

Safeguarding/Child protection Procedures

Every child has the right to be free from abuse and neglect and be treated with dignity and respect. Consequently, everyone, parents, carers and all staff have a responsibility to protect this right. [NMS 17.1]

Donyland Lodge promote the safety and welfare of all the children placed and have detailed Safeguarding Procedures in place in accordance with the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (previously Essex Child Protection Committee) guidelines. These guidelines are known as SET Procedures – the safeguarding procedures for Southend, Essex and Thurrock. There is also close liaison with the local Social Services who advise on matters including staff training. Any matter that could be deemed to be a safeguarding matter is brought to the immediate attention of the Child protection co-ordinator or in their absence a senior manager, who will implement immediately the Donyland Lodge child protection procedures. Serious matters will be handed to the local Social Services investigation team.

With reference to a section in Donyland Lodge Policy on Privacy and Confidentiality:

The young people we care for are potentially very vulnerable to abuse, due to the fact amongst other things the number of carers they have. It is extremely important, therefore, that the placing authorities provide a full history and any experience of abuse a child has had, as part of their assessment prior to admission. And staff observe and report all concerns relating to the young person's relationships with staff and others. Risks to the young person will be assessed and appropriate action taken, this may include a reassessment of the level of staffing required. (NMS 17.7)

Staff must also take into consideration that some young people may have been involved in prostitution prior to being in our care. "Prostitution is commonly defined as an activity where sexual acts are exchanged for payment. However, payment may not be a monetary transaction but could be a place to stay, something to eat, drugs or other payment in kind. A young person's introduction to prostitution may occur when he is without basic necessities and continuing involvement results when these needs are not being met elsewhere, namely access to drugs. For some young people on the street, prostitution is a survival activity sometimes used in addition to theft and begging.

Staff must report to the Police any evidence of young people becoming involved in prostitution, or unauthorised person's picking young people up, contacting young people in the home, or observed trying to make contact with young people outside the home. (NMS 17.3)

Child protection Procedures to follow in the event of a suspicion or allegation of abuse of a child

In the event of any incident or suspicion of abuse of a child accommodated within Donyland Lodge, the procedures outlined in Essex Safeguarding Children Board

(previously Essex Child Protection Committee) guidelines, known as SET¹ Procedures should be followed. Also the notification procedures outlined in standard 20 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 National Minimum Standards (NMS). All staff must be alert to the possibility of abuse by other young people, visitors and members of staff in addition to those outside of Donyland Lodge.

- The member of staff should inform the Team Leader
- The Team Leader should inform the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. If the Child Protection Co-ordinator is not available a senior manager should be informed if on site, or the on-call manager.
- The Child Protection Co-ordinator should contact the Essex Safeguarding team on 01245 436744 who will take the referral and make an initial assessment which should be carried out within seven working days, (emergency action would be taken though should the young person appear to be in a position of immediate risk).

A Regulation 30 report should be completed and sent to Ofsted.

A record of the incident should be made in the Complaints/Reg 30/ safeguarding file.

Donyland Lodge may be asked to carry out some initial investigations or enquiries while the Safeguarding assessment is taking place.

A strategy meeting may take place at this stage.

- The Safeguarding team will decide if the incident warrants a Sect 47 – a full Child Protection Investigation, which could involve external agencies including the police.
- A strategy meeting will take place.
- It should be ascertained from the relevant child protection team how any investigation will precede and the manager should ensure that all staff co-operate.
- The young person should be fully supported at all times with either the manager advocating for the young person where appropriate or the young person should be assisted in seeking advice and support from an independent visitor or advocate.

If a member of staff suspects managers at Donyland Lodge may involved in any abuse of a child, they should contact the Essex Safeguarding team direct, or Ofsted.

Reporting Process

If you have witnessed, received an allegation or have a suspicion that a young person is or has been abused or involved in prostitution, it must be reported immediately to the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator or the most senior member of staff on duty (unless this involves that person, in which case see above. You must not give any absolute guarantee of confidentiality, e.g. to the young person, colleague or parent, as your duty is to pass this information on to the appropriate persons under this procedure. However you can give assurances that it will be dealt with in a confidential manner. [NMS 17.3]

¹ The term *SET* Procedures comes from *Southend, Essex and Thurrock*

Responding to a young person or other, who is telling you about an incident of abuse.

It is important that your response helps them to feel **listened to, in control**, and with **choices** about as much as possible.

Staff must allow young people to speak freely in their own time with out interruption and the person receiving the concern should feel able to offer reassurance to the young person if they are distressed. It is important that the young person feels able to communicate their concern and feel believed. The person receiving any form or disclosure should limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to establish the basic facts, or seek clarification about concerns raised with them, but they may not ask any leading questions or take actions to investigate or in any way make judgments about what is reported to them. Investigations if necessary, must be under taken by properly trained, independent professionals.

