

Ashcroft House

All adults have a responsibility to protect children in their care from harm. Any adult who becomes aware of or suspects that a child is being abused, needs to know what steps need to be taken to protect the child. The Cardiff Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) is responsible for investigating allegations and suspicions of child abuse. This duty is carried out in close collaboration and co-operation with workers in other agencies such as health visitors, doctors, teachers, and the police. The purpose of the investigation is to establish whether the child is being or has been abused and to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to prevent further harm.

Three important principles govern the way in which investigations of suspected child abuse are carried out. These are as follows:

1. Protection from harm and safeguarding the welfare of the child is paramount.
2. The aim is always to try to work in partnership with parents.
3. Children are best looked after within their natural families.

If any of these principles cannot be fulfilled with the child remaining in its current care situation, serious consideration must be given to alternative arrangements to ensure that the child can live in safety and receive the care necessary to enable it to thrive free from the threat of harm.

Child abuse can occur in different ways - it includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Sometimes children are subject to more than one form of abuse. They may be abused by a parent or carer, a relative, a brother or sister, a friend of the family, other children, neighbours and significant people in their lives. Sometimes children assaulted by strangers may also be the subject of neglect by their carer, allowing them to be exposed to dangers. Assaults by strangers are usually dealt with by the police and the courts as criminal offences - unless additional action is indicated e.g. by parental neglect being a contributory factor, in which case Cardiff Children's Services must be involved.

There are a number of signs and symptoms that **may indicate** that a child is being abused. These include:

- Bruises, cuts, burns, scalds, swellings or other marks for which there is no satisfactory or plausible explanation.
- Broken bones.
- Failure to thrive.
- Poor or inappropriate clothing.
- Excessive fear of adults.
- Toileting problems.
- Failure by a carer to seek appropriate medical attention.
- Frequent attendance at the doctor's surgery or hospital for attention.
- A lack of normal parental caring responses to a child.
- Evidence of excessive physical punishment.
- Hunger, no weight gain or weight loss.
- Poor or delayed development.
- Over friendliness.
- Excessive aggression, lethargy or withdrawal.

- Children with play or behaviour that indicates sexual knowledge beyond their age.
- A child who says he / she has been ill-treated.

You should be alert to any of these signs and discuss them with the Registered Manager. If you notice several apparently trivial incidents over a period of time or are concerned over one incident then record your observations with the date and as much detail as possible and discuss them with the Registered Manager.

The Registered Manager or senior member of staff on duty is responsible for referring any suspected or alleged child abuse to the Local Children Safeguarding Board (LCSB). Apart from asking simple questions about marks or injuries it is not appropriate for House staff to attempt to question anyone – a child or an adult - repeatedly in detail or to attempt to investigate concerns or allegations. If explanations appear inconsistent with the injuries observed then a referral must be made to Cardiff Children's Services and the placing local authority informed immediately.

Relevant contact details for City & County of Cardiff LCSB as follows:

Intake & Assessment Tel: 029 2053 6400	Cardiff Child Safeguarding & Reviewing Co-ordinator Trowbridge Centre Greenway Road Trowbridge Cardiff CF3 1QS Tel: 029 2077 4600
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Outside of usual office hours, telephone Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and say that you wish to discuss a child at risk. Tel: **029 2078 8570**

You will be asked for basic details of the child - name, address, date of birth, parent's name, names of other children in the family, GP, health visitor. You will be asked to describe the reasons for your concern, any injuries or behaviour noted, and to give any background information known to you.

Your concerns will be discussed with you and you should be told what action the LCSB will take. The LCSB will arrange a Strategy Discussion followed if necessary by a Strategy Meeting to determine whether an investigation should be carried out. Depending on the outcome of the Strategy Meeting, a Case Conference may be arranged for workers from different agencies to meet and share information about the child and family and to decide what action may need to be taken to protect the child. A decision will also be reached on whether the child's name should be put on the Child Protection Register. The purpose of this Register is to alert all agencies working with children to the possibility of risk to the child and ensure they work together to prevent harm to the child.

In exceptional situations, it may be necessary for the Family Court to consider whether it is necessary to make an order to protect a child - whether by continuing to live at home under certain conditions and with supervision by the local authority, or by being removed from the care of the parent(s). The first aim is for Children's Services to work in partnership with

parents to secure the safety and well-being of children with their parents. It is only when this has been shown to be impossible that alternatives are considered.

Remember that children may not be able to protect themselves. All adults have a duty to act by telling the Local Children Safeguarding Board (LCSB) if they consider a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

If the behaviour of any adult including those looking after children causes you concern:

- **do not dismiss your concerns**
- **do not confront the person who you have concerns about**
- **if you are someone working with children, discuss your concerns with your manager. If you feel this is inappropriate or you are not satisfied with the response, contact Intake and Assessment telephone 029 2053 6400, the Cardiff Child Safeguarding & Reviewing Coordinator 029 2077 4600, or the police.**

Seek advice if you are not sure

Staff confirmation of reading and understanding this policy

I confirm that I have read and understand this policy and am aware of the location of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's Guidance for reference purposes in the Ashcroft House office:

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