



# Safeguarding Children Policy Working with Children and Young People under Eighteen

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## Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that all staff members and volunteers of Bittern Meadow CIC are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection in order to help protect children from harm and to protect members of staff from any allegations made by a child, young person or another adult.

Throughout this document the terms children and young people are used to refer to anyone under 18 years old, the term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, guardians and carers, and the terms staff and volunteers are used to refer to members of staff, volunteers or anyone else who is representing Bittern Meadow CIC.

Bittern Meadow CIC is committed to the protection of children and young people from maltreatment including the 4 types of abuse; Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Sexual abuse and Neglect, as well as protection from violence, bullying, and discrimination. All Bittern Meadow CIC staff will, through appropriate training, have an awareness and understanding of what makes a stable and caring environment for children and young people and be equipped with knowledge of procedure should risks to a child or young person be recognised.

The guidance and procedures in this policy relate to all staff and volunteers working for The Bittern Meadow CIC.

Anybody who believes that a child or young person is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm should always refer their concerns to the local authority Children’s Advice and Duty Services (CADs) or the police<sup>1</sup>.

Bittern Meadow CIC has both a legal and moral obligation to ensure a duty of care. Every young person who comes into contact with Bittern Meadow CIC should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from any forms of abuse.

<sup>1</sup> Sect.47 of The Children Act 1989 ([www.opsi.gov.uk/acts](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts))

## Signs and Indications

*Children who are being abused may show a number of physical and emotional changes. But remember that these signs do not always mean that a child is being abused - there may be other explanations.*

<p>Indications that Neglect might be occurring.</p>	<p>Indications that Emotional abuse might be occurring.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others</li> <li>• Constantly dirty or 'smelly'</li> <li>• Loss of weight or being consistently underweight</li> <li>• Inappropriate dress for the conditions</li> <li>• Tired all of the time</li> <li>• Not requesting medical assistance</li> <li>• Having few friends</li> <li>• Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to thrive or grow</li> <li>• Sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• Developmental delay</li> <li>• Neurotic behaviour e.g. Rocking</li> <li>• Being unable to play</li> <li>• Fear of making mistakes</li> <li>• Self harm</li> <li>• Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour</li> </ul>
<p>Indications that Sexual Abuse might be occurring.</p>	<p>Indications that Physical Abuse might be occurring.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain/itching/bruising/bleeding in the genital/anal areas</li> <li>• Genital discharge/urinary tract infections</li> <li>• Stomach pains/discomfort walking or sitting</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted infections.</li> <li>• A marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive.</li> <li>• They may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically.</li> <li>• The child may refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected.</li> <li>• They may show unexpected fear/distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities.</li> <li>• They may start using sexually explicit behaviour/language, particularly if the behaviour/language is not appropriate for their age.</li> <li>• The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplainable Injuries</li> <li>• Untreated or inadequately treated injuries</li> <li>• Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen</li> <li>• Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks</li> <li>• Cigarette burns</li> <li>• human bites</li> <li>• Scalds and burns</li> <li>• Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed</li> <li>• Having trouble sleeping</li> <li>• Behaving aggressively or being disruptive</li> <li>• Showing fear of certain adults</li> <li>• Having a lack of confidence and low self-esteem</li> <li>• Using drugs or alcohol</li> </ul>

## Recognising Child Abuse

Recognising the signs of child abuse is not straightforward and it is not the responsibility of Bittern Meadow CIC staff to identify whether abuse or harm has or has not taken place. However, it is the responsibility of all Bittern Meadow CIC staff to act if they have a concern.

There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent:

1. A child discloses abuse
2. Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused
3. A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
4. A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused
5. A member of staff's behaviour or the way in which he/ she relates to a child causes concern

## Standard Procedure

Members of Staff are advised that even if they are in doubt that it is better to mention their concern than to keep silent.

The following procedure should be followed when a concern regarding child abuse is recognised.

