

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Safeguarding Policy

- It is the belief of Lifeskills Solutions that the well-being of all children and vulnerable young people is given paramount consideration.
- All members of staff share in the responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable young people from harm whilst they are attending Lifeskills Solutions.
- All children and vulnerable young people regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made, including Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS) .Checks will be reapplied for every three years. When a check is updated any previous paperwork will be destroyed and only the current paperwork will be held on file.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with young people parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and young people appropriately
- Providing effective management of staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

Children and Vulnerable Young People's Rights

Children and vulnerable young people have the right to protection from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

All citizens, as well as professionals, have a responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable young people for reporting concerns about a child's/vulnerable young person's welfare or safety.

Putting Children/Vulnerable Young People First

The well being of the child/vulnerable young person is the paramount consideration in all protection work.

In any conflict between the needs of the child/vulnerable young person and those of the parents/carers, the needs of the child/vulnerable young person must be put first.

Treating Children/Vulnerable Young People as Individuals

Children/vulnerable young people must be listened to and taken seriously, whatever their level of development or communication.

Children/vulnerable young people's wishes and feelings are to be taken into account. Children/vulnerable young people will be involved in decisions about their future in ways appropriate to their age and understanding.

Work with children/vulnerable young people will be sensitive to the child/vulnerable young person as an individual with particular needs and circumstances.

All children/vulnerable young people will be treated with respect and accorded full civil and legal rights.

Equality

Each child/vulnerable young person and family is unique with differing experiences, circumstances and perspectives.

Professionals concerned with child protection and safeguarding investigations must make every effort to identify and make improvements to any areas arising from ethnic origin, culture, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, class, disability or age. Particular attention should be paid to the vulnerability of children/young people with any disabilities, special needs or communication difficulties.

Confidentiality

All matters to do with Lifeskills Solutions children/vulnerable young people and their families are subject to clear standards of respect and confidentiality.

Guidance in relation to confidentiality at Lifeskills Solutions can be found in the Confidentiality and Secrecy Agreement, which forms a part of the staff induction pack.

However sharing information with the appropriate agencies and professionals is essential if children/vulnerable young people are to be protected. Research has shown that it is often the failure to share information that has put children/vulnerable young people at risk.

There are clear legal frameworks that support and promote the sharing of information in a child protection and safeguarding context.

Lifeskills Solutions provides two designated members of staff to support safeguarding. Deputy Managing Director Nick Bailey and Operations Manager Steve Edwards are Safeguarding Coordinators. These two designated staff members will be available to provide advice, guidance and decision making in

respect of any safeguarding concerns. Nick Bailey
07739747901 / Steve Edwards 07435754240

A young person may share information that gives you cause for concern or you may observe something which leads to belief that a young person has suffered harm or may be at risk from harm.

Staff will be aware of the need to make a distinction between, on the one hand, behavior which amounts to serious physical assault, intimidation and sexual assault which requires external intervention and possibly criminal investigation and, on the other hand, normal childhood/ young people behavior or sexual exploration which the Line Manager will inform the Safeguarding Coordinators should any issues arise.

Staff should also be aware of Lifeskills Solutions Policies on:

Staff Dignity at Work Equality and Diversity

What should you do?

Always stop and listen straight away.
Write brief notes as soon as possible, or at the time if it is not disruptive to information sharing.
Keep your original notes no matter how scruffy.

Explain to the young person that depending on the nature of what they disclosed it may not always be possible to keep it in confidence as by law we have a duty of care to pass it on to the appropriate authority to make sure they are safe.

Don't ask leading questions.

The child or young person's first words are important to note and try to allow the child or young person to express

themselves freely rather than ask questions. Questions to clarify the account may be helpful but it is important not to ask leading questions as these might influence and possibly distort the account given by the child/vulnerable young person. Never attempt to carry out a formal interview of a child/young person yourself; this must be left to other professionals (Police and Social Workers) responsible for child protection investigations.

Immediately consider the need to make the child/young person safe from further harm or from harming others and seek help from colleagues in doing this.

Consider the need for hospital or medical attention if there are urgent health needs but be aware of the possible need to retain evidence of harm or assault.

