

The Mix Crosby CIC

Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure

Other relevant The Mix Crosby policies:

Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedure

DBS Policy & Procedure

Equality & Diversity Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Electronic Communications Policy

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (Staff Handbook)

Confidentiality Policy / Code of Conduct

Data Protection Policy

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Policy written with the Support of Sefton CVS

POLICY

1. Overview

1.1 Policy Overview

This policy seeks to ensure that The Mix Crosby CIC undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and will respond to concerns appropriately. This is a priority for the organisation and we are all responsible for reporting concerns. All staff, directors, volunteers and associates are expected to understand their obligations and duty to implement each aspect of this policy and the associated procedures when required.

The policy should be read alongside all other company policies and procedures and is in line with the procedures of the Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) <http://www.seftonlscb.co.uk/>

All staff, volunteers and directors are required to sign to confirm that they have read and understood this policy at their induction or whenever the policy is amended. A copy of the signed declaration will be kept in the personnel files. A copy of this declaration is in Appendix II.

1.2 Safeguarding Overview

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and to protect them from harm. Child protection is part of the safeguarding process; it focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Abuse can arise in a variety of situations and can be defined as a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of circumstances or situations by those in a position of power. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission

In addition, abuse may also include: child exploitation (sexual and/or criminal), trafficking, forced marriage, bullying, and honour based violence.

For further information on signs and indicators of abuse refer to the following link: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>

Definition of a child

This guidance is based upon the Children Act 1989 which defines a child as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. This definition includes a child who has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education. This does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection.

See Appendix for links to relevant legislation.

2. Aim

Through this policy, we aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with whom the organisation engages across its operational activities. The aims of this policy are set out in accordance with the commitments The Mix Crosby makes within their Equality and Diversity Policy.

3. Scope

The policy establishes a framework to support employees in their practice and clarifies the organisation's expectations, including the obligation of employees to take immediate action where any concern regarding the safety, protection and wellbeing of children or adults is noted.

4. Responsibilities

This policy identifies the overall responsibilities of the Board of Directors, Senior Management, operational employees (staff, volunteers and associates) for ensuring the safety, health, wellbeing, reduction of risks, safeguarding and protection of children with whom The Mix Crosby engages in its operational activities.

All employees (staff, volunteers and associates) have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all employees to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding, and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

4.1 Additional Specific Responsibilities

Directors have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their community interest company (CIC). This means:

- Acting in the best interests of children
- Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them
- Assessing and managing risk

- Putting safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- Undertaking ongoing monitoring and review to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective
- Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse
- Liaison with the Designated Persons and monitoring their work

The Mix Crosby designated Directors are Sue O'Connor and Mel James-Henry

The Designated Directors have responsibility to ensure:

- The policy is accessible
- The policy is implemented
- Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented

Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the policy is monitored and reviewed
- Promoting the welfare of children
- Ensuring staff and volunteers have access to appropriate training and information
- Receiving staff concerns about safeguarding and responding to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- Keeping up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS
- Developing and maintaining effective links with relevant agencies, including Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Designated Officer for the Local Authority
- Taking forward concerns about responses

Employees have responsibility to ensure that they:

- Are familiar with, and adhere to, the policies and procedures of the organisation
- Know who the Designated Person(s) are
- Know how to report concerns
- Undertake The Mix Crosby mandatory induction safeguarding training and access appropriate additional learning opportunities. All safeguarding training should be refreshed every 3 years as a minimum, dependent on staff role, and completion of training should be recorded on staff files.

5. Monitoring & Review

The policy and practices of the organisation will be formally reviewed annually to ensure that they remain current and compliant with the law and best practice. The designated persons will report to The Mix Crosby Board of Directors on matters of significance relating to this safeguarding policy, as appropriate or at the request of the Board.

6. PROCEDURE for information sharing and safeguarding

This procedure outlines the stages involved in raising and reporting a safeguarding concern at The Mix Crosby.

All information relating to the following areas should be recorded on the *Safeguarding Concern* form:

- Welfare concerns that do not meet a safeguarding referral threshold but which staff have had a professional discussion about with their line manager or a designated safeguarding lead.
- When information has been shared with another agency in relation to welfare matters, including where actions have been agreed
- Where information has been shared to support a safeguarding referral which a partner agency is leading on.
- Where it is deemed the concern meets a safeguarding referral threshold and a formal referral to social services is required



The Mix Crosby
Concern Form 2019.

Using this recording process enables us to govern the sharing of information and also monitor concerns which may progress to safeguarding concerns

The decision to refer will be taken by the Designated Person in line with The Mix Crosby Level of Need Guidance (see Appendix).