1. Recognise
2. Consult
3. Record
4. Contact

### 1. Recognise a concern

It is important that all concerns are recognised including suspicions regarding a situation involving a child or young person. In these situations it may be necessary to break confidentiality. This should be done with reference to Bittern Meadow CIC Confidentiality Policy.

2. Consult with another worker/line manager. All concerns should be reported to the designated Child Protection Officer and if a referral is believed to be necessary the concern should be reported to the Directors prior to the referral taking place where reasonably possible.

### 3. Record the details and proposed actions

Record the information given or the event in as much detail as possible, making sure to use the child's own words and keep this paperwork confidential. Ensure all information is written in ink, as pencil is inadmissible in court.

### 4. Contact Children's Advice and Duty Service

For any call raising concerns about a child, the Children's Advice and Duty Service will ask for: all of the details known to you/your agency about the child.

In an emergency dial 999.

## 7-Step Procedure for Dealing with Disclosure

If a child or young person is the victim of a form of abuse they may feel that they need to talk to a member of staff thus 'disclosing' personal information to them. The following specific procedure is outlined below.

### 1. CONFIDENTIALITY

Make sure that you have explained Bittern Meadow CIC's Confidentiality Policy. Any disclosure should take place after Bittern Meadow CIC's Child Protection policy and particularly the limits of confidentiality have been appropriately explained to them.

### 2. LISTEN

Listen to and believe what the child or young person tells you. Show respect for them and do not underestimate the significance of their feelings or words. Remain calm and avoid expressions of shock or surprise. Avoid asking leading questions. It is important you do not investigate, but simply listen and allow them to tell you as much as they want; give open responses such as 'what happened?' and 'how did you feel?' Reflect back and paraphrase what they tell you, allowing them to set the pace of the conversation. End the conversation when the young person wishes.

### 3. EXPLAIN

Explain that whatever the circumstances they are not to blame and that what they have told you cannot be kept a secret but that you will have to tell someone else. Explain to the child or young person what you are going to do next and who you will share their information with.

### 4. REASSURE

Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell someone.

### 5. RECORD

As much information as possible should be written down either during or after the disclosure in a factual manner. This may form part of a report so should be kept in a safe and confidential place until further reference.

These recordings should include:

- The date and time of disclosure
- Name and age of the child or young person disclosing
- Content of conversation (using the exact words as much as possible)
- Next course of action
- Your signature and date of recording

### 6. DISCUSS

Talk to your the Designated Child Protection Officer or the Directors as soon as possible. If you are concerned that it is an urgent situation, then call the Designated Child Protection Officer.

### 7. REFER

After discussing with the Designated Child Protection Officer, or the Directors it may be necessary for you to contact Children's Services for a consultation and to make a referral if advised to do so.

In an emergency always call the police on 999 (it may be necessary to do this without prior consultation with the Designated Child Protection Officer or Directors. If this is the case, you should make them aware as soon as possible).

## Safe Staff

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

Bittern Meadow CIC aims to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well being and very best outcomes for our children. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

Bittern Meadow CIC will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with our children. We will always ensure that the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board protocol Allegations Against Staff, Carers and Volunteers is adhered to.

All adults who come into contact with children will be made aware of the steps that will be taken if an allegation is made. We will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). All allegations within this procedure that come to the employer's attention should be notified to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day by completing the [LADO referral form](#) from the NSCB website.

Staff will not investigate these matters. We will seek and work with the advice that is provided. Should an allegation be made against the Designated Child Protection Officer or Deputy, this will be reported by the staff member or volunteer raising the concern who will liaise with the LADO.

See <https://www.norfolkscb.org/about/policies-procedures/8-3-allegations-against-persons-who-work-with-children/> for more information about the LADO

## Good Practice

Because of the concerns of the problem of child abuse it is important that staff members develop guidelines and boundaries in accordance with all Bittern Meadow CIC policies for self protection and to avoid false allegations being made against them. This can be discussed in line management supervision sessions.

