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## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As staff and volunteers throughout People First Independent Advocacy may come in to contact with children and young people who are deemed to be vulnerable, it is important all volunteers and paid workers are clear about how they and the organisation should respond if somebody has concerns about the safety and well-being of a child.

### **Definition of a Child:**

*The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as everyone under 18 unless, "under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier"(Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989). However there are a number of different laws across the UK that specify age limits in different circumstances. These include child protection; age of consent; and age of criminal responsibility.*

*The age of consent (the legal age to have sex) in the UK is 16 years old. The age of criminal responsibility in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is 10 years old, in Scotland it is 8 years old.*

*Legislation in England and Wales asks that due consideration is given to the wishes and feelings of a child as far as reasonable before making decisions on what services to provide or action to take.*

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with:

- Advocates Code of Practice
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Procedure

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of directors, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of People First Independent Advocacy.

### **1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is:**

- to protect children and young people who receive People First

Independent Advocacy's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;

- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;
- to ensure those children who come to the attention of People First Independent Advocacy receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse;
- to provide clear direction to staff and volunteers of People First Independent Advocacy if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection.

People First Independent Advocacy believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

## **1.2 Principles**

### **We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989;
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### **We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;

- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

### **1.3 People First Independent Advocacy staff and volunteers**

To ensure the safety of service users and adults and children at risk, People First Independent Advocacy will ensure robust recruitment procedures for all prospective paid staff and volunteers, which include:-

- Completion of application form
- A formal interview
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- At least two references
- Warner Compliant reference check
- Comprehensive induction training
- Probationary period and review of performance
- Regular supervision

It is the responsibility of People First Independent Advocacy to ensure that its staff and volunteers are trained at induction and updated regularly on this policy and procedure and those related to it. It is also the individual responsibility of each staff member to be aware of the procedure and for it to be followed in the event of actual or suspected abuse.

All employees and volunteers are required to read the People First Independent Advocacy Safeguarding Policy as part of their first week's induction and to participate in Safeguarding Adults and Children training, refresher courses and updates during team meetings at least annually.

All Operational People First Independent Advocacy staff will receive

Safeguarding Adults and Children training, which will be repeated at least once every two years.

Senior and Team managers will receive enhanced Safeguarding training to enable them to provide leadership and advice to staff. Team managers will be responsible for ensuring compliance with Local Authority Safeguarding policies and procedures within their geographical area.

The strategic lead, within People First Independent Advocacy is Sue Stevenson, Chief Operating Officer, based in PFIA's Carlisle Office.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) officer is Lindsay Graham, Advocacy Operations Manager. The DSL officer is responsible for:

- Managing referrals
- Training
- Raising Awareness.

See Appendix 4 for further information on the DSL Role.

#### **1.4 Communicating Safeguarding policies**

A key element in an effective safeguarding policy is the communication of attitudes, priorities, rules and procedures to ensure there is a common understanding of the issues, and that information is fed back where there is cause for concern or suggestions on how to improve policies.

As a minimum, the People First Independent Advocacy Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure will be reviewed annually.

People First Independent Advocacy's Staff Wellbeing Group acts as a staff forum for consulting on changes to policies and procedures, the Wellbeing Group representatives communicate changes to individual staff members, collate their views and feed these back to the Policy Group for consideration.

Members are elected for individual project areas to ensure all staff are represented.

Finalised and updated policies are shared through the People First emailing system, and made accessible for all through People First Independent Advocacy's shared z:/ drive.

The People First Independent Advocacy Safeguarding Children policy and procedure is available on our website for clients, their families and carers to access. We notify our clients that they can see this via the website either at initial triage or first appointment. Clients without internet access will be sent a copy of the policy, upon request.

Senior Leadership Team Members have responsibility to ensure staff are fully aware and updated about changes in policies and procedures.

## **1.5 Risk management**

Risk is identified, assessed and managed through People First Independent Advocacy's Risk management process. Identification and management of risk in relation to direct advocacy work, lone working, home visits and admittance to establishments such as residential services, secure units and prisons, is the responsibility of Senior Leadership Team Members in conjunction with staff and volunteers.