If the person reporting the concern feels that the issue should be managed differently, they have the right to refer directly to Social Services or if appropriate escalate the concern to Sefton LSCB inline with the Board's escalation procedures. In either of these instances, the referrer should inform the Designated Person of their intended action.

It is **not** the role of employees within The Mix Crosby to investigate concerns or disclosures of abuse. Doing so could adversely affect future investigations.

The following links provide information on the appropriate processes for making a referral. If a referral needs to be made, the Designated Person will support in this process being followed.

6.1 Safeguarding Children Referral

Direct page which links to referral forms and process: <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/1924>

This link can also be accessed through the Sefton Council Home Page www.sefton.gov.uk > I want to > Concerned about a child.

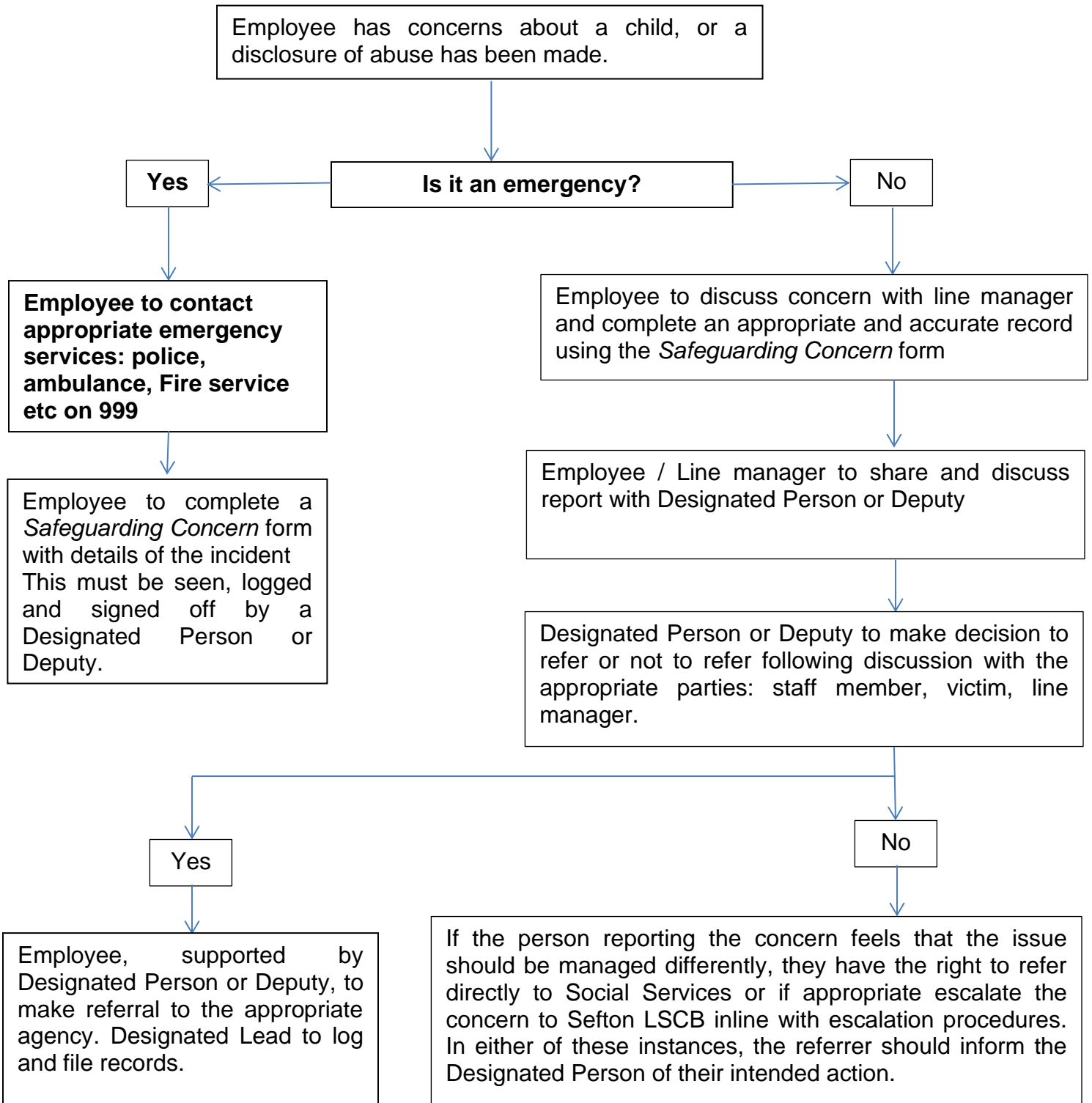
For referrals specifically in relation to concerns about Child Sexual Exploitation, there are two additional forms that are required to be completed in addition to the Child Referral form. These forms should be sent securely to SocialCareCustomerAccessTeam@sefton.gcsx.gov.uk