The following is a list of recommended guidelines:

1. Be Proactive – if at all possible try to ensure that no staff member or volunteer is alone with individual children or young people, unless specifically required to work in a one to one situation.
2. In the event of any injury to a child or young person, accidental or otherwise, ensure that it is recorded properly and appropriately, whether this is in an accident book, notes or session evaluation sheet.
3. Keep written records of any allegations a child or young person makes against you. Including every accusation from 'you hit me' to 'you are always picking on me'. Inform another member of the team that you are working with if you feel a child or young person has a particular dislike of you.
4. Get another member or staff or volunteer to witness the allegation; failing this, another adult.

5. If a child or young person touches you inappropriately record what happened immediately, inform another member of the team you are working with and inform your line manager as soon as possible.
6. Never do something of a personal nature for children or young people that they are capable of doing themselves.
7. Do not go into a toilet alone with a child or young person. Always tell another member of staff where you are going and why.
8. Be careful about how and where you touch a child or young person.
9. Be aware of age appropriate behaviour and reinforce it with young people.
10. Staff members and volunteers should be aware of each other's approaches to children and young people and point out any behaviour or activity that could be misunderstood.

## Six Key Points on Information Sharing

- You should explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.
- You must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.
- You should, where possible, respect the wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information if in your judgment, on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need in the public interest to override that lack of consent.
- You should seek advice where you are in doubt, especially where your doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others.
- You should ensure that the information you share is accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it, and shared securely.
- You should always record the reasons for your decision – whether it is to share information or not.

## Training and Supervision

Every new member of staff or volunteer will have an induction period that will include essential safeguarding procedures, they will be told who the Designated Child Protection Officer is and what the recording and reporting system is.

All Bittern Meadow CIC staff and volunteers are required to attend safeguarding training relevant to their role as soon as possible after their induction. In addition, members of staff and volunteers are to attend safeguarding training at least every three years.

Safeguarding is to be included as a permanent item in supervision for all client facing members of staff. Managers should ensure that any safeguarding issues identified in supervision are recorded appropriately and followed up as soon as possible.

## Referral Procedures and Norfolk Contacts for Child Protection Issues

If we have a concern about a child or children we will telephone the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on **0344 800 8021** immediately. We will be put through to a Social Worker who will take all of the relevant details. We will make sure we are prepared with full details of the child and family, plus what our concerns are, details of any support we have provided to the child/family and what we would like to happen. We will ensure we gain consent from the parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If we have not sought consent from the parent/carer we will inform the CADS worker of this and the reason for this.

The CADS worker will agree a way forward with us and keep us informed. They will send us a written record of our conversation within 5 working days. The outcomes could include a full referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further investigation, the Police, or for work with Early Help. We will not investigate and will be led by the Local Authority and/or the Police.

We will make careful records of all conversations, in ink, including the dates and times of who we spoke to, the information shared and the action agreed. We do not need to send a written referral.

Full details on this process can be found at [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org) under 'How to Raise a Concern'.

We understand if we are unhappy about a decision made by CADS or MASH we can use the Resolving Professional Disagreements policy on [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org) and contact the Safer Programme for more advice on this process.

## IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999

Children's Advice and Duty Service (Office Hours)	0344 800 8021
Children's Service 24 Hours Out of Hours number	0344 800 8020
Norfolk Police	0845 456 4567
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Team. Always someone available during normal working hours	01603 223473
Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) Policies and Procedures	<a href="http://www.norfolkscb.org">www.norfolkscb.org</a>

### Named Designated Child Protection Officer

For year August 2020- August 2021\_ the following designated staff are in post;

DESIGNATED OFFICER - Melanie Wheeler

DEPUTY DESIGNATED OFFICER - Paul Wheeler

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on \_\_1<sup>st</sup> March 2023\_\_.

