



## **Safeguarding**

**Linked to Regulations 12 (1) and 26 & 27 of The Regulated Services  
(Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017**

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### **Scope:**

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will gather as much relevant information as possible about children to help us decide whether to admit them and, if we do, to ensure we are sensitive to their needs and take all reasonable steps to protect them from harm and injury.

We provide high levels of supervision balanced by appropriate opportunities for privacy and security. However, we will not allow children to place themselves at risk and we will take all reasonable steps to prevent them from harming themselves and others to the extent of using physical interventions, including restraint as a last resort.

We will provide plenty of opportunities for children to express their feelings, wishes and fears in terms of their day-to-day living, education and in regard to planning for the future.

We will provide information, advice and education to children designed to help them protect their own rights and lead a healthy lifestyle.

We will provide annual training for staff giving clear procedures for identifying and responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse, neglect or harm.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will not continue to employ staff who engage in abusive relationships with children or who have a tendency to place them at risk of injury or harm. As necessary, we will advise the Disclosure and Barring Service, Social Services and Social Care Wales of staff whose employment has ceased as a result of abusive behaviour. We will also ensure that such decisions are communicated to potential future employers.

Staff must act in accordance with this policy and the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Staff must take immediate action to ensure the safety of all individuals for whom we provide care.

Staff must make appropriate referral arrangements to other agencies as appropriate

Staff must record any evidence or the substance of any allegation, any action taken and referrals made.

### **Wales Safeguarding Procedures:**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a shared responsibility and depends on effective joint working between all staff and all relevant agencies and professionals.

The definitions for Safeguarding can be found within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. All practitioners should be aware of the definitions of abuse and neglect in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 as well as the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. This is essential to communicate concerns about harm in a meaningful way.

If a member of staff has any suspicion that a child has or may be mistreated or harmed, they have a responsibility to report the concern to the home's manager or the on-call manager/Emergency Duty Team outside of working hours.

All allegations must be taken seriously and reported. If a staff member has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are reported to management and referred to social services and the police who have statutory duties and powers to make enquiries and intervene when necessary.

### **Reporting Suspicions or Allegations of Abuse, Neglect or Harm:**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 s.128 specifies the duty placed on practitioner 'relevant partners' under s. 162 of the Act to report children they have reasonable cause to suspect are at risk of harm. For the purpose of this policy 'practitioner' is any persons who work within the service.

Staff who receive a disclosure, have concern, suspicion or if there is an allegation made should, firstly, ensure that the concerns are reported immediately to the home's manager or the on-call manager who in turn will report to the Responsible Individual and social services or the emergency duty team where the suspected abuse/harm may have occurred if outside of normal working hours.

If the manager is implicated in the situation, staff should immediately inform the Responsible Individual who will in turn report the matter to social services and make the necessary notifications.

A child protection referral (MARF) should be made if it is considered that action is needed to safeguard children. In all circumstances referrals should be made within 24 hours by the home's manager unless implicated and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Consideration should be given if a referral to the police is needed to be made before discussion with the social work team. If the manager is implicated, the child protection referral should be made within 24 hours by the Responsible Individual.

### *Emergency*

Where there is immediate risk to the child then staff must take necessary action which may involve requesting police support or emergency medical assistance. If the child is taken to hospital or the police are called, staff must inform them that there is a suspicion of abuse, neglect and harm. Staff must also notify the manager of the home or on-call manager.

Once notified, the manager/on call manager will be responsible for following Wales Safeguarding Procedures and making contact with Children's Social Care Services or EDT.

The manager must inform their line manager or other senior manager. The manager must inform and update Care Inspectorate Wales of the instigation and outcome of any subsequent Child Protection Enquiry or as agreed through the professional strategy meeting.

### *Non-Emergency*

Any member of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council who receives a report or has any suspicions that a child has been or could be subject to abuse, neglect or harm must immediately notify the manager of the home or the on-call manager who will in turn notify the Social Services department and if necessary, the police.

Not acting on such concerns immediately is not an option when protecting children and all of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council staff have a duty to act. Failure to immediately report a concern may be considered to be gross misconduct and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.

### **Receiving concerns:**

Staff may seek clarification about concerns raised with children, but they may not ask leading questions or take any actions to investigate or in any way make judgements about what has been reported. Investigations can only be undertaken by approved persons agreed via the Principle Officer/RI.

Staff must not give guarantees of confidentiality to those who report possible instances of abuse, neglect or harm to them, but they should confirm that the information will only be shared with the minimum number of people who need to know to ensure appropriate action is taken to resolve the concern.

Staff must make a written record, as soon as possible, of what they have been told, detailing the questions they have asked, the replies given, the actions taken and by whom.

They must then share the report to the home's manager or on-call manager. The record should be placed on the child's file, except where a colleague is implicated or there is any risk to the child as a result, in which case record should be given to the manager dealing with the matter.

### **Manager Responsibilities:**

After receiving a report of a suspicion or allegation of abuse, neglect or harm the manager must firstly take any steps needed to protect any child involved from risk of immediate harm.

Ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed within the home and liaising with relevant persons within Children's Services and elsewhere over protection issues.

Referring to social services reports of any suspicions or allegations of abuse, neglect or harm.

Care Inspectorate Wales are to be informed in accordance with current legislation and record of all safeguarding referrals is to be kept within the home.

Work issued computers and laptops within the home that are used by staff are to have the Wales Safeguarding Procedures on the desktop of each computer/laptop for staff to access.

Ensuring all staff are conversant with Wales Safeguarding Procedures and have access to their Regional Safeguarding Boards information hubs.

Holding an up-to-date copy of Non-statutory Guide for Practitioners – Working together to safeguard people and information sharing to safeguard children under Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

All staff are to be reminded of the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020](#) quarterly through direct supervision.

The Local Authority Safeguarding Policy must also be considered alongside this document.

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Please insert identifying details from 'Document History' from the front cover			
Version Number:		Status: (draft/final)	
Date Written:		Date of Issue for consultation	
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