Safeguarding Policy

April 2025

Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Policy Overview
3. Portsmouth City Council Play and Youth and Community Services (PYC) Overview
4. Staffing and Volunteers
5. Designated Safeguarding Lead
6. Handling Safeguarding Issues
7. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
8. Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership (PSCP)
9. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
10. Managing allegations of abuse against staff
11. Handling Safeguarding Adults Concerns
12.. Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board (PSAB)
13. Safeguarding Adults Training
14. E-Safety
15. Whistleblowing
16. HIPS LSCPs

1. Introduction

1.1 Children & Young People's Safeguarding

Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They have a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts which make this clear. This includes specific duties in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, regardless of where they are found, under sections 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Throughout this document where the terms children and young people are used it is intended to refer to both children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility with a duty of care within and out of the workplace.

Professionals working with children and young people are responsible for ensuring that they fulfil their role and responsibilities in a manner consistent with the statutory duties of their employer.

Specifically, the police, clinical commissioning groups and the local authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023). In addition, effective information sharing is a vital part of safeguarding practice. This policy is informed by the guidance set out in *Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services* (Department for Education, 2024), which outlines the principles for sharing information lawfully and confidently to protect children and young people. Furthermore, this policy recognises the importance of understanding and responding to domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue. It draws on the *Domestic Abuse: Draft Statutory Guidance Framework* (Home Office, July 2021), which provides a framework for identifying, assessing, and responding to domestic abuse in a multi-agency context.

Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but it also enhances the confidence of staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public.

1.2 Safeguarding Adults

Local authorities have responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults. There is also information on the Care Act 2014 in relation to Safeguarding, and how this important piece of law protects vulnerable people by changing the way that Safeguarding is placed on a statutory footing. Safeguarding vulnerable adults is everyone's business. It depends on people understanding and doing the following things;

- being aware of the risks of abuse and neglect that vulnerable adults can face
- knowing what help is available
- understanding their responsibilities
- working together to report and investigate concerns
- working together to prevent abuse and neglect

Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person, all of us need to sign up to this principle and to follow it in acting as good neighbours and citizens. All agencies and organisations across Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth must be committed to preventing abuse and neglect, raising safeguarding concerns and putting adults at the centre of our work.

2. Policy Overview

The Play and Youth and Community services (PYC) are committed to safeguarding children and adults.
The key points of this are as follows:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs.
- All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age, sexuality or religious beliefs.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately. This may require a referral to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership or the Local Designated Officer.
- Play and Youth Services have a commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting.
- All settings will aim to ensure that all young people meet in a safe environment with people they can trust.

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- Play Policy
- PYC Personal and Professional Boundaries Policy
- Incident Reporting Process
- Health and Safety Policy
- Employee's code of conduct
- Induction policy
- Probationary policy
- Internet acceptable use policy
- Information governance
- Data protection policy
- Volunteer policy

3. Portsmouth City Council Play and Youth and Community Services Overview

3.1 Play and Youth Service Purpose

The Play and Youth Service purpose is to support the social, emotional and physical development of children who use our service. Within the Play and Youth Service there are different approaches for Play teams and Youth teams, given the age differentials.

3.2 Play Service Statement

The Play service, recognising the value of play and the absence of play opportunities in the general environment, is committed to ensuring that children have access to rich, stimulating environments full of challenge, thereby offering them the opportunity to explore through their freely chosen play, both themselves and the world.

3.3 Play Service Scope

The Play service manages 6 Adventure Playgrounds in Portsmouth. The Play sites are open access and have a qualified Play leader on each site. Opening hours vary slightly with local arrangements but are basically 25 hours a week (term time) and 42 hours a week during school holidays. In addition to this some special opening for specialist groups or special events are possible. The prime focus is children/young people of 6-13 years.

3.4 Youth Service Statement

Portsmouth City Council youth clubs operate across the city offering specifically but not exclusively to 11 -19 years, often extending this for SEND up to 25 years old. The 4 youth clubs and additional 3 projects offer a wide range of activities ensuring that young people have fun whilst informally learning life skills which aid them whilst

making informed social decisions, thus supporting their journey and transition through to adulthood.

