



# Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be affected by gang activities and serious youth violence

IN CONJUNCTION WITH



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**COMPANY REGISTRATION NO: 7884961**

## HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Please use this handbook in conjunction with your employment documents.

### Child Protection Policy – Statement with regard to the Safe from Harm Act 2004

As an Organisation that works with young and vulnerable people, Gangs Unite CIC will work in accordance with the provisions of the 2004 Act to make safety of young people in our care a first priority.

We will:

- Designate a responsible person to be the conduit for concerns about safety of young people.
- Put safeguards in place to make our work as safe as possible.
- Establish procedures to deal with concerns about abuse.
- Support those who have been abused.
- Designate a person to whom all concerns about Child Protection issues should be referred.

### Safeguards

Gangs Unite CIC is committed to:

- Safeguard young people whom we are working with against physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual abuse, harm, neglect, grooming.
- Deal appropriately with indications, verbal or otherwise, that a young person is being abused, coerced into inappropriate and risky behaviour.
- Act in an appropriate manner in order to minimise any likelihood of accusation of inappropriate behaviour towards a young person.
- Deal with any accusations made against any Gangs Unite CIC staff or volunteers, whilst they are working with Gangs Unite CIC, according to the plan of action.
- Plan events/activities with the overall welfare and safety of young people in mind.
- All Management and staff having a CRB enhanced disclosure, either via Gangs Unite CIC or another umbrella body. The Office Manager should be notified of the date, number and other relevant details of the disclosure. This information is to be kept securely.



## Management/Supervision

Regular meetings of staff with their line manager will take place to ensure good practice is maintained and team members are aware of any issues pertaining to risk or abuse that might arise or be current.

## Appointment

Appointment of staff and volunteers will follow Gangs Unite CIC recruitment and selection procedures. From a Child Protection viewpoint these are:

- Obtaining proof of identity
- Interview
- References
- Requirement to allow DBS check

DBS disclosures will be kept secure with right of access strictly limited.

## Induction

- New staff or volunteers shall be given the Child Protection Policy to read.
- Staff will be given appropriate training for their level of contact with young people.
- If during any meeting for young people under the auspices of Gangs Unite CIC an unknown adult comes into and remains in that area the organiser should ensure that polite enquires are made as to their identity.
- Checking the safety of venues, arrangements and equipment is the responsibility of the appointed organiser.
- Guidelines for those working with young people will be followed.

## Procedure where there are concerns about abuse

All allegations or indications of abuse are to be taken seriously. The young person must be listened to with respect. It is important to be honest and inform him/her that it is not possible to promise that this information can remain a secret.

## Types of abuse and possible signs you may observe

- Bullying - Physical harm or injury, the person becomes anxious around certain individual / individuals / places.
- Emotional – the person is threatened, pressurised, overburdened with responsibility.
- Neglect – such as inadequate care is shown by the responsible adult that the young person is liable to damage in health or development.
- Sexual – adults (or other young people) use a young person for



sexual satisfaction, activities can vary from showing pornographic images, through intimate touching to sexual penetration.

- Spiritual – the young person is controlled, coerced or exploited by someone in spiritual authority.
- Gang involved and at risk of harm through their gang related activities. (e.g. drug supply, weapon use, sexual exploitation and risk of attack from own or rival gang members.
- Drug Use.

## General Signs

- If you know the young person, are there changes from normal patterns, are they unusually tired, showing strange speech patterns?
- Does the young person associate with others known to be 'at risk', abused or bullied?
- Do they appear injured, distressed or to exhibit phobias
- Sudden loss of interest in School, decline in attendance or academic achievement.
- Holds unexplained money or possessions.
- Broken off with old friends, now only associates with one group.
- Scared when entering certain areas.
- Unexplained injuries.

## If staff or volunteers are informed of/suspect abuse they should:

- Make an immediate note of conversation/factors involved in their suspicions using the young person's own words, verbatim. A summary will not substitute for the person's key statements. Let the young person know you may need to tell someone else about this.
- Inform the team leader / manager.
- Complete a disclosure form.
- Where disclosure/concern takes place in a school or other agency's premises, Gangs Unite CIC will co-operate with such agencies.
- Where there appears an immediate serious threat to a young person and/or other children, the Social Services Child Safeguarding team should be contacted as soon as possible.
- If the accusation does not involve the parent/guardian of the young person, the person with parental responsibility should be informed that you are passing on information to Social Services

and why.

- If the matter is reported to Social Services, staff members concerned may be requested to attend a strategy meeting. Gangs Unite CIC will co-operate with any such request.
- Details of such proceedings are to be on a strictly need-to-know basis.

### **Allegations against staff or volunteer**

All allegations of abuse made against staff or volunteers must be reported to the team leader/manager. The staff member/volunteer must be informed.