An assessment of risk and any subsequent risk management plan will include an assessment of likelihood of an event occurring and any impact of that event on a range of stakeholders including people receiving our services, People First Independent Advocacy staff, members of the public and colleagues in other services.

All risk will be assessed and managed in conjunction with People First Independent Advocacy's Personal Safety and Lone Working Procedure and Guidelines. Professional Boundaries are defined and addressed within the People First Independent Advocacy's Advocates Code of Practice.

## **1.6 Legislative Background**

Relevant legislation shaping the safeguarding of children and young people includes:

- **Data Protection Act 1998**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

The purpose of this Act is to restrict contact between children and vulnerable

adults and those who might do them harm. The barring aspects of the Act came into force in October 2009.

Key principles include: unsuitable persons should be barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults); employers should have a straightforward means of checking that a person is not barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults); suitability checks should not be one-offs, they should be an element of ongoing assessment of suitability to catch those who commit wrongs following a suitability check

- **Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004**

In September 2003 the Government set out in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' its proposals for the reorganisation of children's services – from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups.

In particular, Section 11 of the **Children Act 2004** details the duty of all agencies to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

- **Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000**

This Act covers disclosures and child protection issues. It contains the list of convictions that bar offenders from working with children in 'regulated positions'.

- **The Protection of Children Act 1999**

Under this Act childcare organisations (defined as those that are 'concerned with the provision of accommodation, social services or health care services to children or the supervision of children') must make use of the Disclosure Service in their recruitment and reporting processes and urges other organisations working with children to also do so.

- **Children Act 1989**

This Act provided legislation to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their right to be protected from harm

- **The Equality Act 2010**

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Taken from "Working together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children" (March 2015) HM Government

### 2.1 Safeguarding

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### 2.2 Different types of abuse

**Physical abuse** is a form of abuse which 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 the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** is 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.

**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).

**Neglect** is 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.

### **2.3 The Data Protection Act and Confidentiality**

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that personal information is obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant and not held longer than necessary; and is kept securely. The Act allows for disclosure without the consent of the subject in certain conditions, including for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and where failure to disclose would be likely to prejudice those objectives in a particular case.

As per the Confidentiality Policy, People First Independent Advocacy staff should be honest with the client about the level of confidentiality they can realistically guarantee.

When working with children and young people, People First Independent Advocacy staff cannot promise complete confidentiality, e.g. "If you tell me something about either you or someone else at risk in some way, I'm going to have to talk to someone who can help". Refer to People First Independent

Advocacy's Confidentiality Policy.

### **3 CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS**

#### **3.1 Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention**

There may be times when you are concerned that there is either a risk of harm, or an actual harm being perpetrated on a child or young person, who the organisation is working with, or who is known to someone we are working with.

- a child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- a child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.
- you may be concerned of a potential abuse based on physical, emotional, behavioural indicators.

#### **3.2 Talking to a child/young person who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused**

If a child or young person has spoken to you about abuse, it may have been very difficult for them to have taken the risk of confiding in you. They may fear that you won't believe them, or they may have been threatened with something bad happening to themselves or someone they love if they tell someone.

If the abuser is a trusted adult, many people feel frightened of what may happen to the abuser, and yet they also want the abuse to stop. They are likely

to have complicated and confusing feelings which will heighten their anxiety.

- Reassure the child/young person that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- **Do not** try to investigate or quiz the child. Let the child tell his or her whole story, making sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying by using open questions. Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegation your self.
- Even if you are shocked by what he/she is telling you, try not to show it
- Do not trivialise or minimise any aspect of abusive behaviour or make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Ask the child what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it. Remind the child/young person that their confidentiality cannot be kept in this instance because either they or someone else is at risk of harm.
- Give the child/young person the ChildLine phone number: **0800 1111**.

### **3.3 Helping a child/young person in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention**

- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and **call the police**.
- Non-Emergency Contact 101
- Emergency Contact 999/112
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from a first aider where possible.

You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out in section 4 below.

## 4 RAISING A CONCERN

All safeguarding issues should be dealt with on the same day as the concern has been brought to your attention, unless agreed otherwise by a supervisor or manager.

