

Safeguarding Children

Policy and Procedures

Informed by:

Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees – The Charity Commission, 25/10/18

Safeguarding Children – Small Charity Support, 12/03/16

Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities – HM Govt, 6/12/17

Working Together to Safeguard Children – HM Govt, July 2018

THE PFC TRUST

25/07/19

This Policy applies to all persons involved with the PFC Trust.

Policy

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Abuse and neglect can have devastating effects on individuals, families and wider society, and the damage from safeguarding incidents and allegations can be devastating to a charity. Public trust and confidence in the wider sector can also be harmed if these issues are not responded to appropriately.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Therefore, safeguarding responsibilities and protecting people is a governance priority for the PFC Trust and we will take all reasonable steps to protect people who come into contact with the charity from harm.

This includes:

- people who benefit from the charity's work
- staff
- volunteers
- those who come into contact with the charity through its work

To do this we will:

- make sure all trustees, employees, volunteers and beneficiaries know about safeguarding
- have appropriate policies and procedures in place
- ensure organisations we work with/are linked with have appropriate policies and procedures in place prior to making any agreements
- know to spot and refer or report concerns
- have a clear system of referring or reporting to relevant organisations as soon as concerns are identified or suspected
- set out risks and how the charity will manage them in a risk register which is regularly reviewed
- be quick to respond to concerns and carry out appropriate investigations
- not let one trustee dominate the work of the charity – trustees should always work together

Additionally, we will be alert to:

- sexual harassment abuse and exploitation
- negligent treatment
- physical or emotional abuse

- bullying and harassment
- health & safety
- commercial exploitation
- extremism and radicalisation
- forced marriage
- child trafficking
- female genital mutilation
- discrimination of any on the grounds in the Equality Act 2010
- people may target the charity
- a charity where its culture may allow poor behaviour
- people may abuse a position of trust they hold within the charity

The PFC Trust Safeguarding Policy and Procedures documents will therefore make it clear how we will protect people from harm, make sure people can raise safeguarding concerns, handle allegations or disclosures and report them to the relevant authorities.

Staff awareness

Copies of the Policy and Procedures document will be provided to all staff, volunteers and beneficiaries alongside the charities Code of Behaviour Policy. Where necessary, any additional PFC Trust staff/volunteers will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; it should be a co-ordinated approach. Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children.

The PCF Trust will therefore:

- ✓ be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect
- ✓ be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children
- ✓ share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances
- ✓ contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare
- ✓ where requested to, contribute to reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans

Information Sharing

All practitioners should aim to gain consent to share information but should be mindful of situations where to do so would place a child at increased risk of harm. Information may be shared without consent if a practitioner has reason to believe that there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner. When decisions are made to share or withhold information, practitioners should record who has been given the information and why.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children, which must always be the paramount concern.

Definitions of abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

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 conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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

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(including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

NOTE: Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, and whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse and can involve child sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The PFC Trust will take note of the following areas identified by children as what they need:

- Vigilance – to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- Understanding and action – to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood and to have that understanding acted upon
- Stability – to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- Respect – to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- Information and engagement – to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans

- Explanation – to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- Support – to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- Advocacy – to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- Protection – to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

(From Working together to safeguard children, HM Govt, July 2018)

Therefore, anyone working directly with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them and their families collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. Special provision should be put in place to support dialogue with children who have communication difficulties, unaccompanied children, refugees and those children who are victims of modern slavery and/or trafficking.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Procedures

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you.

If a child discloses information to you:

- ✓ Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg: *'Everything will be alright now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- ✓ Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- ✓ Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions (eg: Did they touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- ✓ Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.

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- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

What to do if you have concerns about a child

Whatever the nature of your concerns, you **MUST** discuss them with a designated member of staff. These are:

Sally Dunne (Trustee) or Shaun Hope (Trustee) on 07942 207499

The Designated Member of Staff will ask you to complete a referral form (Appendix B) and will follow the Process Chart below, which, may involve contact with social care (below) for advice. Following these discussions, if you still have concerns, you, under the guidance of a designated member of staff should ring (not email):

The Children's Hub, Child and Adult Services, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY.