The general enquiries line is 0345 140 0845 for between 8am and 6pm. If you need to have a consultation with a social worker prior to making a referral through to Children's Social Care call the MASH (Multiagency Safeguarding Hub) Team on 0151 934 4388. If, after referring to this example, you still require further assistance you can speak to a MASH Contact Officer on the following numbers 0151 934 3801/2533/4200/3596.

If you think a child is in immediate danger or it is an emergency, call 999

This information regarding referrals is relevant when raising a concern about a child living in Sefton. If the child lives in another borough, that Authority's procedure must be followed. The Designated Person will assist with this.

6.3 The Mix Crosby Safeguarding Concern Reporting Process



Contact information for The Mix Crosby Designated Safeguarding Person
 Mel James-Henry Tel: 07425 174385, mel.james-henry@themixcrosby.com
 Sue O'Connor, sue.oconnor@themixcrosby.com

7. Communications, Training and Support for Employees

The Mix Crosby commits resources for the induction and training of staff and volunteers, effective communications, and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding

7.1 Induction

The induction of new staff and volunteers will include meeting the designated safeguarding person, reading appropriate policies and procedures, and undertaking mandatory training.

7.2 Training

All staff is required to undertake basic training in safeguarding children (regardless of their role/position). This must be completed within six weeks of their appointment with the organisation. The minimum training required is NSPCC Educare Level 1 Child Protection. The Designated Person(s) and Trustee Safeguarding Champion will attend appropriate Level 2 training. All staff will be required to complete training regularly in line with Sefton LSCB guidelines. Training needs will also be informed by supervision and PDR processes.

7.3 Communications and Discussion of Safeguarding Issues

Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice, including utilisation of local safeguarding thresholds for referral where they are in existence.

- A minimum of quarterly Strategic Safeguarding group meetings comprising of attendance from the Designated Persons, and Directors
- Quarterly Safeguarding development meetings for representatives from each staff team within The Mix Crosby, led by the Designated Person(s)
- Relevant policy briefings and updates provided to staff and volunteers as required

7.4 Support for those at risk

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful. All those making a complaint or allegation, or expressing concern, whether they are staff, service users, carers or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk
- We will endeavour to keep people safe from risk of reprisals or intimidation

7.5 Support for staff

Staff will be given support by their line manager and the Designated Person(s) and afforded protection if necessary. The Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that external support is provided, if necessary and appropriate.

8. Professional Boundaries

The Mix Crosby expects employees (staff, volunteers and associates) to protect their own professional integrity and that of the organisation.

Professional boundaries must be adhered to.

Employees **will**:

- Remember they are a role model and provide an example for those they work with to follow
- Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may be easily misinterpreted and so leave all parties vulnerable
- Be alert to any potential harm to children
- Respect the right to privacy
- Provide opportunities for children to discuss any concerns they may have
- Speak to the Designated Person(s) if concerned about the safety or welfare of an individual
- Speak to the Designated Person if they suspect a child is developing or has developed an infatuation with them, or has inappropriate feelings towards any member of staff or volunteer;
- Refer to the The Mix Crosby Whistleblowing policy if concerns arise about the suitability of a member of staff or volunteer in relation to working with children or if an allegation is raised by another member of staff, service user or third party, such as an external organisation or community member.
- Follow guidance in relation to the use of electronic communication as set out in the The Mix Crosby Electronic Communication Policy and seek further guidance as required when considering the development and use of project-based social networking sites

Employees **will not**:

- Arrange to see or communicate with service users in circumstances unconnected with their work, including the use of texting, video conferencing and personal social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter
- Be left alone for substantial periods of time with any child, except where one-to-one work is necessary. In which case, they should inform another staff member where they are

going, with whom and for how long. This includes the use of video conferencing and online chat platform's (e.g. Discord) when the minimum of two workers should be present.

- Permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves
- Show favouritism to, or become too closely associated with, an individual. Nor should they get drawn into inappropriate, attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. crushes)
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of any kind which could be misunderstood
- Do anything which might undermine a good reputation for providing a safe environment

If a child shares worrying or sensitive information with you, **do not**

- Promise to keep secrets
- Hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the Designated Person(s)

9. Allegations Management

The Mix Crosby recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations made against its employees (staff, volunteers and associates) within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation.

