# **Summary Safeguarding of Children and Young People Policy (Guide for Staff) Updated Policy was approved by Council in May 2024.**

**1. Policy Aims and Definitions**

In all actions concerning the safeguarding of children and young people, the best interests of the child’s welfare is the primary consideration. A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18. Staff have a vital role in creating a positive, approachable and supportive environment for children and young people accessing a wide range of Council services. All staff have responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people.

Child safeguarding starts with **promotion and preventative actions**, which enable a child to grow up safely, securely, and where their emotional, mental and physical development is not adversely affected. Child protection refers to the specific activity of **protecting** children/young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

**2. Types and Signs of Abuse**

Various types of abuse are explained in Section 3 of the policy including physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, exploitation, cyber bullying etc.

### **Common signs of Abuse (Source NSPCC)**

### Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child’s life include:

* unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
* becoming withdrawn
* seeming anxious
* becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
* lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
* poor bond or relationship with a parent
* knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
* running away or going missing
* always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life, which are affecting their behaviour.

**3**. **Designated Child Safeguarding Officers, support and advisory organisations**

Appendix A of the Policy includes a list of the current Council Designated Safeguarding Officers including contact details for further advice/information, in respect of a child safeguarding concern. Contact Details for support and advisory services are included in Appendix A e.g. Childline, Lifeline, NSPCC etc.

**4. Reporting a Child Safeguarding Concern**

If you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm or has been subject to harm, abuse, bullying or neglect. Ask the child/ young person if everything is ok and listen attentively. Waiting for a child to be ready to speak about their experiences could mean that the abuse carries on and they or another child, are put at further risk of significant harm.

You must report your concerns/ provide details of the incident/ concerns using the Child/Young Person Safeguarding Incident/Concerns Form in Appendix F of the Policy

You must provide the completed form – Appendix F and securely send this to any listed Designated Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of the date of incident (if the incident has occurred during the period Monday-Friday or within 72 hours of the date of the incident if this has occurred during the period Saturday- Sunday).

Where there is an immediate risk to a child/young person call 999 immediately and report incident promptly to Designated Safeguarding Officer/ Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer within 1 working day.

**Summary flowchart for raising and reporting child safeguarding concerns.**

Employee/Agency Worker/Elected Member/Member of Public has a concern (\*)

If the child/young person is in immediate danger of harm, you must contact the PSNI or Ambulance on 999, or ring Social Services – relevant Children’s Gateway Team immediately

Report concern promptly to Facility Manager for that location & any Designated Safeguarding Officer on the list (See names & contact details at Appendix A of Policy )

Complete Children/Young Person at Risk Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form and send the completed form to a Designated Safeguarding Officer for onward transmission to Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer (LDO) as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer will co-ordinate a response in conjunction with Safeguarding Champion and seek further advice or make a referral to PSNI/ Children’s Gateway Team Services, consider Employee/Councillor Code of Conduct if applicable and associated procedures.

All action taken is recorded in accordance with I.C.O guidance & all documentation is forwarded securely to LDO Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer. Concerns will be escalated by Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer to NSPCC if no acknowledgement of receipt of a referral is received within 5 working days of a referral having been made\*.

**5. Code of Behaviour for Staff and Others**

Appendix E includes Child Safeguarding Code of Behaviour for Staff and Others and outlines the main principles of appropriate physical contact, conduct with children/ young people. Staff **must not** use a mobile phone or any photographic/ filming equipment not owned by the Council, in a Leisure Centre, any changing area, theatre, auditoria or performance space, or any other area identified and agreed by the relevant Assistant Director or Head of Service, unless the prior permission of the facility management has been obtained**.**

A position of trust includes a coach, teacher, trainer, supervisor or instructor who on a regular basis instructs sport or dance. It is an offence for an adult in a position of trust to engage in a sexual relationship with a young person aged 16 (the age of consent) or above and under the age of 18.

**6. Staff Training**

All staff will be required to complete child safeguarding awareness training – level 1. (using skillgate app – available via staff intranet). Staff will be required to participate in relevant refresher training at least once every three years.

Level 2 Child Safeguarding training will be required to be completed by staff undertaking regulated activity with children (and those responsible for supervising/ managing staff undertaking regulated activity with children/young people) within 3 months of their employment or engagement date. See Appendix J re: the definition of regulated activity and Appendix I for a list of posts which currently entail regulated activity with children. Staff undertaking regulated activity with children/young people or with responsibilities for supervising/ managing staff undertaking regulated activity with children/young people will be required to attend refresher training at least once every three years.

Level 3 Child Safeguarding training will need to be completed by Designated Safeguarding Officers, Managers, Duty Managers, Senior Leisure Officer and Senior Recreation Officers of leisure and sports facilities, Managers of Outdoor Recreation Facilities, Cultural and Arts Facilities and staff supervising apprentices under the age of 18. These staff will be required to attend level 3 refresher training at least once every three years.

**7. Recruitment & Selection of Staff**

All individuals (e.g. staff, coaches, facilitators and tutors) engaged in regulated activity with children/young people must have satisfactorily completed an enhanced Access NI check, in accordance with Access NI’s Code of Practice [https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/accessni-code-practice](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/accessni-code-practice%20%20%20%20)  See Point 11 below for further information on regulated activity with children/young people.

**8. Information Sharing/ Co-operation/ &Confidentiality**

Section 11 of the policy provides good practice principles in respect of sharing of information with e.g. relevant Trust Area Gateway Team and PSNI to keep children safe.

**9. Communication of this Policy to Staff, Children & Young People**

This policy will be communicated to staff via corporate induction, e-learning, appropriate workshops and on the staff intranet. This policy will be communicated to children/young people using appropriate digital platforms and visual leaflets/ posters in e.g. Culture and Arts, Leisure and Outdoor Facilities.

**10. Links to Documentation to support staff implement this policy**

* **Safeguarding Declaration Form** – for completion by external providers delivering services to children/young people on behalf of Council e.g. contractors, tutors, coaches and facilitators (**See Appendix B of policy).**
* **Child Safeguarding Agreement Form** – for completion by clubs, organisations and Adult Group Leaders who regularly (i.e. book/hire for more than 4 days in a 30-day period) Council facilities for children’s activities. **(See Appendix C of policy)**
* **Children’s Activities Registration Form** – for completion by a parent/ guardian wishing to book a place for a child on a programme of children’s activities (**See Appendix D of policy)**
* **NSPCC Guide to running a sporting event** – Child Safeguarding considerations **(See Appendix G of policy)**
* **Definition of Regulated Activity with Children/Young People** **(See Appendix J general reference table and Appendix I Regulated Council Posts of policy).**

**11. Additional Resources for Staff – Children in Entertainment and Other Support Services.** CEET (Children in Entertainment & Employment Team) of the Education Authority has developed webpage link from which to download child performance licence application forms etc. Arts and Cultural Facilities can find further details in Section 11 page 37 & 38 of the policy <https://www.eani.org.uk/services/child-employment-children-in-entertainment-and-chaperone-applications>

Leaflet published by Public Health Agency/ Lifeline reaching out to support a child/young person experiencing emotional distress/despair/suicidal thoughts [https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2020-02/Concerned%20about%20suicide%2001%2020.pdf](https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2020-02/Concerned%20about%20suicide%2001%2020.pdf%20)

List of support services available in Mid Ulster District Council area. These can provide advice and support to children and families with the cost of living. <https://www.midulstercouncil.org/resident/community/cost-of-living-information-and-advice>

A copy of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is available on the staff intranet and from HR on request. (November 2024)