

Contribute to the protection of children and young people from abuse

Overview

This standard is about protecting children and young people from abuse. It covers the identification of possible abuse, handling disclosures from a child or young person, recording and reporting information about abuse and supporting children and young people who may have been abused. It does not cover the in-depth investigation of abuse.

Abuse may be emotional, financial, neglect, physical, psychological or sexual. It includes how and to whom to report suspicion of abuse and where to turn for additional advice and personal support.

There are two elements

1. Identify signs and symptoms of possible abuse
2. Respond to a child or young person's disclosure of abuse

Target group

This standard applies to those with responsibility for protecting children and young people from abuse, including work with adults and young people who pose a risk of harm to children. All those whose work involves, or brings them into contact with children and young people have this responsibility.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Identify signs and symptoms of possible abuse

1. comply with all relevant legal, professional, and organisational requirements and guidelines
2. observe the child or young person's condition and behaviour during activities unobtrusively and with minimum disturbance and disruption to their natural patterns of behaviour
3. encourage children and young people, through the creation of an appropriate environment, to express their fears, anxieties and feelings without fear of ridicule or rejection
4. communicate with the child or young person using techniques that are appropriate to their age, understanding and preference
5. maintain records in line with your organisation's requirements, and which are consistent with child and young person protection procedures, of any:
 - 5.1 significant changes from normal standards of health, cleanliness and physical care expected for that family and specific children or young people
 - 5.2 behaviour and behaviour patterns that are unusual and inconsistent with a child's or young person's developmental level
 - 5.3 injuries which are inconsistent with the history, the child or young person's age, development and level of activity
 - 5.4 omissions of care
6. identify any indicators of potential abuse and, where possible and appropriate and without causing any unnecessary reporting delay, discuss the possible reasons for presentation of these with relevant others involved in the child or young person's care, to exclude any mistaken identification of abuse
7. report any signs and indicators of possible abuse promptly, being sensitive to the child or young person and circumstances

Respond to a child or young person's disclosure of abuse

8. respond to a child or young person's disclosure of abuse in line with recognised good practice
9. communicate with the child or young person using techniques that are appropriate to the nature of their disclosure, their age, understanding and preference
10. ask only sufficient questions to confirm that there is an allegation or suspicion and not pressure the child or young person to disclose, give any prompts or offer guarantees of confidentiality
11. allow the child or young person to lead conversations at their own pace
12. discuss your concerns with the child or young person, and their parents, as openly and honestly as possible, whilst recognising the potential severity of the

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case, the risk to the child or young person and the requirements of child and young person protection procedures

13. make clear to the child that other people appropriate to the situation will have to be made aware of their disclosure

14. maintain records of the disclosure, clearly distinguishing between directly observed evidence, information provided by the child or young person, and that gathered from other sources, in line with your organisation's requirements

15. make referrals immediately following any disclosure, in line with organisational procedures

16. provide reports which are complete, accurate and to time when you receive requests for reports on incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child or young person abuse

17. manage your own feelings aroused by the disclosure in a way which supports the right to such feelings whilst minimising any undue effects on the child or young person concerned

18. discuss cases as soon as possible with relevant people in your agency

19. present the information to those who need to have access to it, maintaining confidentiality in line with your organisation's requirements

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

1. legal and organisational requirements which relate to the protection of individuals from abuse, and their impact for your area of operations
2. legislation, policies and procedures relating to data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
3. the role of your organisation and the services which it provides in relation to minimising abuse, and the monitoring of individuals at risk from abuse
4. organisational policy and procedures regarding confidentiality of information and the disclosure of information to third parties, and the specific circumstances under which disclosure may be made
5. organisational requirements relating to allowing others to be present in discussions with victims/survivors, and the relative benefits and disadvantages that the presence of others can create
6. the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded

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7. children's and young people's social, emotional, physical, intellectual and behavioural development, including their awareness of their body
8. children's and young people's rights and the importance of empowering them to exercise those rights, including the external factors and constraints that may make it difficult for these rights to be promoted
9. how the quality of parent-child attachment affects child and young person development
10. characteristics and circumstances which make some children and young people more vulnerable to abuse, and the contexts in which abusive behaviour occurs
11. the indicators of potential or actual abuse, including awareness of changes in a child's or young person's behaviour
12. the different forms of abusive behaviour which may occur
13. the effects of different forms of abuse in both the short term and the long term
14. methods of preventing the occurrence of abuse
15. the opportunities provided within daily routines and different kinds of games and equipment that can help children and young people become aware of their bodies and to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching, good and bad secrets

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16. ways of listening to, and communicating with children and young people of different ages including:
 - 16.1 indicators of readiness to communicate
 - 16.2 how to interpret both overt and covert messages
17. how to manage a controlled response to distressing disclosures
18. the importance of avoiding the use of unnecessarily probing questions
19. the possible influence of cultural, racial, gender or other forms of stereotyping in response to a child or young person who attempts to disclose abuse, and how to counteract this
20. the potential impact of disclosure of abuse on family members including how it affects parental rights as set out in child and young person protection procedures
21. the importance of distinguishing between directly observed evidence, evidence from reliable sources, opinion and hearsay, and the significance of recording verbal information
22. how situations with a potential conflict of interests can be handled
23. the options for protecting children and young people, and the reasoning process used in determining the most appropriate option for the child or young person concerned
24. the sources of support available to you from other organisations when dealing with your own feelings aroused by the abuse concerned
25. the importance of acknowledging and dealing with your own feelings in relation to the abuse concerned, and the sources of support which may be available to you from other organisations in order to deal with these feelings

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Developed by	Skills for Justice
Version Number	3
Date Approved	August 2015
Indicative Review Date	July 2020
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	Skills for Justice
Original URN	SFJGC2
Relevant Occupations	Public Service and Other Associate Professionals; Public Services; Probation Officers; Probation Staff; Probation Support Officers; Community justice workers
Suite	Community Justice
Keywords	Harm; abuse; protect; risk of abuse; children; safeguard; safeguarding; protection; young people; transforming rehabilitation