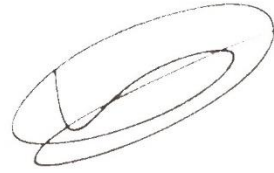


# Child Protection Policy

Designated Person: Dr Katy Lobley



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## Introduction

It is the duty, under existing child protection legislation (including statutory and civil law) of Growing Sudley CIC (including the Board Members, Staff, Volunteers) to protect children and young people whom may come into contact with any form of harm or abuse as outlined in this Policy.

## Policy Statement

Growing Sudley CIC will ensure the following:

- The welfare of the child remains paramount at all times.
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to be protected from harm.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, communicating with the individuals concerned with regards to any concern in a non-judgemental and professional manner.
- All staff, volunteers, board members at Growing Sudley CIC have a responsibility to report and record concerns/incidents as soon as they come to their attention and to inform the designated person.
- All staff, volunteers and board members of Growing Sudley CIC will be made aware of this policy and the process for reporting concerns by providing copies as part of their induction and following policy review.

## Recruitment

Growing Sudley CIC will take all appropriate steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. All staff, volunteers, board members likely to have regular contact with children will require rigorous checks into their eligibility. Such processes will be compliant with Growing Sudley CIC Equality and Diversity policy.

All staff likely to have regular contact with children will be subject to an enhanced DBS check at the time when an offer of employment is made. Volunteers will be subject to a DBS check only where they are in a position of having regular contact with children. Volunteers, Board members and Staff who have not completed a check will be restricted in their activities, and will not have regular or unsupervised contact with children.

DBS records will need to be updated preferably on an annual online basis, but on a minimum of a 3 yearly basis.

All staff, volunteers and board members will be made aware of this Child Protection Policy and any revisions made and will receive training where appropriate.

## Classification of a child

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

## What is abuse?

The 1989 Children's Act recognises four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse - is the actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering to a child).
- Sexual Abuse – is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.
- Emotional Abuse – is the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection.
- Neglect – is the persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including cold and starvation, or failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Other forms of abuse which need to be taken seriously include:

- Historical Abuse - is when a child will disclose abuse (either sexual, physical emotional or neglect) which occurred in the past. This information will be treated in exactly the same way as any other form of abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.
- Domestic Abuse - is abuse caused within the home which may be physical, emotional or due to neglect. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the symptoms below. Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing Children and Young Peoples Service.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – is illegal in the UK and it is an offence to take UK nationals abroad to aid, abet or carry out FGM. All agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM. If you have any concerns with regards to a girl in our care being at risk of FGM then this is a child protection issue and must be documented and reported to Social Services or to the Police. Some warning signs include parents requesting extended leave, if a girl comes from a country that has high prevalence to FGM, mothers and other siblings have already undergone FGM, a girl may indicate that they are going for away for a special event.
- Bullying – is abuse that is deliberately hurtful and is repeated over a period of time. Bullying includes verbal threatening, insulting and personal remarks. It also includes physical abuse e.g. hitting, kicking, pinching, punching etc. Bullying can also be done indirectly e.g. excluding individuals, talking inappropriately about others etc.
- Radicalisation – is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism (Prevent Strategy, Home Office, 2011). In the context of this policy it includes children and young people who may be vulnerable to being radicalised through exposure to extremist views. See appendix 3.
- Human trafficking – involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. If an identified victim of human trafficking is a child the response will be coordinated under the safeguarding process.

Any Board Member, staff member or volunteer has the responsibility to be vigilant to signs that all is not well with a child or young person. Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse; there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what one knows about the child and their circumstances. If any person has concerns it is not their responsibility to decide if it abuse. It is their responsibility to act on any concerns following the right procedures.

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or changes in behaviour that makes one feel concerned. All persons responsible for children at Growing Sudley CIC should be alert to the following types of behaviour:

- Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or excessively clingy
- Seeming to be keeping a secret
- Personality changes – becoming insecure
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places
- Seeking of attention in negative forms
- Acting out in an inappropriate way, perhaps with toys, objects or other children or adults
- Comments made by the child which cause concern e.g. inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or home life
- Unexplained bruising, injuries or burns
- Sexually explicit language or actions

Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and their circumstances.

Child protection is the responsibility of all staff at Growing Sudley CIC. All staff are responsible for ensuring the following procedures and processes are put into place, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

## **Procedure if there are signs of concern or suspected abuse**

- Stay calm.
- If a child is making a disclosure listen to what the child is actually saying and reassure them that they have done the right thing by disclosing.
- Whatever the situation do not ask closed or leading questions. Ensure that any questions that are asked are for clarification purposes only. An example of an open question is 'Why are you upset?' An example of a leading question is 'Are you afraid to go home because your mum will hit you?'
- Do not promise the child that any information/concerns can be kept a secret as subsequent disclosures could then lead to the child feeling betrayed. Explain to the child, no matter what age, that you are obliged to inform someone.
- Reassure the child that the people that are being informed will be sensitive to their needs and will protect and support them.

