

Child Protection and Safeguarding Children

Policy

SAFEGUARDING

Policy Statement

New Roots is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It acknowledges the responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm and exploitation.

New Roots acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse or sexual exploitation whilst respecting the rights of children, young people and adults.

In implementing this policy, New Roots will:

- Communicate to all workers their legal and moral responsibility to protect and safeguard all children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Communicate to all workers their responsibility to work to the recommendations detailed by Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the need to work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice in the safeguarding and protection of children.
- Ensure that all workers have undertaken basic child protection training provided by the NSCP or other recognised provider, have appropriate experience, and confirm with individual workers their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to New Roots' Safeguarding Team.
- Recruit all staff and volunteers with a commitment to Safer Recruitment principles.
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Provide opportunities for all workers to further develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of young people.
- Provide all staff with access to appropriate supervision and support in respect of their safeguarding and child protection practice.
- New Roots will ensure that all workers are kept up to date with local and national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people and current developments relating to the exploitation of children and young people.

Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure the welfare and protection of any child or young person who accesses the services provided by New Roots or any other child or young person who workers may come into contact with during the course of their work with New Roots.

New Roots works on the premise and belief that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective, they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children, and each individual and organisation should play their part.

New Roots has adopted the Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated 2018) definition and guidance which defines safeguarding as:

- 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

New Roots acknowledges that some children are in need because they are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In this case 'harm' is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 so that it may include 'impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another' for example, where there are concerns of Domestic Violence and Abuse. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm (e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning). More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. Sometimes 'significant harm' refers to harm caused by one child to another (which may be a single event or a range of ill treatment), which is generally referred to as 'peer on peer abuse'.

Nottinghamshire County Council 'Pathway to Provision' highlights the following:

- Identifying thresholds for different levels of intervention
- Identifying the range of services available.
- Understanding the criteria, including the level of need, for when a child should be referred to children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under:
 - Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need)
 - Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (safeguarding)
 - Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care proceedings)
 - Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child).

2. Understanding the Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

New Roots will ensure, through appropriate training, that all staff, paid or voluntary, are familiar with these definitions. New Roots recognises that it is essential that all staff either paid or volunteers are able to understand and identify what abuse is and how to recognise the signs and indicators that a child or young person may be suffering from abuse or sexual exploitation.

The following definitions are those identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children:

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another e.g. where there is domestic violence and abuse.
- Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- Exploiting and corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

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 (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of, pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition, sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under Section 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Neglect

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 misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or a cluster of such issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent 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 caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.

These definitions are used when determining significant harm and children can be affected by combinations of maltreatment and abuse, which can be impacted on by for example domestic violence and abuse in the household or a cluster of problems faced by the adults.

3. Potential Risk of Harm to an Unborn Child

In some circumstances, organisations or individuals are able to anticipate the likelihood of significant harm with regard to an unborn baby (e.g. where there is information known about domestic abuse, substance misuse or a diagnosis of a mental health problem which may impact on parental capacity).

These concerns should be addressed as early as possible before the expected birth of the baby, so that a full assessment can be undertaken and support offered to enable the parent/s or carers (wherever possible) to provide safe care to the baby.

4. Child Sexual Exploitation

New Roots have adopted the definition of CSE as published by the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Department of Education, February 2017:

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

5. Child Criminal Exploitation

New Roots have adopted the definition of CCE as published by the Home Office, as suggested by Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership, February 2022:

“Child Criminal Exploitation...occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Child Criminal exploitation is broader than just county lines and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.”

6. Extremism

Radicalisation

The act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.

Extremism

Defined in the 2011 Prevent strategy as vocal or active opposition to fundamental

British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. The definition of extremism also includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

7. County Lines

This is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile used to take the orders of drugs.

8. Cyber Safety

Staff must understand the risks posed by adults or learners who use technology, including the internet or devices such as phones, tablets or computers, to bully, groom, radicalise or abuse children or learners and the impact of having access to inappropriate material.

9. Bullying or harassment

This may fall within one of the definitions of abuse as detailed in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 or they may be stand-alone and even a one-off incident may be dealt with under our whistle blowing or disciplinary policy and may also be considered in the context of safeguarding.

Bullying or harassment

Considered as any unwanted or inappropriate behaviour towards a child, this term may be defined by the child themselves or any observer. Behaviour can be interpreted as direct or indirect, through words, body language, physical contact or any other form of communication. It also includes treating children unfairly, singling them out or teasing them.

10. Safe staffing

All employees, temporary workers and volunteers are subject to a careful selection and vetting process.

11. Legal framework

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Department for Education)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (amended 2014)
- The Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019
- The PREVENT Duty 2011 (amended 2015)
- Pathway to Provision (Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership)

12. Associated policies and procedures

- Employee Handbook
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Benefit through Abuse Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy, Procedure and Guidance
- Recruitment Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy and Procedure

12. Disseminating / reviewing policies and procedures

New Roots will disseminate this document to all staff, paid or voluntary, and Trustees and ensure its availability to all Service Users. Any changes will be shared as necessary. This policy will be endorsed by the Trustees and the Management Team. There is a system in place for the annual review of this policy. Reviews will incorporate the views and perceptions of young people, as well as the views of those implementing the policy on a day-to-day basis.