not limited to:

- Children Act (1989)
- Children Act (2004)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
- When to Suspect Child Maltreatment NICE Guidelines (2017)
- Information Sharing; Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance (Sept 2023 update)

Scope

This policy will apply to all staff who have direct or indirect contact with patients, carers or relatives. It will also apply to all staff in relation to their duty to report any untoward incidents or any concerns of abuse or neglect about patients, visitors, carers or relatives.

The Safeguarding children policy and procedures may be implemented alongside other policies, for example when investigating untoward incidents that may also be considered a safeguarding incident where a vulnerable child or young person has been harmed through the actions or omissions by a member of staff. Staff undertaking investigations must be aware of the requirements of this policy and procedures to be able to fulfil the agreed inter-agency investigatory and reporting requirements.

Principles

Systems and structures need to be in place in the organisation in line with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Each member of staff has a professional and statutory duty to recognise and report potential or actual abuse to vulnerable children or children at risk in accordance with professional bodies and Local Safeguarding Children Board policies.

Health professionals need to ensure that all affected children receive appropriate and timely therapeutic and preventative interventions. The key principle to effective safeguarding work is “Early Intervention.” Health professionals who work directly with children and young people should ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children forms an integral part of all stages of care that are offered. Health professionals that come into contact with children, parents and carers in the course of their work need to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Health professionals need to ensure that they can recognise risk factors and how to report any concerns that they may have about the abuse of vulnerable children and young people and contribute to reviews, enquiries and child protection plans.

Management and child protection supervision to be in place and available to health professionals. Appropriate support to be in place for any staff in the organisation that are managing any potential safeguarding or child protection concerns. This will be through direct case management support, advice and consultancy as well as safeguarding supervision.

DUTIES:

Health professionals

All health professionals have a responsibility to respond to any concerns about the safety and welfare of a child and to follow through on any identified concerns. This includes seeking appropriate guidance and support from the safeguarding team.

All health professionals have a duty to be aware of policies and procedures that inform and govern their practice thus ensuring patient safety and compliance with the law and regulation.

Health professionals have a responsibility to work in partnership with other agencies in order to protect children and those that are identified as vulnerable.

Health professionals are required to work within the scope of their professional role and scope of practice and knowledge.

Health professionals have a duty to ensure that no child is discriminated against or put at risk because of their protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (includes race, age, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion and belief).

Health professionals are required to comply with safeguarding supervision requirements as per policy.

Health professionals are required to maintain contemporaneous healthcare records in line with healthcare and documentation standards.

Manager

The Manager has the responsibility to support clinical staff in accessing various forms of clinical / safeguarding supervision which best meets their needs. Staff must highlight with the manager if supervision is not meeting their needs so a different model can be considered.

The Manager may escalate any concerns or risks in terms of practice or service delivery.

The Manager is responsible for reviewing all known cases of suspected child protection concerns. Auditing clinical practice in relation to the recognising and reporting of any allegations of abuse appropriately, together with referral trends, compliance with safeguarding and documentation standards.

Policy review and updates and for disseminating information to all areas of the organisation via a written briefing as and when required. Policies to be updated in line with national guidance and NICE guidance. Policy review and updates to be undertaken a minimum of once every 3 years. Updates will be required more frequently if there is a change in national guidance or legislation.

Collation of data and key performance indicators as they relate to safeguarding of children. To identify prevalence and trends. To identify any concerns in relation to performance and to plan any remedial action required.

Staff supervision

Safeguarding children/ child protection supervision offers a formal process of professional support, scrutiny, analysis and learning to healthcare professionals working with children, young people and their families. It is recognised that practitioners working with vulnerable children and young people can experience varying levels of stress when addressing complex situations. The safeguarding children supervision process will support the healthcare professional in caring for the needs of children and families with complex needs.

Monitoring Compliance of this Policy

The manager has the responsibility of ensuring that action plans are implemented as agreed. Ensuring compliance with policy and procedures will be through audits, training and feeding back the findings to the appropriate team members with any required action plans.