# Policy 77: Child Protection Policy

**Last updated by:** SH, JM, RS

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- [Age UK logo]
1. Introduction and Scope

i) Age UK York (AUKY) provides a range of services to older people, known for the purposes of this policy as service users;

ii) AUKY's intention and purpose is to promote the well-being of service users and assist them to lead enjoyable lives;

iii) AUKY provides services via staff and volunteers and, where appropriate, liaises with other organisations including statutory services and with carers and relatives;

iv) From time to time, AUKY’s staff and volunteers encounter children who are relatives or are in some other way associated with service users;

v) AUKY does not provide services for children but:
   - recognises that all children have a right to protection from abuse; and
   - acknowledges a safeguarding role for such children as it encounters.

2. Definitions

i) 'Children' means anyone up to the age of 18. Although some legislation only regards children up to the age of 16, a person's age may not be known or it may be unclear. In any case of doubt, workers should assume a child is under 16;

ii) 'Safeguarding' means being alert to situations and behaviour, on the part of children, service users and carers, of any situation where a child's moral, mental or physical wellbeing are endangered or threatened in some way;

iii) 'Alert' means bearing in mind the various ways in which children can be endangered or threatened, identifying any such situations and taking action (see below) to prevent the situation continuing.

3. Encountering children

i) At no time will an AUKY worker be in charge of any children encountered during the course of service user provision. The exception is where the person who has responsibility for a child is unconscious or is in the process of being hospitalised. Consequently, unless a child is in immediate danger, a worker should point out the inadvisability or illegality of any action that a child is performing or being asked to perform, the responsibility remaining with the person in charge of the child. (See below: S. 7. Taking Action.)

ii) This policy does not seek to list all the situations in which children may be encountered but envisages such situations as children who are related to service users or are accompanying carers of service users and who are:
   - caring for pets that belong to service users including in situations where the Keep Your Pet service is being used;
   - running errands such as going to the local shop;
   - doing household chores such as laundry, washing up, bedmaking;

iii) AUKY workers must not bring their own children to a service user's home.
3. Legislation and Guidance

i) AUKY acknowledges and works within all legislation relating to safeguarding;

ii) This Policy covers the requirements imposed by legislation and official guidance that has a bearing on safeguarding children;

iii) In particular, this Policy takes account of the Child Protection Act, 2004; the Children Act, 2004; the Children and Families Act, 2014; the Modern Slavery Act, 2015; and the 2014 Charity Commission Policy Paper 'Safeguarding Children and Young People'.

iv) Legislation:
   a) seeks to safeguard children and young people via a range of restrictions regarding alcohol, tobacco, gambling, employment, the purchase of fireworks, certain categories of films and video games and aerosol spray paint;
   b) covers begging, cruelty and sexual exploitation.

v) Legislation regarding some other kinds of behaviour such as drug abuse and the carrying of illegal weapons, while not intending specifically to relate to or safeguard children, are also relevant to children;

vi) AUKY has created Policy 32, the Anti-modern Slavery Policy. This acknowledges the terms of the Modern Slavery Act, 2015, and AUKY workers who provide any services to service users must read and understand this Policy before working with or providing services to service users;

vii) In all cases of doubt or concern, workers must consult their line manager or the Chief Officer;

viii) All workers will have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service before providing any service to service users or acquiring any information about service users.

4. Types of abuse

i) Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. It includes both inflicting harm and failing to prevent harm;

ii) AUKY workers might:
   - see evidence of abuse, such as physical injury or physical neglect or the actual infliction of injury;
   - hear evidence of abuse such as a violent argument or a child relating incidents of abuse;
   - experience feelings of concern because of a child’s behaviour or other heightened tension in a house, even without physical evidence.

iii) Physical abuse is the carrying out of deliberate actions intended to hurt a child. It can include:
   - deliberate violent acts including burning, scalding, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or in any way causing physical harm;
   - parents or carers of children may also feign symptoms of or deliberately cause ill health to that child;

iv) Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause
severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. Such maltreatment may include:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- not giving a child the opportunity to express their own views;
- deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate;
- the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations;
- overprotection or limiting of exploration, learning and normal social interaction;
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;
- bullying;
- cyber-bullying (see below);
- causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger;

v) Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

- During pregnancy it can occur as a result of maternal substance or alcohol misuse;
- Once a child is born it can include failure to:
  a) give adequate sustenance;
  b) provide adequate clothing or warmth;
  c) provide shelter, including abandonment or exclusion from home;
  d) protect a child from physical and emotional harm and danger;
  e) ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers; access to appropriate medical care and treatment;
  f) neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

vi) Sexual abuse may be perpetrated by men, women and other children and includes:

- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening;
- non-contact activities such as watching or taking part in the production of sexual activities;
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

vii) Modern slavery involves pressuring children or relatives and associates of individuals to undertake tasks or activities with the person to whom they are related or with whom they are associated when, if they were not so related or associated, they would not feel pressured. See also Policy 32.

viii) Cyber-bullying is the use of electronic communication by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. Children are often reluctant to admit that they are the victims of this form of bullying, which has the potential to cause considerable emotional damage and can result in self-harm.
5. Related Age UK York Policies

i) AUKY has created other policies that relate to specific services that it provides. For more details see the Index to Policies;

ii) Policy 32, the Anti-modern Slavery Policy, does not relate to a specific service but to any situation where anyone related to or associated with a service user, including children, may be pressured to provide a service by virtue of that relationship or association which, if they were not so related to or associated with, they would not feel obliged or inclined to provide.

6. Responsibilities

i) The Trustees of AUKY have ultimate responsibility for the workings of this Policy and for adherence to legislative requirements;

ii) The Trustees have vested day to day responsibility in the Chief Officer;

iii) AUKY has ‘Designated Child Protection Persons, consisting of Sally Hutchinson, Lis Ramage, Jane Morris and Nic Edwards, who should be contacted as soon as possible after a worker notices or suspects that a child’s safeguarding needs are a cause for concern;

iii) All workers have a legislative duty to report their concerns at the earliest opportunity;

iv) AUKY workers are not expected to have social work training or to try to analyse why a child is not being adequately safeguarded. For example, a parent or carer may themselves have mental ill health, or a child may not receive adequate sustenance because of financial constraints. The worker’s role is to be alert to safeguarding concerns and pass on those concerns, as above, as soon as possible;

v) All workers will have received a Disclosure and Barring Service check before being able to access any information about a service user. However, while it is naturally expected that workers will not behave in ways which would put a child's mental, physical or moral wellbeing at risk, if a complaint about such a situation is made about a worker, this will be fully investigated and all necessary action taken. (See S. 8 Complaints, below.)

7. Taking action

i) All AUKY workers have a legal responsibility to take action in cases where they suspect of have evidence of any kind of abuse;

ii) Where a worker identifies any situation where a child is in need of safeguarding, that worker should immediately report concerns to Sally Hutchinson, Jane Morris, Lis Ramage or Nic Edwards who are the Designated Child Protection Persons, (01904 627995) who are nominated by Age UK York to act on their behalf in referring allegations of suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

iii) As well as informing the individuals in 7 ii) above, the worker’s actions may depend on what is actually taking place:

- if a child is in physical danger such as mishandling electrical equipment, the worker should take such immediate action as is appropriate to prevent danger;

- if a child has been sent to the local shop for alcohol or cigarettes, for example, it would be illegal for a shop to serve the child so the transaction may not take place;
The worker should in any event, point out the illegality and ask whoever has sent the child to rescind the request;

- if a child is watching unsuitable material visible via electronic means, there is parental responsibility to protect the child from harm. Again, the worker should point out the illegality and may also remove/switch off the electronic equipment;

iv) There may be occasions where there are cultural expectations, cultural clashes or habits that prevail within specific families where children are expected to carry out tasks that are illegal or expose them to danger. In such instances, again depending on the precise circumstances, the worker should explain the illegality of inadvisability of any action, take preventative measures if the task is a dangerous one and inform the Designated Child Protection Person and talk to his/her line manager or the Chief Officer at the earliest opportunity;

v) In all instances where a worker has taken action, this will be reported and recorded in accordance with procedures established by the Designated Child Protection Person;

vi) Where a child reports abuse or talks about a situation which the worker believes is abusive, a record must be kept as soon as possible, even if the child requests that no record is kept or no one must be told;

vii) It is not the role of the worker to investigate the abuse but merely to record the situation and ensure the child's safety;

vii) The record must:

- remember that the record may be read by a stranger at some distant date so that no assumptions should be made about knowledge of anyone or location involved;
- be in ink;
- record the date and time the record is made;
- give the name and date of birth of the child(ren) concerned;
- provide a factual account of what happened, the location of the incident and any other details. The child's actual words should be recorded wherever possible;
- give the names of any other people involved either as alleged perpetrators or witnesses;
- what the worker did next e.g. informed the Designated Child Protection Person, the police etc;
- name and signature of the worker.

8. Complaints

i) All workers will receive certification from the Disclosure and Barring Service before being permitted to access service user information or to visit or assist with service user's service provision. However, this will not prevent complaints being made about AUKY workers;

ii) Complaints about workers will be dealt with either:

- in accordance with the AUKY Complaints Policy and a record kept confidentially; or
- if the complaint is an allegation of abuse then the Chief Officer will inform a City of York Council Designated Officer or the police.
9. Duty of the Prevent Lead

i) The Trustees of Age UK York have appointed the Chief Officer as Prevent Lead for Age UK York;

ii) All workers with any concerns about possible radicalisation or the vulnerability of any service user or other individual to be radicalised must discuss their concerns immediately with the Prevent Lead;

iii) The Prevent Lead will access the voluntary Channel Programme. This is a Local Authority-led multi-agency panel, which decides on what the most appropriate support package for that person will be;

iv) The Prevent Lead will reassure any worker who is uncertain that they are right in voicing their concerns and will keep the Trustee Board informed, as appropriate.

10. Statutory authorities

i) AUKY have Designated Child Protection Persons to whom all reports and concerns about child abuse must be reported as soon as possible;

ii) AUKY workers can also expect to be supported by their line manager and Chief Officer and should speak to either of those people at the earliest opportunity;

iii) In addition, there are statutory authorities whose duty it is to protect children and to whom the Designated Child Protection Person will make an immediate report. The City of York Council’s Advice and Assessment Service phone number is 01904 551900 and the Emergency Duty Social Work team phone number is 01609 780780;

iv) There may also be situations where a worker considers that the police and/or ambulance services are required immediately. S/he will contact such services and request immediate assistance and then contact his/her line manager and the Designated Child Protection Person;