



Copeland Borough Council

6th Draft

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
AND PROCEDURES**

Contents

1. Section 1

Child Protection Policy

- Introduction
- Policy Statement
- Recruitment and Training
- Designated Copeland Borough Council personnel

2. Section 2

Child Protection Procedures

- What is child abuse?
- Recognising child abuse
- Responding to allegations of abuse
- Code of conduct and Good Practice

Section 1

Introduction

All organisations have a duty of care towards the children for whom they provide activities or services. Sometimes, however, there are people who work, or seek to work, in organisations who may pose a risk to children and who may harm them. This policy will help Copeland Borough Council to take all reasonable steps to prevent this from happening.

It applies to the treatment of children (anyone under 18 years of age) by employees or volunteers, who may come into contact with them in the course of their work.

For the purpose of this policy the term “volunteer” will include:

- paid and unpaid helpers
- partner representatives
- members

Child Protection Policy Statement

This policy acknowledges the importance of child protection, both to the individual child and to Copeland Borough Council employees. The Council will ensure that all employees and volunteers are aware of and refer to this policy.

This policy will be used in conjunction with the Council’s policies on equality, complaints, discipline, data protection and recruitment of ex-offenders.

Copeland Borough Council will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for employees and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, employees and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment of employees by ensuring that those recruited to CBC positions (**Appendix 4**) do not commence employment prior to receipt of the necessary Criminal Records Bureau clearance. This process will also be followed, where deemed necessary by the appropriate manager, for volunteer recruitment
- Providing effective management for employees and volunteers through supervision, support and training

Recruitment and Training

Recruitment

Vetting Procedures

Through its recruitment procedures for all employees and volunteers, who work directly with children, Copeland Borough Council will

- Check for convictions for criminal offences against children in accordance with current legislation through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checking process, prior to start of employment.
- Explore each applicant's experience, via interview, of working or contact with children prior to an appointment being made
- Train employees, their line managers and supervisors in the prevention and detection of child abuse and in good working practice.
- Ensure employees and volunteers read and sign a document to say they have read and understood the Child Protection policy

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES APPOINTED TO THE JOB ROLES LISTED IN APPENDIX 4 OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL NOT COMMENCE EMPLOYMENT UNTIL SATISFACTORY CRB CLEARANCE HAS BEEN RECEIVED

Training

Copeland Borough Council recognises that it has a commitment to ensure that all employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with children and young people. This Council's training process will help employees to:

- Be able to recognise the different signs of abuse and what appropriate course of action should be taken in such circumstances
- Have an understanding of the potential risks to themselves and ensure that good practice is adhered to at all times
- Recognise signs of improper behaviour from other employees and take appropriate action should this occur.

Designated Copeland Borough Council Personnel

Designated Line Managers (**See Appendix 3**) will have the responsibility for ensuring the policy and procedures are followed within their service areas.

A Human Resources representative will have responsibility for keeping and maintaining up to date records and providing statistics as and when required.

The Council's Monitoring Officer (or in his absence the Deputy Monitoring Officer) will be responsible for dealing with all allegations and suspicions of abuse. The Monitoring Officer will:

- Receive and record information from employees, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns.
- Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate
- Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency i.e. Social Services to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns as soon as possible
- Make a formal referral, where appropriate, to a statutory agency or the police without delay

It is not the role of the Council to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of the Social Services department, which has the legal responsibility. It is however, everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

The Monitoring Officer should be aware of the local child protection network, the role of the Area Child Protection Committee and the existence of local child protection procedures.

The Monitoring Officer needs to be aware of the relevant contact numbers and addresses of the statutory agencies in their area. Social Services have an out-of-hours duty team who can be contacted at any time. **(Add Contact numbers and details)**

It is important for the designated personnel to have received basic level training in child protection.

Section 2

Child Protection Procedures

These procedures seek to ensure that all involved have a clear understanding of their responsibilities when working with children and young people.