3.5 Youth Service Scope

The youth service manages 4 youth clubs and 3 additional projects, offering a 52 week opening. Opening hours vary slightly with local arrangements but are open across the week with an occasional Saturday offer. All clubs provide off-site activities. The clubs are open access whereby it is voluntary participation, however there is also work with young people on a referral basis from the Youth Justice Service (YJS) or schools and offer NEET sessions throughout the week. All clubs have qualified youth workers to deliver and engage with young people.

3.6 Community Centres Purpose

To promote, enable and facilitate inclusive activities, which embrace and address the education, training, employment, welfare, health, social, cultural and recreational needs of the local community.

3.7 Community Centres Statement

The community centres mission is to provide a sustainable, secure, culturally diverse and accessible space that is valued and supported by the people of the local community.

3.8 Community Centres Scope

HNB manage 4 community centres within the city: Paulsgrove, Cosham, Charles Dickens and Somerstown Central. Opening hours vary slightly however all are open 6 days a week. The community centres are used by people of all ages.

4. Staffing and Volunteers

4.1 Recruitment of Staff

All staff and volunteers in the Play and Youth service are required to go through Portsmouth City Council's safer recruitment process.

Suitable references must be received before being in the workplace.

All staff and volunteers are required to have an up-to-date DBS check. This is to be renewed at least every 3 years. Whilst waiting to receive a DBS check, a risk assessment will be carried out. All new staff must work alongside a fully vetted and trained member of staff until the DBS check is completed.

In accordance with guidance a record will be kept of the DBS number, completion date and whether or not the check is satisfactory.

If a DBS check shows a disclosure then the relevant manager is required to carry out a risk assessment. This must be signed off by the service managers. This is to be regularly monitored through supervision, induction and probation. The renewal date of the DBS may be amended to annually if this is risk assessed as appropriate.

All DBS checks are required to be signed off by two designated safeguarding lead managers.

The Play and Youth service and Community service (PYC) recruitment process includes:

- Explicit reference to intention to seek enhanced DBS disclosure in job application pack.
- A pre-disclosure form to be filled in requesting disclosure of convictions prior to DBS check.
- A statement in the job description that makes it clear the service has a commitment to safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults.
- Face to face interviews with pre-planned clear questions.
- Exploration of the candidate's attitude towards children and young people. This is to include a specific question regarding safeguarding.
- Questioning how the candidate will manage personal and professional boundaries.
- A question in interview which explicitly asks candidates about criminal convictions, cautions, any previous section 47 investigations, other legal restrictions or pending cases that might affect their suitability to work with children and young people.
- Checking applicant's identity, qualifications and references provided. • All new staff and volunteers are required to complete a 6-month probationary period.

All newly appointed staff and volunteers are required to have a structured induction programme.

4.2 Volunteers

Volunteers are to attend a taster session within the relevant service to see if they are suitable for the role. These sessions must be supervised by a fully vetted member of staff and the member of staff will be in the presence of the volunteer at all times. Following this, if the volunteering is to continue, a full DBS check must be seen by the centre manager before the volunteering commences.

Volunteers are also required to complete an induction process and to attend supervision in the same format employed staff do.

4.3 Children & Young People's Safeguarding Training

Individuals have preferred ways of learning through face-to-face courses, e-learning or virtual learning. It is recommended for managers to ensure that staff have embedded their learning into practice through gathering and maintaining evidence to demonstrate competence via supervision.

Staff working within the Play and Youth and Community (PYC) service are required to carry out training in relation to children & young people's safeguarding. The full list of training is available here with clearly outlined training requirements for different levels of roles and responsibilities: PSCP-LD-Programme-July25.pdf
Completion of all training is monitored regularly by senior management via supervision.

4.4 Induction and probation

All newly appointed staff and volunteers will take part in a formal induction process.

This process will start with an induction meeting. The whole process will be recorded and the standard templates should be used to ensure compliance with the process.

All staff will take part in a probation period to ensure competence in their role.

Please see Portsmouth City Council's Induction Policy and Probation Policy for further information.

4.5 Supervision

All staff are required to have regular recorded supervision sessions with their manager. These will usually be monthly however less frequent supervision may be appropriate where for example a post is only 3 hours a week. This will be agreed with the management team as necessary.