The person who raises concerns/suspects the abuse will discuss the concern confidentially with the designated person named on page 6 of this document.

If appropriate the designated person should then raise the concern with the parent either by phone or in person. If the designated person dealing with the issue considers the parent's explanation to be adequate, the matter needs to be logged but need go no further. Both parent/carer and staff member should fill in an incident form acknowledging that the information

sharing process has taken place, this will be kept in the child's file and reported to the appropriate bodies if need be. All information protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 will be treated in line with Growing Sudley CIC's Data Protection Policy, a copy of which is available on request.

If the designated person feels that any child is at risk of any immediate danger they have the right to contact the appropriate services without consent from the parent/carer. Before any contact is made with any external agency the child must be informed that this action is being taken in the best way that is relevant to the child and their development stage. Parents/carers will be informed of the concern and the actions taken as soon as possible.

It is of key importance that the person who has raised the concerns logs all the facts using any words used by the child as soon as possible. Records should include:

- The child's known details including name, date of birth, address and contact numbers.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, specific factors and any other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. If necessary a diagram will be drawn to show the position of any bruises or marks the child or young person may have, with an indication of the size, colour and shape.
- Any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents, if any.
- The child's account if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or others injuries occurred.
- Factual accounts from others, including colleagues and parents.

All records will be kept in a secure place and will be kept confidential. Parents/carers have the right to see any records kept on their child. Information will be shared on a need to know basis in order to protect the child from harm but otherwise be kept confidential.

If any person is in doubt at any time with regards to what steps to follow they should seek appropriate advice and guidance from the local authority children's social care team. (See Referring Concerns About A Child section).

Growing Sudley CIC are responsible for nominating an individual who will take responsibility for matters of child protection in relation to the work of Growing Sudley CIC. This individual is:

**Dr Katy Loble**  
**Board Member, Growing Sudley CIC**

Contact details for the designated person can be found on page 6 of this document.

All matters relating to the protection of children from abuse must be reported to the person named above.

## Allegations against a person working in the organisation

Any concerns must be reported to the designated person:

Dr Katy Lobley  
Child Protection, Growing Sudley CIC  
43 Penny Lane, Liverpool L18 1DE  
[growingsudley@gmail.com](mailto:growingsudley@gmail.com)  
07738 008997

If the concerns regard the designated person they should be reported to another Board Member. This person is:

Lucy Dossor  
Director, Growing Sudley CIC  
43 Penny Lane, Liverpool L18 1DE  
[lucydossor@hotmail.com](mailto:lucydossor@hotmail.com)  
07771 997724

Concerns could include:

- behaviour that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- criminal activity against or related to a child.
- inappropriate behaviour towards a child which may indicate that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

A verbal account must be reported immediately, and a written account of the allegation or suspicion must be submitted to the relevant person within one day of it being reported.

The Designated person (or Board Member) should contact the Local Authority to ask for advice and how to proceed and to give details of the concern within one day of it being received.

The Designated person (or Board Member) will talk to the individual against whom allegations have been made to state the situation. The individual will either be under strict supervision for the rest of the day or suspended, depending on the severity of the allegation whilst the allegations or suspicions are investigated further.

The Designated person will contact and inform the Chair of the Board Members informing them of the allegation.

**The issues surrounding the allegation must not be discussed with any colleague. If this is found to be the case the disciplinary procedure will be followed.**

The staff member will only be able to come back to work once the allegations have been investigated and the Designated person/Board Members deems it appropriate to do so. If this is not the case the staff member's contract will be immediately terminated.

**Serious incidents must be referred to the relevant authority. If in doubt, take advice from the authorities (see Referring Concerns).**

## Recognising inappropriate behaviour in staff, volunteers and other adults

As an organisation that sometimes works with children, it may be necessary for staff members to have physical contact from time to time for reasons of safety (e.g. holding hands when crossing the road), assistance (e.g. helping someone who is stuck down from a log) or emotional support (e.g. comforting an upset child). Staff are encouraged to make such contact and should not fear allegations of inappropriate contact being made where the circumstances demand it. Note that in some circumstances it could be considered neglectful not to provide physical contact as a comfort to a child.

To minimise the risk of allegations being made against staff, they are discouraged from spending long periods alone with children, frequently repeated contact (particularly with the same child) and from gestures of intimacy (e.g. kissing the child), and from comforting when it is not required.

Further signs of inappropriate behaviours may include:

- Paying an excessive amount of attention to a child or groups of children, providing presents, money or having favourites.
- Seeking out vulnerable children, e.g. disabled children.
- Trying to spend time alone with a particular child or group of children on a regular basis.
- Making inappropriate sexual comments.
- Sharing inappropriate images.
- Mistreating a child.
- Being vague about where they have worked or when they have been employed.
- Encouraging secretiveness.