The aim of these procedures is to ensure that all employees and volunteers

- Recognise the signs of child abuse and what appropriate course of action should be taken in such circumstances
- Understand the potential risks to themselves and ensure that good practice is adhered to at all times
- Recognise signs of improper behaviour from other employees and take appropriate action should this occur

1. What is Child Abuse?

There are four main forms of child abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

2. Recognising Child Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy and it is not the responsibility of employees or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. Employees and volunteers however do have a responsibility to act if they have concerns.

Indications that a child is being abused:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts and burns particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- Fear of parents being approached about such injuries.
- Reluctance to get changed e.g. wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Flinching when touched or approached.
- A failure to thrive or grow.
- Sudden speech disorders
- Difficulties in making friends
- The child is prevented from socialising
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- Fear of being left with a specific person
- Sexually explicit behaviour
- Sexual knowledge beyond their age and developmental level
- A distrust of adults particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food
- The child being dirty/smelly and unkempt
- Loss of weight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

This list is by no means definitive and it is important to remember that many children will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should **not** be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death in the family or the birth of a new baby.

It is crucial that this is only a process of observation and that at no point in time should a council employee or a volunteer feel that they should be actively seeking out abuse or an abuser.

The responsibility of employees and volunteers is to ensure that if they have concerns about the welfare of a child they must report it and must **never** assume that others will do it.

3. Responding to allegation and suspicions of abuse

1. Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully
- Find an appropriate, early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared. Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow the child to continue at their own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible. Note the date and time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given. Ensure that this record is signed and dated.
- Relay this information as soon as possible to the Monitoring Officer (who is the designated Child Protection Officer) in accordance with the Council's Confidential Reporting Code for Employees.

Remember that it is important that everyone at Copeland Borough Council is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is **not** responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. This is the task of the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

2. Responding to signs of suspicions of abuse

Employees and volunteers who are concerned about an individual child should record these concerns and raise them at the earliest opportunity in accordance with the Confidential Reporting Code for Employees.

Please use the format at **Appendix 1** to help express your suspicions.

3. Responding to suspicions that a colleague may be abusing a young person or not following the code of good practice

Any employee or volunteer who suspects that a colleague may be abusing children should act on their suspicions. Action should also be taken if it is felt that colleagues are not following the codes of conduct set out in this document. This action will serve not only to protect children but also colleagues from false accusations.

- Talk through your concerns initially with a designated Copeland Borough Council representative (**Appendix 3**)
- Write down the details of the incident following the guidelines in the section on recording set out in these procedures.
- Pass this report to your line manager at the earliest opportunity.
- The manager should then take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the child and of any other children who may be at risk
- The matter should be discussed with the Monitoring Officer, who will then consider whether the matter is an issue relating to poor practice or to child abuse. If the matter relates to poor practice, procedures relating to misconduct should be followed. If the matter relates to child abuse the matter should be referred to Social Services by the Monitoring Officer, who may involve the Police, and the employee suspended pending the outcome of an internal investigation into the allegations.

Copeland Borough Council acknowledges that this is an extremely sensitive issue for employees and assures all employees and persons working on its behalf that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Confidentiality

The legal principle that “the welfare of the child is paramount” means that the considerations of confidentiality that might apply to other situation within the borough council should not be allowed to override the right of the child to be protected from harm.

However every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned both when an allegation is made and whilst it is being investigated.

Recording

In all situations, including those where the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, it is vitally important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident, regardless of **whether or not** the concerns are shared with a statutory agency.

An accurate note should be made of:

- The date and time of the incident and disclosure
- The parties who were involved
- What was said and done by whom
- Any further action taken by Copeland Borough Council to investigate the matter
- Any further action e.g. the suspension of a worker
- Where relevant, reasons why there was no referral to a statutory agency
- The full name of the person/s reporting and to whom reported

This record should be stored securely and shared only with those who **need** to know. These procedures not only serve to protect children but also protect employees, volunteers and the council itself.

The importance of good record keeping in this area cannot be over-emphasised.

4. Reporting Child Protection Concerns

See **Appendix 2** for a summary of the process

4. Code of Conduct and Good Practice

These guidelines are designed not only to protect children but also to protect employees and volunteers from positions where false allegations may occur.