### 4.1 Escalation procedure

Member of staff has concerns about child's safety or welfare or is unsure whether there is a safeguarding issue



Member of staff makes notes of their concerns using the reporting form, and discusses them with supervisor/manager on the same working day as the concerns is raised



If the child's family does not already know about the concern, the member of staff or manager discusses it with them within the next **unless:**

1. a family member might be responsible for abusing the child
2. someone may be put in danger by the family being informed
3. informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the family should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department.



If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, the supervisor/manager can discuss with children's social care department LSCB or with NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000) without disclosing the identity of the child/family.



**No longer concerned**

No further child protection action needed. Staff member and supervisor/manager decide whether to discuss the initial concern with other services (eg school) to ensure that the child's needs are being met elsewhere.

**Concerned** Supervisor/Manager refers to local authority children's social care department and confirms in writing within 48 hours.

For Cumbria Local Safeguarding Procedures follow the link below:

<http://www.cumbrialscb.com/procedures.asp>

**Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures manual is divided into distinct areas:**

- Core Procedures (what to do)
- Safeguarding guides (safeguarding children practice guidance)
- Learning and Improvement (Learning and Improvement Strategy, SCRs, CDOP etc)
- Roles and Responsibilities of LSCB (inc. Conflict Resolution Policy and Guidance for Safe Recruitment)
- Appendices and protocols (local and national documents plus user guidance)
- Documents Library (Risk tools, forms, local protocols, practice guidance and models of practice)

**The Procedures Manual can be accessed at:**

<http://cumbrialscb.proceduresonline.com/>

## **4.2 Within normal working hours 9am-5pm**

Managers should ensure that staff are aware of how to contact them, or a colleague at a management level, in an emergency, during the working day, including ways of interrupting meetings.

If an immediate Line Manager is unavailable, the concern should be escalated by the member of staff in possession of the information up through the organisation to a Senior Manager.

Any decision to take further action will be made by the relevant Manager. This may be following discussion with the CEO or other Senior Managers.

## **4.3 Outside normal working hours**

Staff should note which Manager is on duty for Out of Hours safeguarding alerts at the start of each week.

Emergency contact numbers for Managers can be found in the Safeguarding policy appendix.

#### **4.4 Disagreements/Disputes**

If PFIA's staff/managers feel that advice or action after discussion with the local authority safeguarding team is inappropriate or that there are delays in the case management, then a discussion with the appropriate authority team manager will take place. Most disagreements can be resolved through discussion and negotiation. The professionals involved should attempt to resolve differences through discussion, but if they are unable to do so, their disagreement must be reported by them to their line managers or equivalent. The relevant line managers will be able to resolve most day to day issues. The purpose of this contact is to review the available information and to resolve the concern.

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter at front line management level, the matter should be referred without delay to the relevant service leads.

Cumbria County Council Children's services do have a formal dispute procedure to follow should a disagreement still remain. The matter will be referred to an appropriate Executive Manager/Lead, e.g. for Cumbria County Council Children's Services this will be the Assistant Director who will consider the matter with their equivalent level of management within the concerned agency who is in dispute.

The purpose of escalating the dispute to this level is to reach a position where differing professional opinions have been taken into account and efforts made to explore whether the dispute has arisen through lack of clarity or understanding in the professional dialogue. Ultimately a decision will need to be reached where agencies agree a way forward where the interests of the child take precedence over a professional stalemate.

If agreement cannot be reached then the formal process should be activated. An assessment about the degree of urgency will be determined by the Executive Manager/Lead and an appropriate timescale lasting no longer than 7 working days to be applied. If the issue relates to child protection then this should be determined within 24 hours.

The Executive Lead will e-mail the LSCB Chair, copy the LSCB Business Manager setting out the issue and what has been done to try and resolve it at an informal stage.

The LSCB Chair will identify an LSCB member who is not from either of the two agencies whose role will be to review the information and speak to the two Executive leads. They will then make a decision drawn from this information and any other supporting information they request. This information is the final stage.

All disputes should be resolved in a timely way so that the welfare of the child remains paramount. In some situations, it may be required to instigate all of the stages within a short period of time or to escalate the process so that the safety of the child is not compromised.

Records of all such discussions and responses must be logged on PFIA's database.