What this will mean in practice is:

- Let the young person tell all their story without interruptions.

- If they seem to need prompting to help them keep going try just reassuring them that it is OK to tell you, that you are listening, acknowledging that they are feeling sad, or upset or...

- Try repeating back what they have said and then let them continue.

- Always use their words, don't introduce new words.

- Do not ask questions that suggest anything e.g. "did X do it"

- Try to ask an open question instead e.g. "do you want to tell me who was there"

- Don't ask any more questions than you have to,

Before you do anything else:

- Thank the young person or other person for telling you (if this is the case)

- Reassure them that they have done the right thing.

- Tell them what you are going to do next in order to keep them safe.

- Find out where they will feel safe to be in the meantime- the young person may feel safer being with you while you go to a senior person.

As soon as possible afterwards record your conversation in detail

- Exactly what the young person said

- Exactly what you said

- The time that you talked to the young person

- The time that you recorded the conversation

- Sign it.

All the facts must be relayed immediately to the designated child protection co-ordinator or a member of the Senior Management Team or if out of work hours the on-call manager the mobile and telephone numbers are in the rota. However, if a member of staff has any concerns about the possible involvement of the management in any incident of abuse, they should refer to the section on *Abuse by Staff*.

If there is any immediate danger the Police will be informed immediately by a member of the Senior Management Team.

The Child protection Co-ordinator, Head of Care, or other senior Manager will inform the Safeguarding Board and jointly make the decision as to how to inform the following of any allegation or suspicion of abuse:

- The young person's Social Worker/Team Leader or, at the weekend, the Emergency Duty team.

- Family members of the young person (if applicable)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection, by telephone, then written up on NCSC Reg 30 report form. (Tel 01206 715630)
Essex Social Care department (child protection);
Police (unless this has been already done) in cases of immediate danger.

Abuse by staff:

We rely on the dedication, professionalism and skill of our staff. However, our work with vulnerable children places staff in positions of power. In order to retain the trust of those we are trying to help it is essential that we take all reasonable steps to ensure this power is exercised responsibly.

If any member of staff has any concerns whatsoever that a colleague is acting in a way that mistreats or may cause significant harm to a young person they must report their concern. Where the report involves abuse, an allegation or suspicion of abuse by a member of staff or the social work team, the action taken will be the same as with any other suspected abuse. However, under no circumstances must the alleged perpetrator be made aware of the matter, either directly or indirectly.

Bearing this in mind, the usual reporting process may need to be changed to maintain confidentiality if the Senior Management Team are involved.

At any time the person making the report can refer the matter to Essex Safeguarding Unit on 01245 436744, Ofsted, on 08456 404040, the young person's social worker, or the NSPCC.

A member of staff, who is subject of an allegation or suspicion of abuse, may be suspended whilst the matter is being investigated, without prejudice. Staff in this position will have no contact with young people or staff, especially about the matter being investigated; but in order to keep contact and provide appropriate support, a link person will be appointed to keep them up to date on progress with the investigation (NMS 17.6)

The Donyland Lodge disciplinary procedures will be invoked, to ascertain whether there has been misconduct on the part of the staff member.

Written records will be kept of all involvements, agreements and outcomes, these will be recorded on Reg 30 forms.

Because issues raised under this procedure are often of a sensitive nature, those involved should agree not to discuss the matter outside of the enquiry until an outcome has been reached.

If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. However, a serious view will be taken about any unsubstantiated allegations which prove to have been made maliciously or knowing them to be false and will regard this as a serious disciplinary offence.

We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with who have genuine concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns.

The culture recognises that some concerns raised may prove unfounded. We believe, however that it is better to raise a genuine unfounded concern than to take the risk of an unreported concern causing serious harm to a young person.

Abuse by other young people:

Significant harm can be perpetrated upon one child by another in many different

ways, including persistent or serious bullying, sexual exploitation, aggressive, exploitive or other threatening behaviour which places a child at risk. Incidents of these, or staff concerns about a potential abusive situation must be carefully logged and recorded. This must also be handed over to the Designated child protection co-ordinator. These serious incidents will be reported to the safeguarding Board and Local Authority Social Worker, the safeguarding procedure relating to the abuse of a child or young person looked after, by another young person must be implemented. (See Essex Safeguarding Children Board guidelines, known as SET Procedures).

Visitors:

A young person is entitled to receive visitors, and unless child protection issues are compromised, these visits should be in private. Staff should always consider child protection issues and the young person's right to privacy when deciding the level of supervision for any visit. In some circumstances courts may have imposed restrictions on access to particular young people and visits from certain people may be prohibited or require very close supervision. Staff must be aware of these restrictions, which will be recorded in the young person's placement plan, and must ensure that they are observed.

Visitors to young people must not be allowed unsupervised access upstairs at any time.