There may be other signs of concern. If you are concerned about another staff member or volunteer's behaviour you must discuss this with the designated person.

Dealing with Child Protection issues is upsetting for all those involved. It is important that any persons dealing with any issues relating to child abuse are able to express their feelings through talking with either the designated person or a Board Member. They will endeavour to provide the right support.

## Referring Concerns About A Child

Any concerns about the protection and safeguarding of a child should be reported to the Local Authority Social Care Team:

Careline 0151 233 3700

[www.liverpool.gov.uk/social-care/childrens-social-care/keeping-children-safe/children-at-risk](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/social-care/childrens-social-care/keeping-children-safe/children-at-risk)

The Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board offers advice and guidance, and can also be used to report concerns.

[www.liverpoolscb.org](http://www.liverpoolscb.org)

NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000

For further information about Inter-Agency working please see the Working Together to Safeguard Children document at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children)

## Emergency Action

In some cases staff may need to protect a child immediately. In these situations the Police will be contacted. The Police are the only agency with statutory powers for the immediate protection of children.

**It is not the responsibility of any employee, board member, volunteer or practitioner linked to Growing Sudley CIC to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however it is our responsibility to report well-founded suspicions and pass on information to the appropriate authority immediately.**

## Appendix 1 – Seven Golden rules of information sharing

*'Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers'* (2008) is aimed at supporting good practice in information sharing by offering clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally in order to achieve improved outcomes. It can be especially useful in supporting early intervention and preventative work where decisions about information sharing may be less clear than in safeguarding or child protection situations. Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends.

Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

From the outset be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.

Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgements on the facts of the case.

Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.

Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

Keep a record of your decision and the reason for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.



## Appendix 2 - Considerations when Contacting another Agency/Service

### 1) Effective Communication between Agencies

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Effective communication requires a culture of listening to and engaging in, dialogue within and across agencies. It is essential that all communication is as accurate and complete as possible and clearly recorded.

Accuracy is key, for without it effective decisions cannot be made and equally, inaccurate accounts can lead to children remaining unsafe, or to the possibility of wrongful actions being taken that affect children and adults

Before contacting another agency, think about why you are doing it, is it to:

#### **Share Information**

To share information is the term used to describe the situation where practitioners use their professional judgement and experience on a case by case basis to decide whether and what personal information to share with other practitioners in order to meet the needs of a child or young person (CWDC 2009)

#### **Signpost to Another Service**

The definition to signpost is to indicate direction towards. It is an informal process whereby a professional or a family is shown in the direction of a service. If someone is signposted to a service it is because accessing the service may enhance the family's quality of life, but there would be no increased risk to the child or young person should the service not be accessed.

No agency is responsible for the monitoring or recording of signposting.

#### **Get Advice and Guidance**

Seeking advice and guidance at any time, making a general query or perhaps consulting with a specialist colleague within your own organisation (or from another agency) may enhance the work that you are doing with a child, young person or family at any stage. It could be that you want further information about services available or that you want some specialist advice or perhaps need to consult about a particular issue or query for instance to ask if making a referral is appropriate.

The name of the child and family should be anonymised at this stage unless agreement to share the information has already been obtained. It is vital that you record that you have sought information and advice in your own records. The agency you are contacting may not record this information, particularly if the case is not open or active with them. It should be agreed between agencies in this situation as to who records what information.

## **Facilitate Access to a Service**

If you think that a family may benefit from a service then directing, signposting or facilitating is appropriate. For example, a family approaches your service and asks for some advice about leisure activities in the local area. You give them the information and directions to the nearest open access leisure centre.

## **Refer a Child or Family**

If you think that by not accessing a particular service, a child's situation could deteriorate then a referral is appropriate. However, a referral is only the start of the process. You as the referrer have a responsibility to monitor that the service has been taken up and the child's situation has improved. Sometimes you may need to draw on other support services, for example when an intervention has not achieved the desired outcomes and the child/young person requires more specialist or sustained support.

A specific gap in services to meet a need or any level of concern warrants follow up and monitoring to ensure there is no risk to children.

At the end of the conversation both parties must be clear about the outcome and the next course of action.

### 2) Professional Differences

Where there are any professional differences about a particular decision, course of action or lack of action you should consult with a Senior Manager or Board Members within your own organisation about next steps.

### 3) Recording

Well-kept records about work with a child and his or her family provide an essential underpinning to good professional practice. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires information to be brought together from a number of sources and careful professional judgements to be made on the basis of this information. These records should be clear, accessible and comprehensive, with judgements made and decisions and interventions carefully recorded. Where decisions have been taken jointly across agencies, or endorsed by a manager, this should be made clear. (*Working Together 2010*)

You should record your decision and the reasons for it, whether or not you decide to share information. If the decision is to share, you should record what information was shared and with whom.

You should work within your agency's arrangements for recording information and within any local information sharing procedures in place. These arrangements and procedures must be in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998 (*Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners and Managers 2008*)