Good Practice

1. Contact with children

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Children should only be taken alone on a vehicle journey in an emergency or with parental consent
- Do not take children to your home
- Never meet up with children outside of your work with Copeland Borough Council unless it is with the full consent and knowledge of the child's parents/carers and your manager
- Never enter a house when a child is on their own

2. Relationships

All employees and volunteers should be aware that they **SHOULD NEVER:**

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes be ignored or go unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves

3. Intimate Care

It may sometimes be necessary for employees/volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parents. If an emergency situation arises that requires this type of help then parents should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

4. Restraint

Restraint is where a child is being held, moved or prevented from moving, against their will because not to do so would result in injury to themselves, or to others or would cause significant damage to property. Restraint must always be used as a last resort, when all other methods of controlling a situation have been tried and failed. Restraint should never be used as a punishment or to bring about compliance (except where there is a risk of injury).

Only employees or volunteers who are properly trained in restraint techniques should carry it out. A young person should be restrained for the shortest period necessary to bring the situation under control.

All such incidents should be recorded, detailing the facts of the behaviour, witnesses, who restrained the young person and how, what other methods had been tried and what other

follow up action took place. This record should then be passed to the designated child protection officer.

Code of Conduct

Employees, elected members and volunteers **must:**

- Treat all children and young people and their possessions with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within the sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy and encourage young people to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted and be mindful of how and where you touch young people
- Recognise that special action is required when discussing sensitive issues
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse
- Be identifiable and wear a name badge at all times
- Keep the child's needs first and achieving definitive outcomes second

Employees and volunteers **must not:**

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- Make sexually suggestive comments even in fun
- Make derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children and young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to individuals
- Ask young people to do things that are potentially dangerous, illegal or otherwise unreasonable
- Allow bullying
- Believe that "it could never happen to me"
- Take chances when common sense, policy or practice suggest a more prudent approach

