

Keeping Children Safe

A quick guide for **all** staff and volunteers



*because
you matter*

**St Nicholas
Hospice Care**

A Registered Charity No. 287773



Need to talk?

01440 848260

stnicholashospicecare.org.uk

Policy and practice

Anyone who is concerned for the safety of a child in the course of their work has a responsibility to take some action.

Concerns could arise within the hospice, in someone's home, in a group activity, or in hospice premises like shops. This could be a result of what you observe, what another person reports to you, or what a child discloses to you.



What is **child abuse**?

The official definition of abuse is that there is a risk of 'significant harm' or that harm has taken place. This may involve any of the categories described below. Signs and symptoms may overlap or have alternative explanations but in a child protection investigation, expert attention will be given to this - it is not your job to investigate: it is your job to make sure concerns are heard and acted on.

The main categories of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

What should I do if a child tells me they have been abused?

Most children who reveal abuse to an adult do so because they want it to stop. Your job is to listen, not to investigate. Reassure the child that they were right to talk to you, and tell them that you will have to share what they have told you – confidentiality cannot be promised where children are at risk. Above all allow them to give their account of what happened.

What about keeping records?

Record all discussions & keep a detailed account of the disclosure, signed & dated, in a secure place to discuss with your manager, who will also keep a record. Using the child's own words is helpful. Don't elaborate events or colour them with your own views. Try not to ask too many questions & there is no need to ask a child to write down what they have told you, as they will be interviewed formally later on.

What to do if you believe a child is being harmed

Sharing concerns & information is essential. If you have concerns you should share them at once with your manager & one of the Hospice Safeguarding Leads - Quality & Service Development Lead, Head of Education & Outreach or Clinical Care & Support Services Operational Manager. This should happen within one working day and will lead to a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), where a decision will be made about what action should be taken.



Who are the people with key responsibilities in the Hospice?

Your manager is always your first port of call. The Safeguarding Lead Managers are the 'named professionals' whose job it is to ensure that referrals are made. They are also able to discuss concerns with the MASH professional consultation line to help clarify whether further action is necessary. In some cases no further action will be needed; in others, for e.g. where a crime may have been committed, a police investigation must take place. In cases where action must be taken, the Clinical Services Director will inform the Chief Executive.

How are children safeguarded?

Children are kept safe by everyone involved sharing information & working together to ensure that suspicions of harm are investigated, the evidence is carefully evaluated, & where necessary considered by a multi-agency Child Protection Case Conference. Here, risks to a child will be clarified & it will be decided whether a protection plan is needed. An assessment of a child's needs will be started, to which you may be asked to contribute. On rare occasions, children may be removed from home either by police or by social workers following the order of a judge or magistrate.

What does a **child protection** investigation involve?

After a referral has been made to Children & Young People's Services (CYPS) or the police, a strategy discussion is held between these agencies, where it will be decided what further action must be taken. Child protection investigations are led by police and CYPS, with the involvement of other professionals who know the child. Professionals, family members & children will be interviewed & sometimes you may be asked to attend a child protection conference with a senior person from St Nicholas Hospice Care.

What should I do if I can't discuss my concerns with any of these people?

Don't delay. If you cannot consult with anyone else at St Nicholas & you are worried that a child is in danger, make a referral to CYPS or the MASH yourself. If you can't contact them, phone the police: in an emergency you may call 999. Report your actions to your manager, one of the Safeguarding leads or the Clinical Services Director or another senior person at the first opportunity.

The **family**

Parents should normally be told that a referral is being made in all cases, except where this would put a child or another person at further risk, cause delay or interfere with an ongoing investigation into a criminal matter. If in doubt seek clarification from the Safeguarding Lead first.

What if my concerns include a **member of staff or volunteer?**

Report your concerns directly to one of the Safeguarding Lead Managers, the Clinical Services Director or Chief Executive. The safety of the child must come first, as in all other cases. The person's manager will deal with the personnel issues arising.



Important telephone numbers

St Nicholas Hospice Care, out-of-hours: 01284 766133

On call Manager numbers can be obtained from the inpatient unit.

Children's Services Telephone Numbers:

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 6061499

Professional Consultation Line 0345 6066167

MASH 'emergencies only' number 0808 8004005

Customer First 0808 8004005

Emergency Duty Service

(operates between 5.20pm—8.45am on weekdays and from 4.25pm on Friday through to 8.45am Monday)

Norfolk access Team (24 hours) 0344 800 8020

Suffolk Police Telephone Numbers:

Main Switchboard 01473 613500

Bury St Edmunds 01284 774006/1

Ipswich 01473 782791

South Norfolk 0845 4564567

or National Emergency Number 101

*because
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**IN AN EMERGENCY YOU
MAY ALSO DIAL 999**

The full policy can be found in General folders
Date produced: January 2019

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