Safeguarding issues are to be discussed at every supervision session ensuring that staff have a clear understanding about policies and procedures in place.

4.6 Hirers

All HNB community centres have hire agreements which are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that:

- a current, signed hire agreement form is in place for each hire (including those where no charge is made)

- a valid indemnity insurance policy has been sighted and evidenced (where required)
- there is evidenced of relevant qualifications and DBS status (where required).
- All hirers to agree to the centre's terms and conditions of hire.

5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Person was specified in the Children Act 2004 and ensured that every organisation had a “named person” for safeguarding children and young people. Prior to that, the role had frequently been known as the Child Protection Officer.

The responsibilities of the DSL are to:

- Keep their head of service and team informed of any safeguarding concerns or safeguarding referrals and any safeguarding allegations made against a member of staff. This would be done in line with the Portsmouth City Council policies and procedures and HR support throughout the process.
- Ensure if a referral is required that it is reported through the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as soon as possible but must be done within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of possible safeguarding issue.
- Make prompt contact with the police if a criminal offence is suspected or if there is a concern for a child or young person's immediate safety.
- Ensure that all members of staff, including newly appointed staff, are aware of the service policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of children.
- Ensure that all members of staff are kept up to date on any changes to the policies and procedures related to the safeguarding of children.
- Ensure that the staff team and volunteers they are directly responsible for receive regular safeguarding refresher training at least every 3 years.

The responsibilities of the head of service are to:

- Investigate any allegation of child abuse and/or safeguarding concern involving a member of staff or volunteer, with the support of HR and in line with policies and procedures.
- Inform the LADO of any allegation of safeguarding allegation made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure that all play and youth policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are updated in line with any revised guidelines for child protection from the LSCB.
- Ensure there are effective links with the LADO, LSCB and MASH to ensure best practice.

The management DSLs for Play and Youth:

Nicola Clannachan
Head of Housing Community Services

Julia Potter
Play and Youth Manager

Contact email: PYCService@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

The management DSL for Community Centres

Sarah Lindley
Operational Manager

Contact email: Sarah.Lindley@Portsmouthcc.gov.uk

6. Handling Safeguarding Children Issues

If a member of staff has any safeguarding concerns regarding a child/family, not arising from a disclosure, then they **must** complete a safeguarding record. For example, concerns about a child's poor hygiene, a child always seeming hungry, a child displaying out of character behaviour.

Once a safeguarding record has been completed, the member of staff should inform the DSL as soon as possible. Whilst individually these safeguarding records may not require any action to be taken, multiple records on the same child or family, on review, may result in a referral to MASH.

If a safeguarding concern is significant and requires immediate action the DSL will immediately refer to MASH and advise the service lead of the action taken.

Where a concern requires monitoring in order to understand if it is a safeguarding issue the following process will be used:

- Play & Youth workers complete daily recorded session wash up sheets with a section for safeguarding issues; this sheet is then used to monitor any issues that arise during sessions.
- Weekly review of session wash up sheets by centre manager with their deputy.
- If required, referral to MASH is made. If uncertain advice may be sought from tier 2 coordinators in the MASH at any point to clarify the decision.

- If a referral is not required, then continue to monitor and evidence.
- Service lead informed of action taken allowing for a review of the decision made.

7. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH is multi-agency and brings together services from social care, education, health, police and children's services. The MASH aims to work together to offer the right help at an early stage to families who need support.

If you are concerned that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse, you must contact MASH who can discuss this with you.

During Office Hours 0845671 0271 pccraduty@portsmouthcc.gcsx.gov.uk

Out of Hours 0300 555 1373

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999. The contact should always be followed up with a written inter-agency contact form as soon as possible.

You should seek, in general, to discuss concerns with the family and, where possible seek the family's agreement to making a referral unless this may, either by delay or the behavioural response it prompts or for any other reason, place the child or staff at increased risk of significant harm.

8. Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership (PSCP)

Portsmouth City Council and the play and youth and community (PYC) services operate in conjunction with the PSCP, including accessing training modules and keeping up to date with safeguarding issues.

The Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) brings together all the main organisations who work with children and families in Portsmouth, with the aim of ensuring that they work together effectively to keep children safe.

Contact information can be found at Home - Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (portsmouthscp.org.uk)

9. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works or volunteers with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child.

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

The LADO role applies to workers who are paid, unpaid, volunteers, casual, agency or anyone self-employed and they capture concerns, allegations or offences emanating from outside work.

10. Managing allegations of abuse against staff

Management DSLs have a responsibility to ensure the safety of young people, children and vulnerable adults:

- Dealing with allegations of abuse quickly, fairly and consistently.
- Supporting all parties involved in allegations to reach a suitable conclusion.
- Ensuring all staff members are aware of their responsibilities and the actions they should take regarding allegation of abuse.
- Ensuring all staff members know what to do in the event of an allegation of abuse regarding external relationships which may affect the integrity of the service and the Council.

Actions which may indicate abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Behaviours which have caused a child, young person or vulnerable adult to be harmed.
- Criminal offenses committed against children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Behaviour which indicates risk to children, young people, or vulnerable adults. • Behaviour which violates a duty of care.

All staff members, including volunteers, are responsible for the ongoing safety of all service users.

The DSLs are responsible for hearing concerns and reports surrounding potential safeguarding issues. The DSLs are then responsible for referring cases to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and further action will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

11. Handling Safeguarding Adults Concerns

The primary focus for safeguarding is to promote well-being and prevent abuse and neglect happening in the first place, ensure the safety and wellbeing of anyone who has been subject to abuse or neglect, take action against those responsible and learn lessons and make changes; which will be achieved by putting the person at the very centre. Safeguarding is everybody's business and with the new Care Act 2014 this can only strengthen the protection of vulnerable adults within Portsmouth.

Any safeguarding of adults concerns immediately need to be made a record of. This could include any person who is at risk of, or experiencing, abuse or neglect and as a result is unable to protect themselves.

If a member of staff hears or suspects a vulnerable adult is being abused in anyway, it must be reported.

Adult Social Care Helpdesk: 023 9268 0810
Out of hours contact: 0300 555 1373

Portsmouth City Council has a safeguarding team and can be contacted on the number above or email PortsmouthAdultMASH@portsmouthcc.gcsx.gov.uk

Alternatively if urgent support is not required safeguarding concerns can be referred to
Portsmouth Adult's MASH team by using the referral form which can be found here: Reporting Concerns (portsmouthsab.uk). A one-minute guide to submitting safeguarding concerns is also available on the same link.

12. Portsmouth Safeguarding Adult's Board

Portsmouth City Council and the play, youth and community service work in conjunction with the Portsmouth Safeguarding Adult's Board including accessing training modules and keeping up to date with safeguarding issues.

Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board is a multi-agency strategic partnership that oversees and leads adult safeguarding in Portsmouth.

Information can be found at: Home - Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board

13. Safeguarding Adults training

All Play and Youth and Community staff and volunteers are required to complete the Safeguarding Adults Awareness training via the PCC Learning Portal - Intranet.
Further and relevant training is accessible via Training - Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board.
Completion of all training is monitored regularly by senior management via supervision.

14. E-Safety

The use of information technology is an essential part of all our lives. It is an intrinsic part of the experience of our children and young people, and it is greatly

beneficial to all. However, it can present challenges in terms of how we use it responsibly and, if misused either by an adult or young person, can potentially be harmful to them.

The Play and Youth and Community services (PYC) will seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Supporting and encouraging children, young people and adults using our service to use the opportunities offered by mobile phone technology and the internet in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.
- Supporting and encouraging parents/carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online when using their mobile devices and consoles.
- Informing parents and carers of incidents of concerns as appropriate.
- Ensuring that the personal information of staff, volunteers and service users are not published on our website without permission.
- Providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online and the appropriate use of ICT, linking this to the responsibilities laid out in our personal and professional boundaries policy.
- Offer site blocking via My City Wifi and review blocked sites as required.

15. Whistleblowing Policy

Please refer to Portsmouth City Council's whistleblowing policy.

16. HIPS LSCPs

Portsmouth City Council is part of the HIPS LSCPs partnership. Policies and procedures can be found using the following link:

Welcome | Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton