

Safeguarding Guidance

Children and Young People

February 2018

1. Aim of the Guidance

The Assembly Commission acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, and is committed to ensuring that its safeguarding practice reflects its statutory responsibilities and relevant guidance. For the purposes of this guidance, a child or young person is anybody up to 18 years old.

This guidance recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender identity, religion or belief, ethnicity, sex, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children and young people:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience in all their engagement with the Assembly, whether visiting the Assembly Commission estate, during visits and events conducted by its representatives, or through any on-line, social media and social networking site contact; and
- are protected from abuse whilst either visiting the Assembly Commission estate or participating in visits and events conducted by its representatives or 'on line', social media or social networking contact (Information and Communication Technology 'ICT').



As part of our safeguarding practice, the Assembly Commission will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
- ensure that everyone is provided with training that is relevant to their role so that they can recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse and neglect in order to be able to take appropriate action to safeguard children and young people . Awareness training will be provided in-house for all staff. In depth training will be provided for DSOs and staff who engage regularly with young people;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and that support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose concerns;
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- prevent the employment of unsuitable individuals within the Assembly Commission; and
- ensure that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation and are kept up to date and relevant.

The guidance will be widely promoted throughout the National Assembly and applies to all employees and those on work experience or similar arrangements (collectively referred to in this document as 'staff'). The guidance also acts as reference information for Assembly Members and their Support Staff (see Section 4).

2. The Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that staff of the Assembly Commission understand what to do if they have concerns that a child is being abused or neglected.

The guidance helps staff in:

- Recognising child abuse and neglect;
- Responding to concerns about all employees (temporary and permanent), contractors or those on work experience or similar arrangements and other users and visitors of the estate;
- Reporting child abuse concerns or seeking guidance; and
- Recording all information and actions relevant to the concern.

3. Who the Guidance Applies to

This guidance applies to all staff and recognises that everybody in the Assembly Commission has a responsibility to ensure that children and young people are safe.

4. Information for Assembly Members and their Support Staff

Assembly Members and their Support Staff are not employees of the Assembly Commission. However they may wish to use this guidance and associated procedures as reference for their own safeguarding arrangements.

Assembly Members and their Support Staff may wish to follow the guidance by contacting the relevant Assembly Commission official to seek further advice if they wish to report any concerns.

5. Recognising Abuse

This guidance is concerned with the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people. The categories of abuse and their definitions, used by the Assembly Commission, are set out in the statutory guidance for safeguarding children and young people in Wales ('Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004' Welsh Government 2007)¹. Definitions of abuse can be found in Annex 1².

6. Responding to Concerns about Abuse (The Procedure)

Witnessing, being made aware of or having a child disclose abuse to you can generate mixed feelings which may include disbelief, anxiety, anger and a sense of being overwhelmed. To guide you through these situations the following provides simple and straight forward actions that you need to take.

Where you have concerns about a child or young person but are unsure about whether what you've seen, heard or been informed about is abusive you should always seek advice and guidance. It is always better to err on the side of caution than not take any action. In this situation you should first contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Section 7 contains the details of the DSO and alternative internal contacts. If none of those listed are available, the NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 can also be contacted out of hours. The role of the DSOs is set out in section 7 of this document. In summary, it is their role to be the central point for reporting concerns and to provide staff with advice and guidance on safeguarding concerns.

¹ The Welsh Government have consulted on new guidance following changes made by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

² The definitions have been updated to take account of any changes made by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and any changes made to definitions within the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 (which are also in the process of being updated).

General Guidance

This Guidance is intended to help you deal with a situation:

- should a child or young person disclose to you that they or someone they know is experiencing abuse;
- or**
- should you witness or become aware of behaviour towards a Child or Young Person that is unusual or causes you concern.
- The procedure below should be followed regardless of whether the concerns arise on the National Assembly estate or at Assembly events happening off site (for example the Assembly bus, during outreach work, off site committee meetings etc) or through ICT.

In the event of a threat to a child or young person's life you should, of course, alert security staff and/or the emergency services.

In some instances, there may be a threat to the well-being of the child or young person, but that threat may not warrant the attendance of the emergency services. Instead, you should immediately inform the DSO. Refer to the information in Section 7 to identify alternative contacts if the First DSO is not available.

