



Stockport Action Youth Speakers

Safeguarding and Policy Procedures

Background

1. Stockport Action Youth Speakers (SAYS)

SAYS comprises of young people who are involved with or receive services in Stockport.

2. Legislation and Guidance that Underpins this Policy

This Policy and Procedures has been developed in line with the principles of The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004, and with reference to the following:

Working Together to Safeguard Children (Dept for Education 2013)

- Every Child Matters (DCSF 2004)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- No Secrets: guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care (Dept of Health 2000)

Aims and Principles

3. Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide members of SAYS with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities in safeguarding, and to provide information for parents and carers about the safeguarding measures that PIPS employs to ensure

that it meets its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people promote their welfare. The policy also covers our role and responsibilities towards vulnerable adults caring for or parenting children and young people.

4. The principles behind the Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding children - the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

The application of SAYS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is based on the following key principles:

The welfare of the child is paramount and all the children have the right to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution

- Achieve economic wellbeing all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

5. Policy and Procedures

It is everyone's responsibility to report any significant concerns in relation to children or vulnerable adults to a local statutory agency. It is not the responsibility of SAYS to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. This is undertaken by external child protection professionals. Members of SAYS, representatives and employees do not primarily have contact with children or young people. However, by the nature of our work, we come into direct contact with parents, carers of disabled children and young people. Abuse is more common amongst children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities than with their peers. All SAYS members must be familiar and comply with this policy and its procedures. If the Safeguarding Officer has significant concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing harm, that information should be relayed to the local statutory agency.

Emergency Situations

If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via their powers to use Police Protection.

It is vitally important that any disclosure made in confidence is recorded factually as soon as possible, this is whether or not the matter is taken to another authority.

An accurate account should be made of:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any action taken by the group to gather information and refer on names of person reporting and to whom reported

To do this, you should then contact the Safeguarding Officer responsible for. The Safeguarding Officer will then use the appropriate reporting systems for the situation. This may be reporting the matter to Local Authority Children's Social Care or the police. The Safeguarding Officer will also record the following information:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
- Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any action taken by the group to gather information and refer on
- Any further action, e.g. suspension of a worker or volunteer
- Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
- Names of person reporting and to whom reported recording all information impartially and accurately and keeping it securely is vital as this could be used for evidence for later use. SAYS Members and staff will be provided with training and induction to assist them to fulfil their duties.

6. Designated SAYS member

The designated Safeguarding Officer for SAYS are Heather Charnock and Joe Rowlands (Co-Chairs), in the absence of the Co-Chairs, it will be the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer in relation to any concerns about a child, young person or adult.

☒ The role of the designated Safeguarding Officer is to:

To provide a single point of contact between SAYS and the statutory child protection agencies, for example, children's social care and the police;

To offer consultation and advice about safeguarding and child protection concerns pertaining to the activity of SAYS.

7. Definitions of signs of abuse

There are four recognised types of abuse and it is important that the SAYS Group know what they are and how to recognise them.

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 or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the

exploitation or corruption of 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, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include noncontact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

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 abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

8. Guidance on how to respond to a child/young person/vulnerable adult disclosing abuse

It is important that all those who come into contact with disabled children and young people have some understanding of the reasons why they are more vulnerable to abuse and ensure that they offer appropriate support to any child or young person who discloses abuse.

DO:

Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying.

- Tell the child they are right to tell you.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Tell the child what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell the designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- Write down everything said and what was done.

DON'T:

- Make promises you can't keep.
- Interrogate the child, it is not your job to carry out an investigation, this will be up to the police and Children's Social Care, which have experience in this.
- Cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.
- Do nothing, make sure you tell your Safeguarding Officer immediately, they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

9. Should we tell parent/carers if we are going to make a referral?

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parent carers about any concerns and you if you need to make a referral to social care, you should normally discuss this with the parent carer before you do. However, inability to inform parent carers should not prevent a referral being made. It would then be a decision of Children's Social Care about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

However, you should NOT discuss your concerns with the parent carer in the following circumstances:

- Where contacting or discussing the referral would place a child, yourself, or others at immediate risk.
- Where sexual abuse or sexual exploitation by the parent carer or those they have a responsibility to is suspected
- Where organised or multiple abuse is suspected.
- Where fabricated or induced illness (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy) is suspected
- Where female genital mutilation is the concern in cases of suspected forced marriage.

10. Guidance on how to respond to a parent carer disclosing abuse DON'T:

- Make promises you can't keep – e.g. tell people they can tell you things in confidence.
- Interrogate the parent carer, it is not your job to carry out an investigation, this will be up to the police and Children's Social Care, which have experience in this.
- Do nothing, make sure you tell your Safeguarding Officer immediately, they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

11. Recruitment and Vetting process

Any SAYS employee will be subject to a rigorous recruitment process, including a vetting process with a DBS check, and references sought as well as a formal interview process.

12. Allegations against Adults who work with children

If you have information which suggests an adult who works with children or young people (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has:

- ☒ • Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child,
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child,
- Behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children. You should speak immediately with the Safeguarding Officer. They will make a referral to the local statutory agency.

13. Code of Conduct

SAYS have a Code of Conduct which all members and young people representatives are expected to comply with.

The Code of Conduct has a section in relation to action taken should a safeguarding issue be raised in relation to a member of SAYS.

SAYS members must inform the co-chairs about any allegation that they may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed a crime, or any child protection or safeguarding concern relating to children and/or vulnerable adults.