## **5 Information Sharing Externally**

- 5.1 When taking decisions about what information to share, you should consider how much information you need to release. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires you to consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Any information shared must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.
- 5.2 Only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make sound decisions.
- 5.3 Information should be adequate for its purpose. Information should be of the right quality to ensure that it can be understood and relied upon.
- 5.4 Information should be accurate and up to date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. If the information is historical then this should be explained.
- 5.5 Information should be shared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of harm. Timeliness is key in emergency situations and it may not be appropriate to seek consent for information sharing if it could cause delays and therefore harm to a child.

Practitioners should ensure that sufficient information is shared, as well as consider the urgency with which to share it.

- 5.6 Wherever possible, information should be shared in an appropriate, secure way. Practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information.
- 5.7 Information sharing decisions should be recorded whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom, in line with organisational procedures. If the decision is not to share, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the requester. In line with each organisation's own retention policy, the information should not be kept any longer than is necessary. In some circumstances this may be indefinitely, but if this is the case there should be a review process.

## **6 RECORDING INFORMATION**

- Use the form at the end of this policy to record the information and actions taken.
- Do not take photos.
- Record the information being given, verbatim where possible.
- Record the information at the time of the conversation, or as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the information objectively. However, do identify where you have been subjective, or where you have interpreted information, particularly if the person has difficulty communicating clearly.
- Upload the completed form to the People First Advocacy Database – password protected.

## **7 Notifiable Incidents**

A notifiable incident is an incident which meets any of the following criteria:

- A person who uses services or a child has died (including cases of suspected suicide), and or abuse is known or

suspected

- A person who uses services or a child has been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected
- A looked after child has died (including cases where abuse or neglect is not known or suspected)
- A child in a regulated setting or service has died (including cases where abuse or neglect is not known or suspected)
- Local Authority Supplier staff are reporting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for suspected abuse
- Data breaches related to a person who uses services

All notifiable incidents must be reported to the Local Authority. Therefore if you are made aware of a notifiable incident you must raise this with your supervisor/manager who will support you to notify the Local Authority at your earliest opportunity.

## **8 WHISTLEBLOWING and COMPLAINTS**

8.1 A staff member concerned about safeguarding issues should always report to their line manager. If they do not feel that the manager is following correct procedures, or if they feel there are safeguarding concerns within the organisation, then they must refer to People First Independent Advocacy's Whistleblowing Policy.

8.2 People First Independent Advocacy staff have a responsibility to raise issues or concerns in relation to People First Independent Advocacy services and services provided by other organisations. All potential alerts should be escalated in line with this policy.

8.3 Complaints relating to safeguarding will be dealt with in accordance with People First Independent Advocacy complaints procedure. (available upon request). Any complaints relating to the safeguarding will be directed to the Chief Operating Officer, Sue Stevenson.

## **9 MANAGING YOUR OWN FEELINGS**

9.1 Hearing accounts of abuse can be distressing and difficult to deal with. Even when you have listened supportively and empathically

to the person concerned, and have followed all the guidelines in the Safeguarding Policy, you may still be left feeling helpless, anxious or upset.

9.2 It is important that you know you can get support for yourself by talking to your manager who will be able to support you in accessing organisations or individuals who could provide support to you if you think that would be helpful.

## **10 KEY POINTS**

- You must not keep information to yourself.
- You should discuss any concerns with your line manager or another senior manager within People First Independent Advocacy, as described in the escalation procedure.
- It is not the job of individual staff within People First Independent Advocacy to assess if harm is actually taking place.
- Other agencies have a statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of adult and child abuse.
- Our role may be to provide information, where appropriate, to any criminal or Safeguarding investigation.
- You cannot be wrong by raising a concern.

## **11 RELATED POLICIES**

- Safeguarding Adults
- Whistleblowing
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Data protection
- Recruitment
- DBS
- Advocates Code of Practice
- Personal Safety and Lone Working Procedure and Guidelines

## APPENDIX 1

### Form for Reporting a concern about a child

This form is also available separately in the z:/drive.