At best, policy and procedure can only ever provide clear actions to deal with most foreseeable situations. However, in situations where there are concerns about a child or young person that either fall outside this guidance, or about which there is uncertainty as to what to do, always seek advice and support by first contacting the DSO.

If the DSOs are unavailable then contact the NSPCC Helpline on **0808 8005000** which can also be contacted out of hours.

What steps should you take?

If you are concerned that:

- a child or young person has disclosed to you that they or someone they know is experiencing abuse

or

- you have witnessed or become aware of behaviour towards a Child or Young Person that is unusual, inappropriate or causes you concern

you should contact the DSO at the first opportunity (see section 7 for contact details). You should also inform your manager. Your manager will not be expected to give you any advice or guidance, but should be made aware of the situation.

You will then need to record:

1. The concerns
2. The date, time and place
3. The people involved (including what details that are known about the child and young person)
4. The actions agreed and taken (including who agreed/did what)
5. The disclosure if made by the child or young person..

A proforma setting out the steps for recording the information that you will need to pass on to the DSO is available at Annex 3.

The DSO will decide on any subsequent action that needs to be taken and will keep you informed. Your manager should also be kept informed.

The following explains how you should/shouldn't behave and what actions you should/ shouldn't take if dealing with a situation that causes you concern.

What to do

- **Do** reassure the child or young person that they are right to tell you
 - **Do** be accessible and receptive
 - **Do** listen carefully
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- **Do** tell the child or young person that you are taking their concerns seriously
- **Do** tell the child or young person that you will need to tell people who can help them and you will give the information to those people only
- **Do** tell the child or young person what will happen next
- **Do** listen and record what the child or young person has told you without interruption, question or prompt

What not to do

- **Don't** act with disbelief, disgust or in any way that conveys to the child that you don't want to hear them
- **Don't** jump to conclusions especially about the abuser
- **Don't** speculate or accuse anybody
- **Don't** tell the child you will keep their secret
- **Don't** ask the child or young person any leading questions or any questions about the disclosure
- **Don't** make promises you cannot keep
- **Don't** stop a child who is speaking freely
- **Don't** promise total confidentiality
- **Don't** ask the child or young person to sign the disclosure

What next?

- **Do** consult immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- **Do** record what you have been told as soon as possible (see above and Annex 3)
- **Do** record only what the child or young person discloses (using a verbatim record as much as possible) and nothing more
- **Don't** seek to investigate the allegation or confront the alleged abuser

7. Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)

Whilst Safeguarding is the responsibility of everybody who works in the Assembly Commission, the DSOs are the lead personnel for Safeguarding and have both a strategic and operational role. Further information on implementation, governance and the monitoring of this guidance is included in Annex 2. The DSOs:-

- are responsible for managing safeguarding concerns within the Assembly Commission;
- are the central point for reporting and dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- handle referral and liaison with external Child Protection agencies and the Police; and
- provide advice and guidance to Staff on Safeguarding matters and concerns.

In carrying out these roles, the DSOs will receive support from the HR team. HR will:

- develop, implement and monitor policy and procedure;
- hold all records of concerns and allegations; and
- arrange training on safeguarding .

8. Resources and Support

Contact Numbers

- Child abuse concerns and concerns about staff or advice and guidance (the DSOs) and the numbers to use out of hours – see section 7.
- Children’s Services Contact Number where National Assembly Buildings are located: Cardiff Access Point: 029 2053 6490 (8.30 – 17.00 Mon to Fri Office Hours) or Emergency Duty Support Team 029 2078 8570 (Out of Hours)
- Police Contact Numbers: National Assembly Police Unit 8090 or 999 (if an emergency)
- NSPCC ChildLine: 0800 1111(for Children and Young People)
- NSPCC HelpLine: 0808 800 5000 (For adults who are concerned about a Child or Young Person).

Annex 1: Definitions of abuse

This guidance is concerned with the physical, sexual, psychological/emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people. These categories of abuse and their definitions, used by the Assembly Commission, are those set out in the statutory guidance for safeguarding children and young people in Wales ('Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004' Welsh Government 2007)³. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 added a new category of abuse 'financial'. A definition of financial abuse is not included in this policy as it will be less prevalent for children. DSO's will be able to provide further advice should you become concerned about financial abuse concerning a child.

