



Child Protection Policy

Throughout this policy we may make reference to Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton, the Organisation or ACL&S. This means however that the policy is applicable to the Charity, Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton, the trading company, Age Concern Liverpool (Services) Ltd and any subsequent company within the group,

Statement of Purpose

Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton are determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, those children and young people who we encounter in the course of our work or participate in any of our activities/services.

This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved within Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton. It very clearly highlights the importance placed by Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton in the protection of children and young people.

Every child and young person whom we encounter or participates in the activities of Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton should be able to enjoy a safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in this organisation.

We recognise however, that child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken.

Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

- All staff and volunteers working in this organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to the person responsible for Adult and Child Protection procedures – Chief Operations Officer on 0151 330 5678

Key Principles

Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton will take responsibility for:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- Recruiting, training and supervising all volunteers and staff members to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse
- Recruiting all employees and volunteers to adopt and abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and the Child Protection Policies and Procedures outlined within this document
- Responding to any allegations appropriately
- Regularly reviewing the policy.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989)

Promoting Good Practice

- Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.
- Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. There are some people in this organisation who will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to the Chief Operations Officer and the guidelines in this policy should be followed.

Good Practice means:

- Always working in an open environment, where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treating all young people equally with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each, young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with service users (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making
- Keeping up to date with training, qualifications and insurance

- Involving children/young people/parents/carers wherever possible.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the development needs and capacity of young people
- Securing parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Named person for child protection

The details of the named contact for Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton is Elaine Middleton, 0151 330 5678

If you are concerned about a child

What should you do if a young person reports abuse to you:

If someone discloses that they are being abused, whether in the home or elsewhere, then upon receiving the information you should:

- React calmly
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible the light of subsequent developments
- Inform the child/young person what you will do next
- Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information

The report will include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- 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 and special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred

- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If there are concerns about sharing the above information with a colleague you can contact Careline Children's Service in **Liverpool** on **0151 233 3700 (open 24 hrs)** or **Sefton's** Customer Access Team on **0845 140 0845** or the appropriate local authority social services child protection department. **Sefton Emergency Contact Team** (night-time and weekends) can be contacted on **0151 920 8234**

What Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton will do next:

It is not our responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however we will pass on the information to the appropriate authority.

Write down all of the information so that if we are asked at a later time we can produce a written report.

Severe and obvious cases of abuse will be reported immediately.

Children's Social Care, have a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made, they have a legal responsibility to investigate and all agencies have a duty to co-operate with those investigations. This may involve talking to the child and their family, and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. Clearly then concerns about children must not be taken lightly.

The protection of children is paramount and if we have any concerns about a child being abused or neglected we will contact the relevant Local Authority social services child protection department.

Types of Abuse and Neglect

Signs/indicators of abuse and neglect are helpful if they are used with some caution. They are not necessarily evidence of abuse or neglect. However, if you are concerned about a child or young person they can help you think about why you have that concern.

Signs that may suggest physical abuse:

- Any bruising to a baby – pre-walking stage
- Multiple bruising to different parts of the body
- Bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries

- Fingertip bruising to the chest, back arms or legs
- Burns of any shape or size
- An injury for which there is no adequate explanation

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

- Something a child has told you
- Something a child has told someone else
- A child who shows worrying sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- A child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- A child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known or suspected sexual offender.

Signs which may suggest emotional harm

- The following signs may be present in children whose parents are over critical and emotionally distant, or who are unable to meet their child's emotional needs.
- Children whose behaviour is excessive, for example, excessive bedwetting, overreacting, rocking, head banging
- Children who self harm, for example, they may cut or scratch themselves or overdose
- Children who attempt suicide
- Children who persistently run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal
- Children who usually seek out or avoid affection

Signs which may suggest neglect

- Squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions
- Parents who fail to attend to their children's health or development needs
- Children who appear persistently undersized or underweight
- Children who continually appears tired or lacking in energy
- Children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision

Please note that these lists are possible indicators of abuse, and any signs of abuse have to be considered in context.

Positive ways of protecting children

What do children need?

- To feel safe and secure
- Health and happiness
- Appropriate affection
- Lots of smiles
- Praise and encouragement
- To be able to talk to someone

- To be listened to
- New experiences
- Respect for their feelings
- Rewards and treats.

What to do if you are worried

If you are concerned that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse, you can contact;

Careline Children's Service in **Liverpool** on **0151 233 3700 (open 24 hrs)**

Customer Access Team in **Sefton** on **0845 140 0845**. Emergency contact for weekends or evenings **0151 920 8234**

You can also contact the police or the appropriate local authority social services child protection department.

If you are unsure that a child may be suffering but are worried, please also contact the above numbers for advice.

References for work in Liverpool & Sefton

Liverpool's Safeguarding Children's Board produces Child Protection Procedures which are for the use of all agencies and staff in Liverpool. They can be obtained via:

Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board
2nd Floor Millennium House
60 Victoria Street
Liverpool
L1 6HF **Tel:** 0151 233 0493/0510

Sefton's Safeguarding Children's Board produces Child Protection Procedures which are for the use of all agencies and staff in Sefton. They can be obtained via:

Sefton Children Schools & Families Service
9th Floor, Merton House
Stanley Road
Bootle
L20 3JA **Tel:** 0151 934 4706/3366

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