The person should normally be withdrawn from frontline work. Options for him/her will include working in the office, at home or being granted special paid leave. The Management should satisfy themselves that the person accused has appropriate support. In the event of the team leader or a Manager being under accusation, another Senior Manager should be contacted directly.

### **Support for the Abused**

Gangs Unite CIC is committed to:

- Offering what support is possible and appropriate to an abused person.
- Listening with respect to what the young person wishes and says.
- Maintaining confidentiality without prejudicing appropriate activity by statutory agencies.
- As with all young people support and interventions should be proportionate, rational and based foremost on the young person's needs identified during an assessment.

### **One to One Mentoring**

- If the person is under 18, written consent from a parent/guardian should be obtained in order to meet them.
- You should usually choose public places to meet and never in a room with a closed door.
- Don't be on your own with a young person and don't touch a young person unless they initiate contact.
- If meeting in a public place, check to see if the young person is in a safe environment and has a safe route home.
- If there is a need to give a lift home to ensure safety, notify another staff member, preferably before or as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Maintain dated notes of meeting, recording anything said or



done which concerns you.

### **Detached Work**

- Always work with a minimum of two staff together.
- Emergencies which necessitate separating should be noted and information passed to the line manager.
- Any incidents of concern should be noted and dated and passed to the line manager.

### **Residential Work**

- Do not invade the privacy of young people unnecessarily. Leaders should knock before entering sleeping areas and, except for emergencies, only enter accommodation of young people of the same sex.
- Separate accommodation for the sexes is essential. Where possible leaders should also be in separate accommodation from the young people.
- Keep different age groups separate from each other in their own sleeping accommodation.
- Leaders must be representative of the sex of the young people attending, i.e Females to female, male to male.

### **Talking with Young People**

- Talk in open places where others are around, although privacy needs to be considered.
- Discretion is vital. However, do not promise at the outset to keep a secret. You may need to tell someone in authority. If that is so, tell them who it will be and what you will say.
- Don't be afraid to ask for advice. We want the best for the young person. If you feel out of your depth or unsure, ask someone to help you.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Keep calm and don't appear shocked. Keep control of your body language.
- Don't laugh about, minimise, or trivialise any issue, even if it may not seem important and could lead to them raising other issues of greater significance.
- Always encourage and affirm, don't judge or condemn.
- Don't feel that you have to bring the conversation to an early conclusion. Some things may need to be talked through more thoroughly. However, don't offer to do this alone and don't offer



the availability of someone else without getting their confirmation that this is acceptable to them.

- If you are told anything illegal you must tell your team leader or, if unavailable, a senior manager straight away. There is no general legal duty to report an offence to the Police.
- Do not touch someone inappropriately when talking with them. It is good practice to follow the boy with boy and girls for girl's guidance. Do not hug a member of either sex.
- Follow up where appropriate and check how they are the following week.
- Fill in your form straight away for line manager covering the general issue without unnecessarily breaking confidences.

## Signs of Abuse

Signs listed below are not exhaustive and by themselves may not necessarily mean the young person is experiencing abuse but can be indicators.

- Socialising with others, known or suspected to have been abused; bullied or at risk.
- Arriving at different times with different adults. Changing times of arrival, withdrawal from meetings.
- Physical appearance:
  - a) Clothing unchanged, crumpled, smelly, unlike normal appearance.
  - b) Clothing inappropriate: too adult, wrong size, much smarter than usual, which indicates sudden sources of funding, new dramatic use of makeup.
- Change in demeanour compared with that previously known; fatigued, excitable, high, withdrawn, signs of fear, distress, phobias. More frequent visits to the toilet can have a range of reasons but can also be an indicator.
- Changes in speech patterns: halting, torrent of abuse, silent, lack of response. There can also be allegations of inappropriate 'naughty' behaviour from a third party.
- Signs of damage on the flesh: swelling, limping, lines/welts, appearance of scratches indicating use of implement, bandages, change in hairstyle to mask injury.
- Signs of drug use.

## Confidentiality Policy

Ensuring confidentiality is vital to the work carried out by Gangs Unite CIC. No employee or volunteer may disclose any information of a private or personal nature regarding any individual who are encountered as part of your employment, unless they are specifically authorised to do so. An employee coming into possession of confidential information of a sensitive nature and which gives cause for concern is encouraged to report the matter to the team leader or Senior Management who may advise an appropriate course of action.

## Data Protection:

Under the Data Protection Act (1998), employees may be held personally liable for distress caused by reason of inaccuracy, loss or disclosure of any information relating to an individual. Employees should therefore take reasonable care when collecting and storing personal information and must not under any circumstances release it to unauthorised persons.

All personal data should be kept secure and no longer than necessary.