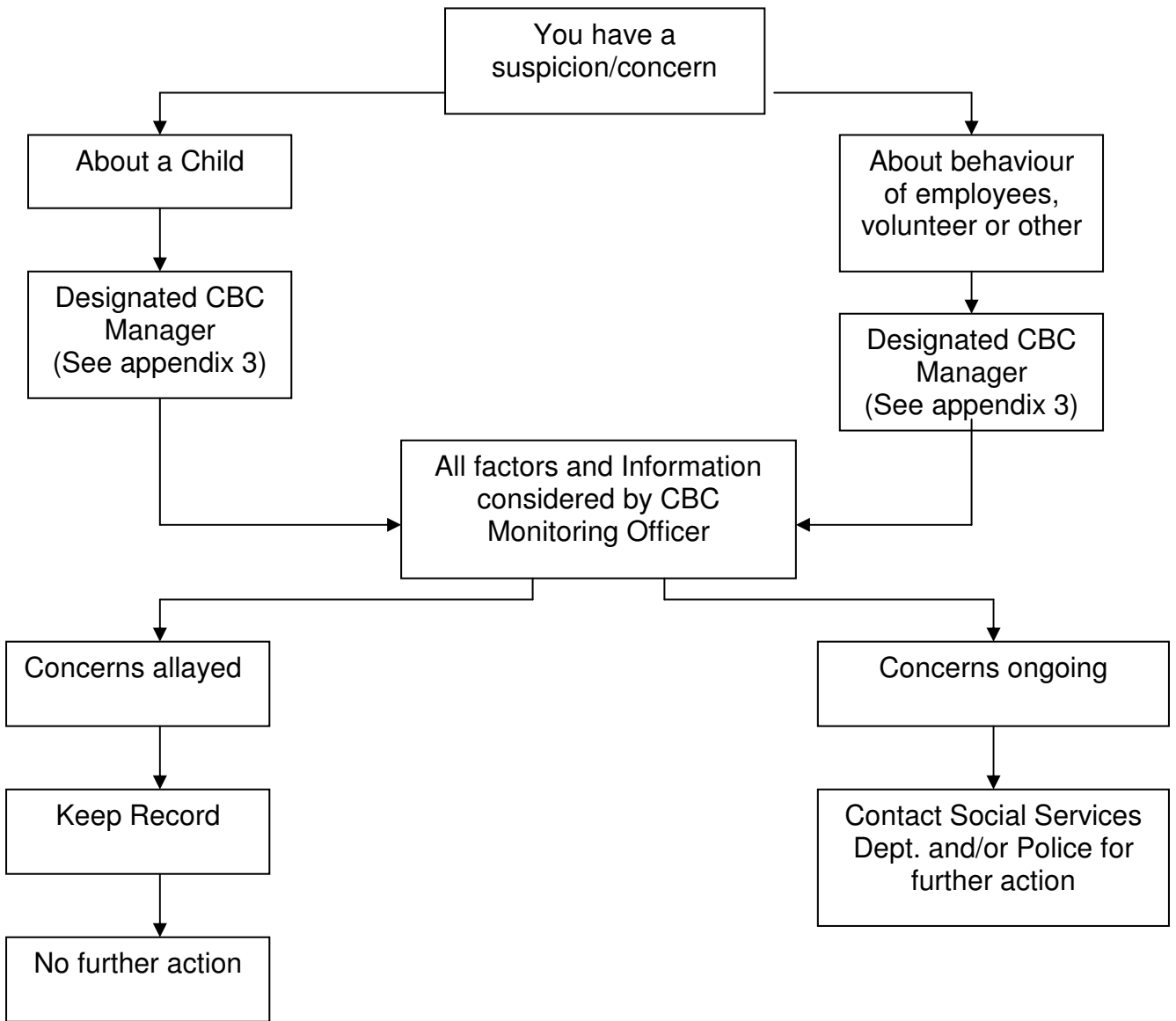
Use of video/photographic equipment

To avoid the possibility of inappropriate photographs and film, those wishing to use video or photography should register their intent, and gain consent to do so, in advance with the appropriate CBC designated representative. See **Appendix 5** for a registration form. A record should be kept of such requests by the designated CBC representative.

CHECKLIST FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

Name of child:	Age and date of birth:
Any special factors e.g. disability, or non-English speaker:	
Parent's/carer's names:	
Home address and phone number if available:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details	
Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?	
Have you spoken to the child? If so what was said?	
Have you spoken to the Parent(s)? If so what was said	
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details	
Have you consulted anybody else? Give details	
Your name and position:	
To whom reported and date of reporting:	
Signature:	Today's date

Reporting Child Protection Concerns



Designated Line Managers

Cultural Services Manager
Senior Cultural Services Officer
Arts Development Officer
Sports Development Officers
Parks Development Officer
Beacon and Tourism Services Manager
Curator
Museum Education Officer

HR Personnel

HR Manager
HR Officer
Health and Safety Officer

Monitoring Officer

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

CBC Jobs that require CRB checks completed prior to employment begins

Leisure and Environment

Cultural Services Manager
Senior Cultural Services Officer
Arts Development Officer
Sports Development Officers
Sports Leaders
Enforcement Officers
Playground Technician
Playground Technician Assistant
Parks Development Officer
Park Attendants
Park Warden

Regeneration

Beacon and Tourism Services Manager
Duty Officer - The Beacon
Curator - The Beacon
Museum Education Officer
Visitor Hosts

Policy and Performance

Senior Communications Officer

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL
USE OF VIDEO OR PHOTOGRAPHY
REGISTRATION FORM

Copeland Borough Council's Child Protection Policy requires that any person wishing to engage in the use of video or photography must register their intent prior to the event.

Please complete this form and bring it with you to the event. You should submit it to the identified Copeland Borough Council representative who will register the necessary details and sign its approval. The purpose of the form is to ensure the safety of all children participating.

This form will be retained by Copeland Borough Council following the event.

Event Title and Date	
Name of Applicant	
Address & Post Code	
Telephone Number	
Name of team or individual primarily being filmed or photographed	
Relationship to team or individual being filmed or photographed	

Declaration

I confirm that the purpose of filming or photography at
is for coaching or for family use and I will not in anyway use, alter or permit the altering of
images for inappropriate use.

Signed:	Date:
---------	-------

I have inspected and recorded the above details and, on behalf of Copeland Borough Council, give consent to the use of video/photography equipment in accordance with the details above.

Signed:	Date:
Job title: Copeland Borough Council	