Accumulative Concerns

It may be that the incident you are dealing with does not in itself appear significant or of a serious nature. It may be one of a series of incidents over time and it is important that you look back on previous incident forms and other paperwork to ensure the information is collated.

Allegations Concerning Staff

Allegations that concern colleagues are extremely challenging to other staff and to Lifeskills Solutions but in spite of our commitment to colleagues we must also allow ourselves to think the unthinkable and keep an open mind to the possibility that a staff member may be implicated.

Never think that abuse is impossible in Lifeskills Solutions or that an allegation against someone you know well is bound to be wrong.

In such instances Lifeskills Solutions own disciplinary procedures will run alongside the child protection investigation and possible Police investigation. Depending on the nature of the allegation it may also be required to inform the relevant Local Authority within each area (LADO)

Whistle Blowing Procedure

In the first instance you are expected to inform your Manager if you have reasonable concerns about the following:

- A criminal offence has been or likely to be committed
- An inappropriate relationship between staff and learner
- Someone has failed or is likely to fail to meet a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred or you think is likely to occur
- Someone's health and safety is endangered
- The environment has been damaged or is likely to be damaged
- Evidence of one of the above has been deliberately concealed

If it is your Manager who is guilty or could be guilty of any of the above you should raise the matter with another Manager, the HR Department or a Director.

If you are in fear of disclosing any of the above this can be done anonymously by sending a letter to the HR Department, any such letter should be marked Private and Confidential.

Where you have reported a matter to a Line Manager, other Manager or HR and you do not believe any action has been taken you should report this to a Director.

Any Employee who raises any of the above matters with a Manager, the HR Department or a Director will have the matter treated in the upmost confidence and the Employee will where appropriate be informed of any action that has or has not been taken.

If any Employee considers that they have suffered any sort of detriment as a result of raising any of the above matters must in the first instance raise a grievance in accordance with the grievance procedure.

You should report your concerns IMMEDIATELY to your Line Manager who will then inform Nick Bailey or Steve Edwards

For all safeguarding concerns it is essential that a written record with clear dates, times and names is begun and kept up to date.

Incident report form SP/ER 71

Body Map - SP/ER 70

Incident report log SP/ER 72

There may also be supporting evidence from previously completed Incident Report Forms.

Then What Happens?

A Child Protection Coordinator will:

Immediately respond to the concerns raised by staff (or students) and support a decision on an appropriate course of action.

Support staff and Centre Manager to ensure that the identified young person/ people are protected from harm.

Ensure information is collated concerning the allegation/incident.

Support a referral where appropriate following area specific Local Authority procedures. Due to Lifeskills working with so many Local Authorities Centre Managers will be responsible for ensuring that their 'home' authority procedures or paperwork are available to all staff. That Local Authority contact numbers and a flowchart for referral is on display in a staff area.

There may be unusual circumstances in which it is best to inform the Police first, for example when there is direct evidence that a serious crime has been committed or the young person is in such immediate danger that the protective powers of the Police are needed. In such circumstances the Social Service Department should also be informed immediately as well.

The Managing Director will take responsibility for informing the "Home Authority" for the child/young person. In normal circumstances the young person's parents should also be informed as soon as possible and indeed their permission may need to be sought for some elements of the investigation, e.g. a medical.

However in some cases where allegations might implicate parents then the Safeguarding Officer will need to take advice from the relevant Local Authority professionals about when to inform the parents of the child, in case that doing so would impede the investigation.

If you have any queries about Safeguarding, or this policy document, please speak to a Safeguarding Coordinator.

Lifeskills Solutions accepts responsibility for establishing the above procedures, for responding to allegations of abuse and for providing guidelines for good practice.

Lifeskills Solutions will ensure that staff who are employed, those who volunteer and others who have substantial access to children/young people are checked through the Police Service and other appropriate sources.

In some residential settings it has been known for senior staff to be involved in the harm and abuse of children and young people. In such situations it is difficult for other staff members to know how best to raise their concerns.

What is Child Abuse?

Definitions

The Children Act 1989 provides the legal framework for defining the situations in which local authorities have a duty to make enquiries about what, if any, action they should take to safeguard or promote the welfare of children/ young people.