Phone Number: 01429 284284
Out of office hours: 01642 524552 (Emergency Duty Team)
Emergency: 101 or 999 (police)
Email: childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

What information will you need when making a referral?

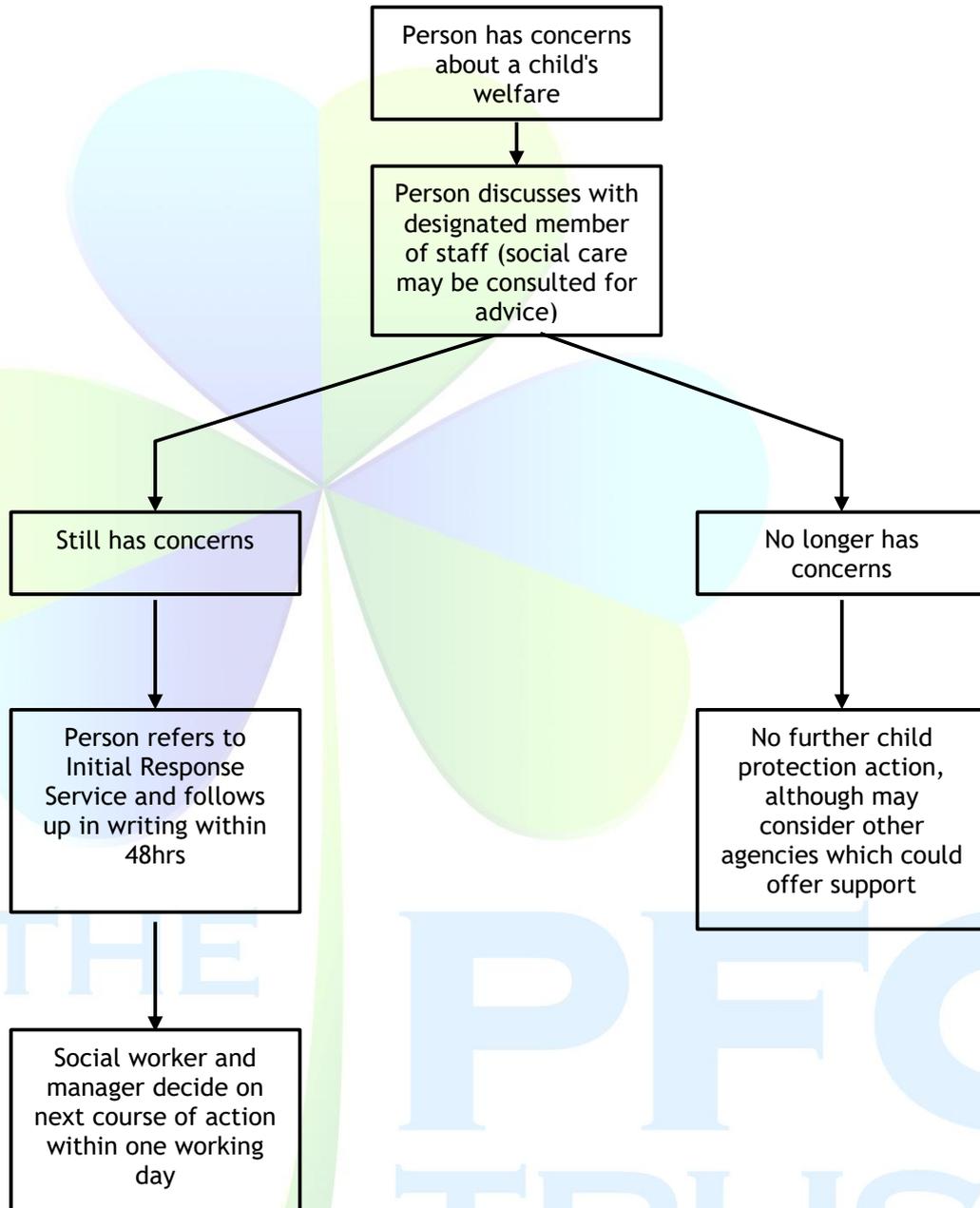
You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs.

Once the referral has been accepted by local authority children's social care, the lead practitioner role falls to a social worker. The social worker should clarify with the referrer, when known, the nature of the concerns and how and why they have arisen.

Within one working day of a referral being received, a local authority social worker should acknowledge receipt to the referrer and make a decision about next steps and the type of response required.

Process Chart Where There Are Concerns About A Child's Welfare



Allegations Involving a Members of Staff / Volunteer

The PFC Trust is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted immediately to a Designated Member of Staff. The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting. The Designated Member of Staff will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the Designated Member of Staff will immediately refer the matter to the Local Authority Social Care Team.

Some allegations may be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the Local Authority Social Care Team. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and the Designated Member of Staff should be informed of all allegations that come to the attention of Charity staff and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- The police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

Safeguarding Referral Form

About the Child/Young Person

Full Name (include 'known as' name)		DOB	
Languages spoken by the Child/Young Person			
Details of any Disabilities			
Address			
Telephone No			
School/College they Attend			
GP details			
Name of their Main Carer and Relationship to Child/Young Person		Are they aware of the Referral?	
Telephone No of Main Carer			
Address of Main Carer			

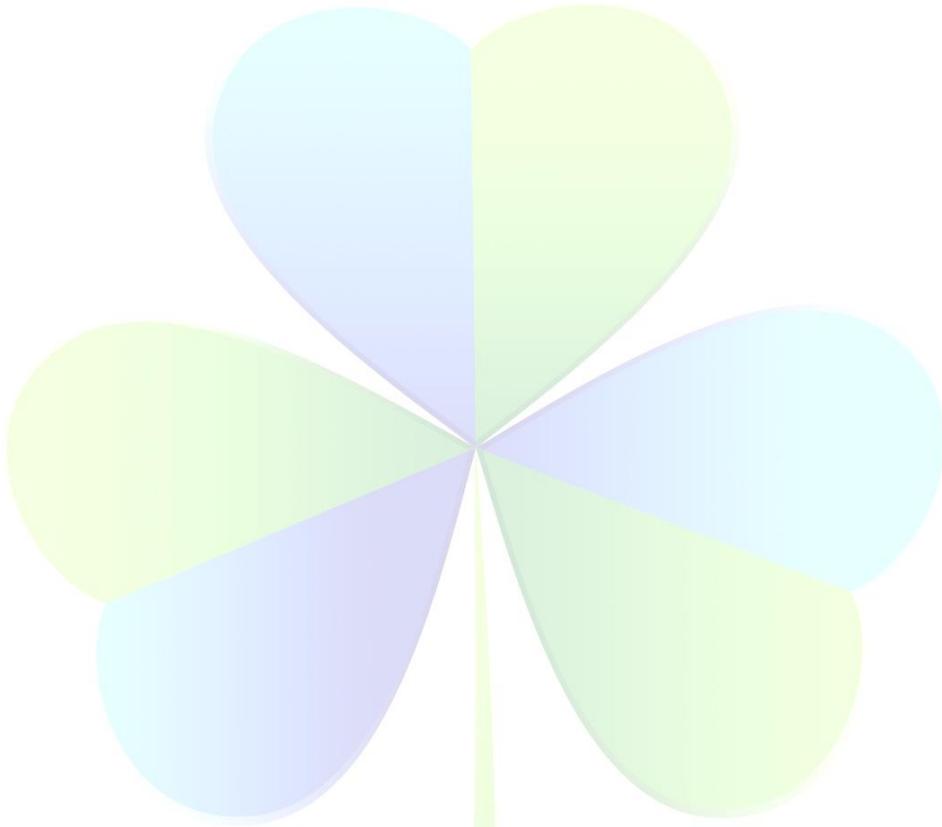
About the Person with the Concern

Full Name of Person with Concern	
Telephone No	
Address	
Position in the Charity	

If the Person making the Referral is **NOT** the Person with the Concern, add details below:

Full Name of Person making the Referral	
Telephone No	
Address	
Position in the Charity	

Please give details of your concern, in as much details as possible, and include where the information originated:



Date of Incident/Concern:

Date of Referral:

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