



U18's SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Mission Statement

"A safe home and a fresh start. Delivering high quality accommodation and support services for young people aged 16-25 who are leaving care or at risk of homelessness. We engage our young people actively; supporting and developing their capacity for independent living in the community, social mobility and inclusion, increasing their positive life chances."

Introduction

Ensuring young people's safety is a shared responsibility. At Moving On Durham we prioritise the safety and well-being of young people above all else. We are committed to immediately addressing any concerns related to safeguarding and protection.

All staff members at Moving On Durham have a crucial role in promptly reporting safeguarding concerns and accessing relevant training to effectively manage any allegations, ensuring the safety of young people. This policy therefore applies to all staff members, those on temporary or bank contracts, support staff, or any individuals who have direct contact with children and young people we are supporting.

For individuals aged 18 and above, we refer to the Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures.

This policy should be read alongside our other company policies and procedures.

The safeguarding policy for Moving On Durham is applicable to all young people (under the age of 18 years) supported by our organisation. This policy must be followed in cases where there are concerns that a young person has suffered or may be at risk of suffering harm, and the responsible party is one of the following:

- A parent or a person with parental responsibility
- An adult known to the young person (relative, family friend, neighbour)
- A professional person who has contact with the young person through their employment
- Another young person
- Individuals involved in organised abuse

Assaults on young people by members of the public who are not known to them fall outside of this policy. However, in all such cases, the police must be informed as soon as the alleged offense comes to light. While the

young person has a choice about making a statement to the police regarding the incident, staff must report the incident promptly: This should be conveyed sensitively to the child/young person, emphasising the importance of keeping them safe. Staff should consult with their immediate line manager or designated safeguarding lead (DSL), but there should be no delay in calling the police. Additionally, the matter must be reported and shared with the placing authority.

Moving On Durham acknowledges that some young people are more vulnerable due to their experiences, level of dependency, communication needs, and other factors. Moving On Durham will minimise risks and opportunities for abuse and exploitation by providing help and support to young people. This will be achieved through care, guidance and support, child protection and safeguarding practices, procedures, and staff code of conduct.

Moving On Durham will ensure that all young people are aware of their absolute unconditional right to be kept safe and free from harm. Staff will work with individual young people on their personal safety and protection, providing guidance, advice, assistance, and support on how to stay safe. Additionally, Managers and designated leads will closely liaise with allocated social workers, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and the police to further safeguard and protect young people.

Moving On Durham recognises that working in partnership with young people, their parents where necessary, staff, and other agencies is essential in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Young People**

Young people play a crucial role in their own safety. Moving On Durham ensure that the young people's voices are heard by seeking their views on feeling safe, by asking what factors contribute to their safety, and what measures make them feel secure. We actively engage young people to provide feedback on any necessary changes to our practices, policies, procedures, and safeguarding arrangements.

Home managers and DSLs must consider how young people can best understand safeguarding and what this means, including online safety and learning opportunities.

- **Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ensures that concerns and allegations regarding professionals and adults working with children and young people are recorded and monitored, and that they are progressed promptly, fairly, and confidentially. They oversee individual cases from start to finish, providing guidance and advice to organisations and liaising with relevant agencies.

The LADO ensures effective management and oversight of individual cases when an allegation meets the safeguarding threshold.

In instances where an allegation does not meet the safeguarding threshold, the LADO will liaise with the organisation's DSL and discuss appropriate actions, which may include activating disciplinary procedures or conducting internal investigations.

The LADO provides guidance and advice to organisations including liaising with all relevant agencies including police, children social care and health. They also talk with chairs of strategy meetings and will also attend and/or chair allegations/outcomes meetings.

The LADO will collaborate with the DSL to determine any potential referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or relevant professional bodies such as Social Work England, Education Welfare Council, or Teaching Regulation Agency.

- **The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)**

Moving On Durham has 1 Designated Safeguarding Lead, with 2 deputies with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding. They liaise with the LADO and other agencies.

- In the absence of the service DSL, another allocated lead DSL's will provide cover.
- If there is an immediate risk of serious harm to a child, the DSL will ensure immediate referral to children's social care and involvement of the police.
- DSLs are part of Moving On Durham leadership team and possess the necessary experience and seniority to provide guidance and support to staff.
- The DSL ensures that Moving On Durham safeguarding policies and procedures are known to staff, that they are fully implemented with enough resources and time allocated to enable staff to attend training to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood and maintained.
- The DSL ensures that Moving On Durham is represented at any discussions and meetings, offering support and guidance to staff attending such meetings.