An allegation or concern could come from an employee, director, volunteer or associate within the organisation. Any concerns or allegations should be immediately reported to the Designated Person(s) in accordance with the The Mix Crosby Whistleblowing Policy.

The Designated Person must refer any allegations relating to children to the Designated Officer (DO) for Sefton Local Authority (Pauline Trubshaw) **within one working day** of the allegation being made, in accordance with the procedures set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children. The DO will advise on any action that must be taken to keep service users and the organisation safe. The DO will pursue the allegation and offer support, help and advice to the organisation throughout the investigation. See the following link for further information <http://www.seftonlscb.co.uk/managing-allegations/>

The alleged individual has the right to seek representation and The Mix Crosby will support any member of staff or volunteer who is subject to such a complaint. However, irrespective of the outcome of any Police or Social Care investigations, The Mix Crosby will consider disciplinary action, in accordance with its Disciplinary Procedure, until the matter has been resolved.

If, following consideration and any consultation, the concern is clearly about bad practice rather than abuse, The Mix Crosby will take the necessary action to support, advise, manage or instigate disciplinary action against the member of staff or volunteer about whom the allegation has been made.

Where a member of staff or volunteer is dismissed, or removed from working in a regulated activity because they harmed a child, or might have harmed them, or if they resigned before being dismissed for one of these reasons, The Mix Crosby must inform the Disclosure and Barring Service. Guidance and a referral form can be downloaded at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>

10. Information Sharing, Consent and Recording

When considering the appropriateness of sharing information The Data Protection Act should not be considered as a barrier. It simply sets out a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.

Where there are concerns about the wellbeing of a child, it is best practice to gain consent to share information. However, if there are concerns relating to the parent/family in relation to the abuse, this may not be appropriate. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm, then follow the relevant procedures without delay.

All information sharing or referrals of concerns need to be carefully recorded in full using the appropriate recording form as outlined in section 6 of this policy. When recording concerns, it is particularly important to:

- Be specific about the nature of concerns
- Provide accurate details
- Detail the time and date specific incidents were observed, if applicable

Records should be signed by the employee recording concerns and by the Designated Person who has provided guidance on the course of action.

All records and witness statements relating to safeguarding concerns will be kept confidential. Access will only be via the Board of Directors and the Designated Person(s). Information will only be shared with other agencies that have a need to know, in accordance with Sefton LSCB procedures and Government guidance on information sharing.

Records will be held and stored securely in a central place by the Designated Person and in line with The Mix Crosby Data Management Policy. Records will be destroyed in line with The Mix Crosby Data Retention Schedule guidelines. If other employees hold records in relation to referrals discussed with the Designated Person these guidelines should also be followed.

11. Safeguarding Monitoring

The organisation will monitor the following safeguarding aspects:

- Safer recruitment practices
- DBS checks undertaken
- References applied for new staff
- Records made and kept of staff and volunteer supervision and appraisal
- Register/ record of staff training on child/ vulnerable adult protection
- Whether safeguarding concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
- Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
- Presence and actions of Designated Person for Safeguarding

Appendix I: USEFUL REFERENCES

The Department for Education is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.

At the local level, Local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) co-ordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children. Each local board includes: local authorities, health bodies, the police and others, including the voluntary and independent sectors. The LSCBs are responsible for local child protection policy, procedure and guidance.

Legislation

1. Children Act 1989 and 2004
2. Children and Social Work Act 2017
3. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
4. Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
5. Children and Families Act 2014
6. Education Act 2002 and Education Act 2011
7. Digital Economy Act 2017
8. Adoption and Children Act 2002
9. Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
10. Children and Adoption Act 2006
11. Children and Young Persons Act 2008
12. Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
13. Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

Policy and guidance

1. Working together to safeguard children (2015)
2. Child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation (HM Government, 2015)
3. Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation- Procedural information (Home Office, 2015)
4. Sefton LSCB Level of Need Guidance <https://www.seftonlscb.org.uk/lscb/news/level-of-need-guidance>

Appendix II: Staff, volunteer and directors declaration

By signing this declaration I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understood The Mix Crosby Safeguarding Children policy and procedure.
- I am aware of who the designated safeguarding leads are
- I am aware of what I need to do if I have any care or safeguarding concerns about a child.

I also acknowledge that I must complete the following training as a minimum requirement:

- NSPCC/ Educare Child Protection Level 1 eLearning course; or the
- LSCB endorsed Level 1 Safeguarding Children 1 day training

I must renew my safeguarding training every 3 years.

Name:

Signature:

Position (staff/volunteer/director):

Date: