

Recognise and respond to possible harm or abuse of children and young people

Overview

This standard is about the need to protect children and young people when there is the possibility that harm or abuse is occurring. It is important that the practitioner is competent to identify the indicators of potential harm or abuse, and that appropriate action is taken according to the practitioner's role and responsibility.

When the practitioner has concerns, these should also be recorded and the appropriate people informed of them. If the concerns warrant it, immediate action must be taken to protect the child or young person. Depending on the nature and type of harm or abuse, the action should involve a referral to one or more of the statutory agencies for child protection, including the police if necessary. The practitioner has to comply with all legal requirements and their codes of practice, and these should always be seen as the principle sources of advice on the action to take. The practitioner should monitor the outcome of the action to ensure that the child or young person is protected. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. comply fully and at all times with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice, organisational policies and procedures, and inter-agency protocols
2. review and apply the relevant advice and guidance on safeguarding children and young people relevant to your practice
3. collate all relevant information relating to the care of the child or young person from appropriate sources
4. communicate with the child or young person in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference
5. seek advice from the relevant agencies about the nature of any communication with the child or young person and those involved in their care when you have serious concerns about the safety of the child or young person
6. review the assessment of the child or young person and identify any changes in their presentation and behaviour
7. ensure that the collection of information relating to possible harm or abuse is conducted in a sensitive manner and will neither jeopardise:
 - 7.1 the safety of the child or young person
 - 7.2 any subsequent investigation
 - 7.3 the child or young person achieving appropriate emotional and mental health support
8. review the information and identify any factors that suggest that the child or young person might be at risk of harm or abuse
9. identify any indicators of potential harm or abuse and, where possible and appropriate, discuss the possible reasons for presentation of these with practitioners involved in the child or young person's care, to exclude any mistaken identification of harm or abuse
10. record all concerns, discussions with the child or young person, any decision as to whether harm or abuse is possibly taking place, and the reasons for those decisions
11. discuss your concerns with the relevant people and identify and record any differences of opinion
12. seek to discuss your concerns with the child or young person, and those involved in their care, and seek their agreement to inform the relevant agency unless you consider such a discussion would place the child or young person at risk of significant harm or abuse
13. refer any concerns about child abuse or neglect to the relevant people
14. record all interactions and communications accurately and as soon as possible and pass these to the relevant people without delay
15. review and assess all available information relating to the care and possible harm or abuse of the child or young person

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16. review and revise the care plan for the child or young person to ensure appropriate follow-up of health and well-being needs
17. agree with the relevant people the actions to be taken to protect the child or young person from harm or abuse
18. monitor the situation to confirm that action is taken by the relevant people to protect the child or young person, consistent with legal and organisational requirements
19. contribute to any further action related to the possible harm or abuse as requested by relevant people

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role and the activities being carried out
2. the nature, extent and boundaries of your work role and its relationship to others in your own and other organisations
3. the roles of other practitioners working with children, young people and families and how they relate between and across agencies
4. the importance of effective multi-agency working
5. the ethical issues, legal requirements and good practice guidelines on consent, including capacity issues and consent for children and young people
6. the principle of confidentiality and the implications for your practice
7. how to recognise and respond to the signs of injury, abuse or neglect and your responsibility in relation to raising concerns with the appropriate person or agency
8. local systems, procedures and protocols for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
9. the principles of equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice and how they are applied
10. the duty to report any acts or omissions in care that could be detrimental to the child or young person
11. the rights of children and young people to make decisions for themselves and to take risks in the context of their own lives, taking into account issues of capacity and your professional responsibility
12. how to engage with and communicate effectively with children and young people, and those involved in their care
13. the need for communication to be modified for different contexts and cultures, including the age, vulnerability, understanding, developmental capacity and communication needs and preferences of the child or young person and those involved in their care
14. the ways in which children and young people communicate non-verbally and through behaviour, as well as through language, and how different forms of behaviour can be interpreted
15. the importance of adopting a child/young person centred approach
16. the conditions and issues affecting children and young people in your area of practice and how they can inter-relate
17. child and young people's development, including emotional, physical, and social how they affect one another
18. how the behaviour needs of children and young people may affect others

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19. the effect of parenting capacity, family, environment and cultural influences on the health and wellbeing of children and young people
20. the factors that contribute to the risk of harm to children and young people
21. the guidance that is available for your own practice and where to access this
22. current issues, research and evidence based practice relevant to your role
23. local sources of health and well-being information, advice and support for children and young people, and those involved in their care
24. how to access and use information from case files and public enquiries to develop your own knowledge and understanding of safeguarding
25. the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and young people
26. the different forms and extent of harm or abuse that can affect children and young people and their impact on children's development
27. indicators of potential harm or abuse including behavioural, emotional, psychological, relational and physical
28. how different interpretations can be placed on indicators of potential harm or abuse and how to analyse objectively
29. the impact which abuse or neglect may have on children's and young people's health and well-being as a whole
30. the cumulative effects of neglect and the different indicators of neglect
31. the children and young people who are more vulnerable to harm or abuse
32. assumptions, values and discriminatory attitudes that can influence practice and prevent some children and young people from having equality of opportunity and equal protection from harm or abuse
33. the agencies for child protection, their statutory roles and responsibilities, and the local policies and protocols for referrals to them
34. the role of different people within your organisation in safeguarding children and young people, including those with lead responsibilities
35. how abuse is investigated in different settings, who leads investigations, and who is involved in investigations
36. what to do if agencies or practitioners fail to comply with agreed policies and protocols for safeguarding children and young people
37. the purpose of pursuing concerns about the welfare of children and young people, what decisions are required at each stage of the process, and what are the intended outcomes for the child or young person and their family
38. how to observe, record and report incidents of possible harm or abuse in line with organisational requirements
39. how to determine the amount of information people need, balancing this with the risks involved, the rights and interests of the child or young person,

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- and legal duty of care
- 40. the importance of engaging and working co-operatively with those with parental responsibility
- 41. what actions can be taken to safeguard children and young people
- 42. how to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguards
- 43. issues related to aggression, anger and violence, and how to respond to conflict situations involving adults, peers or the children or young people themselves
- 44. how to deal with the distress and trauma of the child protection process itself to the child, family, yourself and other practitioners
- 45. how to access advice and advocacy for the child or young person
- 46. how to access supervision, advice, support and debriefing for yourself and others
- 47. the importance of keeping full and accurate records, and how to do so in line with organisational requirements

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External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):
Dimension: HWB3 Protection of health and wellbeing

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