

Information for Volunteers

Safeguarding Children and Young Adults

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and with that in mind we are aiming to give you a basic understanding of issues associated with safeguarding children and young people. We will include an outline of EAAA reporting policy and procedure.

We must all ensure that any concerns relating to the abuse of a child are properly addressed and that we all promote the safety and well-being of the children that TVAA, both staff and volunteers, come into contact with.

Aims of this handout

- To help you to recognise indicators and effects of abuse
- To understand good practice for disclosure, consent and confidentiality
- To give you a basic understanding of guidance and laws in this area
- To give an understanding of the TVAA approach and response to safeguarding children and young people across our work so that all staff and volunteers feel confident about knowing how and when to respond to concerns
- We have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all the children and young people who have contact with us. Our safeguarding policies and procedures will be applied to all children without discrimination.

Who could suffer abuse?

Anyone could be abused but some children are particularly vulnerable, they include:

- Children with disabilities and/or special educational needs
- Young carers
- Those with other family issues, e.g a parent with an addiction
- Refugee and asylum-seeking children
- Minority ethnic groups who may not have fully adapted to our culture
- Children leaving the care system

What is abuse?

'Child abuse occurs where a child or young person experiences maltreatment or impairment through a failure on the part of their parent or carer to ensure a reasonable standard of care and protection' *Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department of Health 1999.*

Abuse can be an act of commission or an act of omission, it can happen once or be repeated. It is NEVER acceptable.

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Types of abuse

- Physical
- Neglect – Physical – Emotional – Educational – Medical
- Sexual – Contact – Non-contact e.g grooming
- Mental
- Radicalisation

It is also increasingly important to consider forms of online abuse.

Indicators of abuse

- Unexplained injuries
- Inappropriate behaviours
- Dirty/unkempt
- Underweight/overweight
- Withdrawn
- Isolated

This list is not exhaustive. It is important to understand that many signs and symptoms are more easily recognised over a period of time and that some of the symptoms can just as easily occur where there hasn't been any abuse. Avoid jumping to conclusions.

Long term effects of child abuse

Children who have been abused may experience difficulties with:

- Behaviour
- Mental Health
- Education
- Relationships
- Drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Self-harm

The potential long-term consequences of abuse on children further underlines the importance of responding appropriately to all concerns about a child's welfare.

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Child safeguarding legislation

- The interests of the child are paramount
- Children have a right to be safe and protected from harm
- We must act promptly
- We must work and collaborate with other agencies in the best interests of the child
- The law says that families must be supported to 'keep' their children unless it really isn't safe for the child to remain in the family

Who is a child?

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, a person under 18 years of age.
In Scotland, a person under 16 years of age.

Responding to concerns about the abuse of a child

- Who are you concerned about?
- What is making you concerned?
- Do you have your facts right?
- Is the child at immediate risk of harm?

Responding directly to a child

- Listen carefully to what you are being told
- Allow the child to tell you in their own words and at their own pace
- Don't judge
- Don't make assumptions
- Don't make promises or guarantees
- Accept what you are being told
- Be reassuring
- Record what you have been told and what you have observed

Minimising risk when working with children and young people

- Ensure that there is always more than one person present within hearing or sight when working with children
- If you must touch a child, for example to treat an injury, always try and have another person present and explain what you are doing and why
- Never take photographs of children without getting parental consent
- Always use language which is appropriate when communicating with children

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To Recap

It is not our job to investigate allegations, but it is our responsibility to be vigilant and to report any concerns we have to the appropriate authorities following TVAA policies and procedures.

Reporting procedure

Consider if there is immediate risk to the child making the disclosure, and what needs to be done in their best interests. For example, if you believe someone is at real and immediate risk of physical harm you should dial 999 and ask for the Police. If not, report the matter as soon as is practicable to tvaa.safeguarding@nhs.net

What happens after I report it?

The Safeguarding Lead will pass all the details to the Local Authority who will then lead on investigating the matter. The Safeguarding Lead for TVAA is the Patient Liaison Manager, Adam Crosby.

Responsibilities

TVAA have a responsibility to take all safeguarding concerns seriously, working within our agreed policies and procedures and within the framework of our represented local authority's Safeguarding Children's Policies. The Local Authority has a responsibility to respond to all concerns raised with them in a timely, proportionate and legal way.

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