It is important to note that abuse or neglect of a child isn't confined to inflicting harm; it also refers to failing to prevent harm. Also child abuse isn't confined to personal contact and can take place through the use of the internet, social media and networking sites. The statutory guidance highlights that 'Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger'

(Welsh Government p.138, 2007).

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 or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after. Physical abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or - at the extreme - death. Harm may be caused to children both by the abuse itself and by the abuse taking place in a wider family or institutional context of conflict and aggression.'

(Welsh Government p. 138, 2007).

³ Where definitions have subsequently been revised by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 or changes to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008, the definition in this guidance reflects the revised definition.

Emotional Abuse

‘Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, for example by witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.’
(*Welsh Government p. 138, 2007*)⁴

Sexual Abuse

‘Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative 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.’
(*Welsh Government p. 139, 2007*).

Neglect

‘Neglect means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the child's development). It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, 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.’
(*Welsh Government p. 139, 2007*)⁵

⁴ The definition has been amended to reflect changes made by the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008).

⁵ The definition has been amended to reflect changes made by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Examples of possible Child Protection concerns within the Assembly Commission work place are;

- staff coming into contact with a child or young person who they believe is or is at risk of being neglected or physically, emotionally or sexually abused
- abuse by Assembly employees or those using the Assembly estate
- abuse by the public or others involved in an event, conference, exhibition or similar
- abuse by the teacher, group leader or other accompanying adult;
- parental abuse;
- self-harm; and
- abuse via the use of the internet or mobile phones (ICT). Examples of this type of abuse include 'cyberbullying'; 'cyber stalking'; image manipulation; viewing pornographic, violent or inappropriate images; the child or young person sending or being asked to send indecent images of themselves (known as 'sexting'); contact via social media or 'chatrooms' with people who are seeking to sexually abuse children and young people (known as 'grooming').

Children and Young people can also abuse each other and such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult.

Annex 2: Roles, responsibilities, governance and monitoring

This guidance applies to staff of the Assembly Commission. Arrangements for implementation, governance and monitoring are set out below.

Role	Responsibility
Chief Executive and Directors	<p>Receive a quarterly update on the operation of the safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Informed about each incident for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>Investigate any issues relating to the conduct of the DSOs.</p> <p>Receive enquiries and reports from staff if no DSO is available (e.g. out of hours).</p>
Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)	<p>Receive enquiries and/or written reports from staff with concerns about, or evidence of, safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Take decisions on whether to refer reports to the appropriate authorities, seeking external advice as necessary.</p> <p>Pass information to HR for file and follow-up.</p>
Human Resources	<p>Maintain the policy and associated policies.</p> <p>Organise training.</p> <p>Maintain records of reports to DSOs and their decisions.</p> <p>After a DSO has made a decision to refer a report, liaises with the appropriate authorities e.g. on further information/interviews required.</p>
All staff	<p>Read the policy and undertake training.</p> <p>Where there are concerns or evidence of safeguarding issues, follow the policy, record concerns and contact a DSO as soon as possible.</p> <p>Be available to answer any follow-up questions about what has been reported.</p>

Annex 3: Form for recording information

This form should be used to record the details of any concerns raised. It should be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and marked confidential.

If there is more than one alleged victim, a separate form should be completed.

All efforts must be made to keep the information confidential and only shared with the DSO at the initial stage..

DETAILS OF PERSON COMPLETING THE FORM

Name:

Telephone Number:

Department:

DETAILS OF INCIDENT

Date reported or observed:

Description of the incident/s or what has been observed:

The concerns:

The date, time and place:

The people involved

(including what details that are known about the child and young person)

The disclosure if made by the child or young person:

Anything else?

Please confirm which DSO was contacted and the date and time of contact:

Policy Review

The National Assembly for Wales Commission ('Assembly Commission') is committed to reviewing its procedures for Safeguarding one year after its implementation and then every two years or in line with any new relevant legislation or significant event or change.

This document contains interim guidance for all Assembly Commission staff. Further work is underway to ensure that the guidance complements and enhances existing arrangements that support all employees in their work.

This guidance was produced in consultation with NSPCC Cymru.

A summary of this document is available in languages other than English and Welsh upon request.

If you require a copy of this document in an alternative format please contact::



National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



www.assembly.wales



contact@assembly.wales



0300 200 6565

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