The Act requires that if the Local Authority has 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they must make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary....'

'Child' means any child or young person under the age of 18 years old.

The Concept of Significant Harm

Under Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989:

'Harm' means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development

'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development

'Health' means physical or mental health

'Ill treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment, which are not physical.

Under Section 31 (10) of the Act:

Where the question of whether harm suffered by the child is significant, turns on the child's health and development. His or her health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect and the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse.

Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill treatment.

Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is an accumulation of significant experiences, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the children's physical and psychological development.

Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting

significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill treatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

To understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

- The family context, education, or living situation
- The child's development within the context of their family and wider social and cultural environment
- Any special needs, such as a medical condition, communication difficulty or disability
- that may affect the child's development and care within the family
- The nature of harm, in terms of ill treatment or failure to provide adequate care
- The impact on the child's health and development
- The adequacy of care.

It is important always to take account of the child's reactions and his or her perceptions, according to their age and understanding.

Categories of child 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 feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health in a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as 'factitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy'.

Emotional abuse - 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 in so far 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, 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.

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 (e.g. rape or buggery) 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.

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, including non-organic failure to thrive. It may involve the 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 treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic educational or emotional needs.

E- Safety

At Lifeskills Solutions, we understand the responsibility to educate our learners on e-Safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviors and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and

related technologies, in and beyond the context of the classroom.

Teaching and learning

Why the internet and digital communications are important

- The Internet is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. Lifeskills Solutions has a duty to provide learners with high-quality Internet access as a part of the learning experience.
- Internet use is a part of the statutory curriculum and a necessary learning tool for staff and learners
- Internet is an entitlement for learners who show a responsible and mature approach to its use

Internet use will enhance and extend learning

- Lifeskills Solutions internet access will be designed for the learners use and includes appropriate filtering
- Clear boundaries will be set for the appropriate use of the Internet and digital communications and discussed with staff and learners
- Learners will be educated in the effective use of the Internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location, retrieval and evaluation

E-mail

- Learners may only use approved e-mail accounts that Lifeskills Solutions have set up for them
- Learners must immediately tell a member of staff if they receive and offensive e-mail
- The use of obscene, profane, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, harassing or disrespectful language is not permitted and may be subject to Lifeskills disciplinary procedures. It may also be contrary to current legislation and therefore subject to possible legal proceedings

- In e-mail communication, learners must not reveal their personal details or those of others, or arrange to meet anyone without specific permission
- The forwarding of chain letters is not permitted

Publishing learners' images and work

Photographs that include learners will be selected carefully and permission will be gathered from learners or their parent/guardian prior to any publication

Social Networking

- Lifeskills will control access to social networking sites, and consider how to educate learners in their safe use
- Newsgroups will be blocked unless a specific use is approved
- Learners will be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them, their friends or their location

Managing emerging technologies

- Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use
- Mobile phones will not be used during lessons. The sending of abusive or inappropriate text message is forbidden
- Learners must not use camera phones to take or distribute photographs of other learners or staff without their knowledge or consent

Assessing Risks

- Lifeskills Solutions will take all reasonable precautions to prevent to inappropriate material.

- Lifeskills should audit ICT use to establish if the e-safety policy is adequate and that the implementation of the e-safety policy is appropriate and effective

Handling e-safety complaints

- Complaints of Internet misuse will be dealt with by a senior member of staff
- Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Centre Manager
- Complaints of a safeguarding nature must be dealt with in accordance with Lifeskills safeguarding procedures

Introducing the e-safety policy to learners

- E-Safety rules will be posted in all rooms where computer are used
- Learners will be informed that network, email and Internet use will be monitored

In line with e safety policy Lifeskills staff should not have personal social media accounts where learners are followed or added as friends. In circumstances where a learner is known to staff prior to placement at Lifeskills staff should take the professional step to cease social media links with the learner.

Staff members are encouraged to share Lifeskills social media information via their own personal account friends or followers.

Lifeskills and individual Lifeskills centres do have social media pages where learners can be added to promote the good work and achievement of the learners as well as promoting learning opportunities.

**Nick Bailey
Deputy Managing Director**

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