- **Staff**

All staff members at Moving On Durham have a responsibility and vital role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Staff are trained to identify signs and symptoms of abuse and understand the appropriate actions to take if they have concerns about a child's well-being, responding to any safeguarding concerns promptly to ensure the safety of young people. Staff members receive support and guidance about safeguarding policies and procedures, including being briefed about updates and amendments. These take place through regular and effective supervision sessions, and team meetings. This ensures that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

To support staff, Moving On Durham ensures that prior to admission, information about the child and or young person's history, their experience and risks are obtained and that any plan of care takes account of these matters. This is necessary to ensure from the start of a placement, staff know what is required to support and safeguard the child/young person.

Recording

If children and young people choose to disclose their abuse, neglect, or exploitation to staff, this should be managed sensitively and appropriately in line with company safeguarding training, and fully recorded. Any further events or correspondence and actions should be recorded within the incident record as updates, maintaining a detailed chronology.

The disclosure record must include details of the date, time, location, and circumstances in which the disclosure was made in addition to as near as possible a word for word account of what the child or young person said. Staff will not 'translate' the child or young person's account into adult language, nor censor it nor put their own interpretation on what has been alleged. In addition, it should be legible, clear, concise, and free from jargon and abbreviations, separating fact from opinion and signed.

The record should be made as soon as possible after the information has been received, and at the latest by the end of the shift on which the situation arose but within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

After receiving a report of a concern, suspicion or allegation of abuse or harm, the home manager, senior staff, and DSL must firstly take any steps needed to protect the child or young person from risk of immediate harm. Managers, DSLs and senior staff should follow the local safeguarding partnership/safeguarding board procedures in the area in which the setting is located.

If staff become concerned about possible abuse/exploitation through their observations of children and young people in contact with other adults (professional or otherwise) they should record the details of the date, time, location, and circumstances in which the concerns arose and what it was about the interaction that caused concern. Again, this record should be made no later than the end of the day/shift but within 24 hours of the cause of concerns/allegations being reported. The information should be passed immediately to the home manager and DSL.

The management of safeguarding concerns

Moving On Durham take all concerns about abuse, neglect, sexual and criminal exploitation seriously. Such allegations will be managed in line with Moving On Durham safeguarding and child protection procedures including the Child Exploitation and Whistleblowing procedures. Management of safeguarding concerns will take account of the local area safeguarding partnership/boards and responsible placing authorities' procedures.

Where the concern or allegation has come from a staff member, the whistleblowing procedures will be activated. Any whistleblowing concerns which trigger the safeguarding procedures will be managed through one management of investigation process.

Responding to Allegations Against Staff Abuse

Professional abuse refers to any allegation made against person/people who work with children and young people. Keeping Children Safe in Education (England) 2023, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, highlights the requirement on organisations and agencies working with children and young people to have clear policies and for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Chapter 4 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 notes that:

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- *Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.*
- *Possible committed offence against or related to a child.*
- *Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.*
- *Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.*

Any allegations of professional abuse must be reported by the DSL and/or in their absence the Registered Manager, to the LADO who has a responsibility for coordination, management, and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. This includes allegations that on the face of it may appear relatively insignificant or that have also been reported to the police or children's social care.

Due to the vulnerability of the young people supported by Moving On Durham, it is necessary to take a "safety first" approach to any expressions of concern about professional misconduct. This policy therefore acknowledges the need to act based on allegations being true first and foremost and that any action taken by the organisation in the short term to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people is done without prejudice (i.e. no presumption of guilt).

It is important to note that concerns about a staff may not always relate directly to their professional work and may be current or relate to past events. This may include the following:

- The staff member's own children.
- Other children living outside the family.
- Their conduct away from work which compromises their professional role, e.g., inappropriate use of social network with children and young people.

Where allegations and concerns are highlighted about staff, every effort will be made to ensure the matter is dealt with promptly and within a reasonable timescale. However, this is not always possible due to the nature and extend of the allegations and or concerns. This is because Moving On Durham will not be the only organisation involved. If the matter leads to police involvement, the criminal investigation cannot be jeopardised by pre-emptive disciplinary investigation which might alert key witnesses to the potential lines of enquiry.

Therefore, if a criminal investigation is warranted all other investigation would need to wait. However, the police and LADO in consultation with Ofsted may determine that the regulator should, irrespective of any investigation, undertake an inspection and/or monitoring visit to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. In such cases, the regulator will ensure it does not compromise any potential criminal investigation and confidentiality where this is necessary.

Staff will be provided information on how they can access support during any investigation that may be necessary.