While young people have the right to privacy for meetings, in some cases it is more appropriate for the visits to take place in public; and a visitor's insistence on complete privacy might, in some circumstances, be a cause for suspicion. Any concerns regarding issues of a child protection nature should be immediately reported to the child protection co-ordinator or member of senior management and the child protection procedures should be followed.

Recruitment/Staffing:

When employing any new staff, Donyland Lodge ensure that young people are safe from the threat of potential abuse from adults who prey on children. Potential staff are rigorously interviewed in accordance with the Warner Recommendations for employing staff and the appropriate police checks and reference requests are made. Staff go through an induction process and receive all relevant training. They are openly encouraged to question practice issues and the senior management team will take issue with individual staff members whose practice gives cause for concern. This could result in disciplinary action.

Training:

All new staff spend time going through the policies and procedures when they first start as part of the induction process. This includes the policy and procedure for safeguarding. Their knowledge and understanding is tested by their supervisor during the supervision process. All staff receive child protection training upon starting at Donyland and then have regular refresher courses as required in line with NMS. When ever possible Donyland will also access safeguard training from Essex safeguarding board where ever possible.

Physical Contact between staff and young people:

With regards to appropriate physical contact it is explained to staff that many young people in care have been deprived of ordinary positive childhood experiences. Staff by their words and actions express concern for young people for whom they care.

Older children may enjoy the feeling of being physically cared for, but staff will need to avoid situations, which could be misinterpreted.

Due to the possibility of allegations against staff, it would be easy to avoid these activities, but they are appropriate and part of good parenting. Where this is done professionally, professional behaviour demands that these things are offered without emotional attachment. For physical contact to be beneficial to the young person, it does not have to be prolonged or intense.

It is possible to express affection and concern for young people in a variety of ways such as a hand on a shoulder, a hug, an arm around the shoulders and this can be done safely. Full frontal hugs should be avoided and of course both staff and young person should be fully clothed.

Any expression of comfort and concern involving physical contact should take place in a setting where other staff and young people are present. It is important to avoid situations where there are no witnesses, and thus a possibility that the action by staff could be misinterpreted and lead to subsequent allegations.

Staff should be aware that sometimes-physical contact is unacceptable to young people- perhaps when newly arrived at Donyland Lodge before an effective relationship has been established and if they have experienced a relationship where they have been abused.

Lone working:

No member of staff will work in a one to one situation with a young person until they have satisfactorily completed an appropriate induction programme.

Upon completion of the induction programme, the staff members progress and his or her competence to start lone working will be reviewed by the manager in consultation with those responsible for the delivering the induction.

No member of staff will be asked to work in a one to one situation until it has been assessed as appropriate and manageable, as a result of a risk assessment carried out in relation to the young person. The assessment of the risk presented to lone workers must also be subject to regular reviews.

If the member of staff has any concerns about their safety or the safety of the young person due to lone working they must bring these concerns to the manager immediately and an urgent review should be held of the risk assessment.

Staff should view spending time alone with the young people as an opportunity to develop individual positive adult/young person relationships however staff are asked to pay particular attention to the following areas of risk:

Special relationships: it is beneficial for children and young people to be involved in wholesome relationships with responsible adults, but exclusiveness and secrecy should be challenged.

Taking children/young people home: **This is not allowed under any circumstances.**

Physical Care: young people should be encouraged to undertake personal care and hygiene activities for themselves as soon as appropriate for their age. Should any additional help need to be provided, staff must ensure that this support is carried out in a sensitive manner ensuring that privacy boundaries are maintained.

Access to bedrooms: staff should be mindful of young people's need for privacy, and situations, which could give rise to discomfort or misinterpretation. Staff should therefore avoid being alone with a young person in their room with the door shut.

Trips and Outings: these should be dispersed among the staff group. There should be careful monitoring when a pattern emerges, linking one member or staff with a

particular young person. Again there should be concern when a member of staff frequently comes in on off days or regularly volunteers for extra duties.

Administering medication:

All new staff are trained in safe administration of medications and then regular refresher training is ongoing.

Staff must ensure that when administering medication they are not distracted, double check they are about to administer the correct medication to that young person, where ever possible staff should have a colleague witness the administering of the medication. All the correct paper work should be completed and signed. All medications are booked in on receipt and identified as prescribed or homely remedy, with full instructions as to dosage and regularity recorded and passed on to all staff. In addition to this regular medication audits occur and are also recorded.

If staff notice an error in the administering or recording of medications they should report this immediately to the manager, senior staff or oncall manger and an investigation should be carried out. If staff are concerned at any time that a young person has received the wrong medication, been given to much or to little medication they should seek medical advice immediately.

This policy must be read in conjunction with those listed in NMS 17.7 these can be found in Donyland Lodge *Staff Guidance Manual*.