## Other Relevant Policies

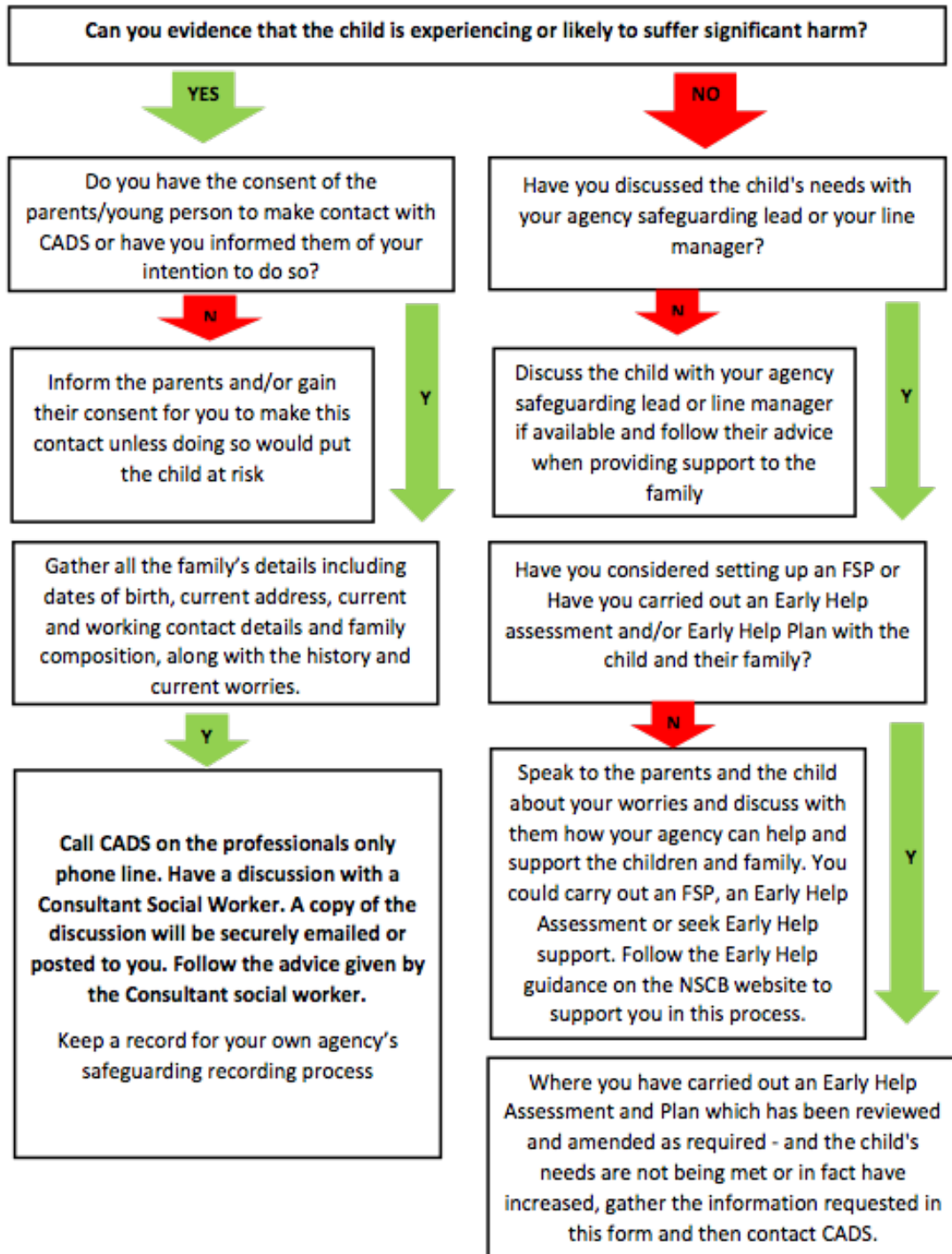
To underpin the values and ethos of our organisation and our intent to ensure our children/young people are appropriately safeguarded the following policies are also included under our safeguarding umbrella;

Safer Recruitment Policy  
Code of Conduct  
Confidentiality Policy and Procedure  
Health and Safety Policy  
Whistle Blowing  
Complaints



## Children's Advice and Duty Service- CADS

Before contacting CADS, please answer the following questions and follow the advice provided:



**PROFESSIONAL USE ONLY – CALL CADS ON 0344 800 8021**