#### Reporting a concern about a child

Name of Child		
People First Independent Advocacy reference	Age	Date of Birth
Gender	Language	Additional needs
Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s)		
Child's home address and that of Parent(s)/Carer(s) if different from the child's		

Your Name	Your role	Date and time of incident (if applicable)
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<p>Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?</p> <p>Reporting own concerns</p> <p>Responding to concerns raised by someone else</p> <p>If you are responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position within the organisation</p> <p>Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates, description of any injuries, whether information is first hand or the accounts of others, including any other relevant details:</p> <p>The child's account/perspective:</p>
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<p>Please provide details of anyone alleged to have caused the incident or to be the source of any concerns:</p>
<p>Provide details of anyone who has witnessed the incident or who shares the concerns:</p>
<p>Please note: concerns should be discussed with the family <b>unless</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the view is that a family member might be responsible for abusing the child</li> <li>• someone may be put in danger by the parents being informed</li> <li>• informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.</li> </ul> <p>If any of these circumstances apply, consult with the local authority children's social care department to decide whether or not discussions with the family should take place.</p> <p>Have you spoken to the child's parents/carers? Yes/No</p> <p>If so, please provide details of what was said. If not, please state the reason for this.</p>
<p>Are you aware of any previous incidents or concerns relating to this child and of any current risk management plan/support plan?</p> <p>Yes                      No              If so, please provide details:</p>
<p>Summary of discussion with supervisor/manager:</p>
<p>Has the situation been discussed with the named person for child protection?</p> <p>Yes                      No              If so, please summarise the discussion:</p>
<p>After discussion with the supervisor/line manager and named person, do you still have child protection concerns?</p> <p>Yes                      No</p>



## **Appendix 2**

### **People First Independent Advocacy Managers Contact Information**

Unless otherwise stated, all can be contacted via the main contact number during office hours

01900 607 208

## Appendix 3

### Child Safeguarding Contact Details

Local Authority	Office hours	Out of hours
Cumbria County Council	01228 226920	0333 240 1727
Darlington Borough Council	01325 406222	01642 524552/01642 602346
Durham County Council	03000 267 979	03000 267 979
Hartlepool Borough Council	01429 284 284	0870 240 2994
Liverpool City Council	0151 233 3700	0151 709 6010/999
Middlesbrough Council	01642 726004	08702 402 994
Newcastle City Council	0191 277 2500	0191 278 7878
North Tyneside Council	0345 2000 109	0191 200 6800
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	01642 771500	08702 402994
South Tyneside Council	0191 424 5010	0194 456 2093
Sunderland City Council	0191 520 5560	0191 520 5552
The Borough of Gateshead Council	0191 433 2653	0191 477 0844

## Appendix 4

### Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer Role Description.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is an appropriate senior member of staff who has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.

All child protection concerns WILL be reported to the appropriate authority and the DSL is responsible for:

#### **1. Managing referrals**

- Refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and:
  - The designated officer(s) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member)
  - Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child); and/or
  - Police (cases where a crime may have been committed)
- Liaise with the Strategic Lead to inform him or her of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies

#### **2. Training**

The DSL, and cover officers, will receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order to:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's or college's child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers

- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses. Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them

### **3. Raising Awareness**

- The designated safeguarding lead will ensure People First policies are known and used appropriately:
- Ensure the People First Safeguarding Children policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
- Ensure the Safeguarding Children policy is available publicly
- Link with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding

### **4. Other Responsibilities**

#### Referrals to the Multi Agency Referral Unit

- Contacting, by telephone, the relevant Local Authority as a matter of urgency, in order to discuss the child protection concerns of possible abuse or neglect that the designated person has in connection with the child, being prepared to provide the child's details and follow advice and guidance provided by the person handling the call and as in the guidance referred to above;
- Providing a written record of any formal referral by fax/post/e- mail to the relevant Local Authority, on the same day.
- Completing, with the Strategic Lead and People First Policy Group, an annual safeguarding audit details any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL and by all staff and volunteers; number and type of incidents/cases, and the number of referrals made. If this self-assessment highlights any areas for improvement, this will be detailed in an action plan which will be signed off and monitored by the Strategic Lead to ensure these improvements are implemented.
- providing advice and guidance to colleagues, attending inter-agency meetings (or supporting other staff to do so) and contributing to assessments.

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**Approved by:** The People First Independent Advocacy Board

**Review:** Annually (or sooner when there is a change in Legislation or Guidance)

**Next Review Due:** June 2018