1. Introduction

Future Directions CIC believes that it is always unacceptable for a child of young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and their agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare.

The purpose of the policy:
- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Future Directions CIC’s services, including the children of adult members or users
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or be at risk of harm

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board or directors, paid staff, volunteers and agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Future Directions CIC.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for all staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.
2. **Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers**

Future Directions CIC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, following National Guidance.

**Pre-selection Checks must include the following:**
- All volunteers should complete an Application Form. The Application Form will elicit information about an applicant’s past and a self-disclosure about any Criminal Record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Record Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one from previous work environment. These references must be taken up.
- Evidence of identity should be provided (e.g. Passport or Driving Licence with photo).

3. **Interview and Induction**

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the Application Form has been completed in full (including sections on Criminal Records and Self-Disclosure).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should sign up to General Social Care Council (GSCC) Code of Practice.
- Child Protection Policy are explained and training needs are identified.

4. **Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.
- Staff and volunteers to complete a recognised Awareness Training on Child Protection, and attendance of update training when necessary.
5. **Code of Behaviour – for all Staff and Volunteers**

You must not:

- Staff and/or volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. Meetings with individual children should be avoided or take place within sight of others. If privacy is needed staff and volunteers should ensure that service user’s are given this accordingly and other staff or volunteers should be aware of the meeting/or interaction occurring.

- Staff and/or volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children. However, there may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort at times of distress or physical support in relation to personal/intimate care (in such cases contact should only take place with the consent of the child). If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is a physical contact lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

- It is not good practice to take children alone in a car, however short the journey. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents (or guardians) and the Team Manager of the property.

- Staff and/or volunteers should not meet children outside of work/activities unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parents and the Team Manager of the property.

- Staff and/or volunteers should not start an investigation or question anyone after an allegation or concern has been raised. This is the job of the authorities. You should just record the facts and report these to your line manager or on call manager.

- Staff and/or volunteers should never (even in fun):
  - Initiate or engage in sexually provocative conversations or activity.
  - Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged.
  - Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
  - Allow any allegations made by a child go without being reported and addressed, or either trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues.
  - Make promises to keep any disclosure confidential from relevant authorities.
  - Share a room with a child.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.

- Staff and/or volunteers should not show favouritism to any one child, nor should they issue or threaten any form of physical punishment.

You must:

- Staff and/or volunteers must respect children’s rights to privacy and encourage children and adults to feel comfortable enough to report attitudes or behaviour they do not like. This means maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with young people e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them.

- Staff and/or volunteers will be expected to act with discretion with regards to their personal relationships. They should ensure their personal relationships do not affect their role within the organisation. All pre-existing relationships between staff/volunteers must be declared.

- Staff and/or volunteers must refrain consuming alcohol for a period of at least 12 hours prior to assuming responsibility for any child or children.

- All staff and/or volunteers should be aware of the local authority child protection procedure for reporting concerns or incidents, and should familiarise themselves with the contact details of the designated person.

- If a member of staff or volunteer finds himself or herself the subject of inappropriate affection or attention from a child, they should make others aware of this.

- If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns relating to the welfare of a child in their care, be it concerns about actions/behaviours of another staff member or volunteer or concerns based on any conversation with the child; particularly when the child makes an allegation, they should report this to their Team Manager.

- Staff and/or volunteers must act in the best interest of children in their care to ensure that every effort is made to support them to maintain their health and wellbeing. This encompasses support to attend appropriate health appointments, healthy diet and lifestyle, monitoring changes and ensuring records are appropriately maintained.

- Staff and/or volunteers must be excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.

- Staff and/or volunteers must keep up-to-date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
• Staff and/or volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations.

• Staff and/or volunteers must secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.

• Staff and/or volunteers must keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

• Where a child is assessed as requiring any kind of physical intervention, this must be decided and agreed by the allocated social worker, any individual who has parental responsibility for the child and full details and guidance must be documented in the child’s risk assessments/management guidelines before any such interventions are implemented.

6. Safeguarding

All staff have the following statement written into their job descriptions:-

“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment, have direct or indirect contact with vulnerable adults, children or families or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare.”

“Future Directions CIC is committed to ensuring that no act or omission on the part of the company or that of its staff puts a vulnerable adult or child at risk and that systems are in place to proactively safeguard and promote their welfare.”

All staff on commencing employment with Future Directions CIC will receive the necessary training and support in order to fulfil their obligations and also be made aware of who the safeguarding lead for the company is.

All staff should make themselves aware of the local authority procedure for reporting any concerns/issues they may have in regards to safeguarding.

7. Child Protection Training

In order to safeguard children effectively, staff employed at Future Directions CIC will need to have a basic awareness of how to recognise a child in need/child protection issues, and initiate concerns if need be through their Team Manager or the On call Manager.

These training requirements will be met via:-

• All new staff attending the Future Directions CIC induction will receive a session on safeguarding.
• All staff attending the basic awareness in child protection course provided by Future Directions CIC.

8. **Incidents that must be Reported/Recorded**

If any of the following occurs you should report this immediately to a manager and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If a child accidentally hurts themselves.
- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If a child appears sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

9. **Staff who have concerns about a Childs Welfare**

If you have concerns about a child’s welfare you must discuss immediately with your Manager.

If it is considered that the child is or may be a child in need, the child and the family will be referred to Social Services by a Senior Manager (see Flowchart, Appendix A).

Where a referral is made to Social Services by Future Directions CIC the Senior Manager or nominated Deputy will make the referral by telephone. Social Services should acknowledge the written referral within 1 working day of receiving it. If nothing has been heard from Social Services within 3 days, a Senior Manager or nominated Deputy will follow up the matter with Social Services.

All staff have a responsibility to co-operate fully with all child protection investigations through both the company and external agencies. The Senior Manager involved is responsible for ensuring any member of staff involved as a witness in a child protection review or investigation is supported and fully appraised of the process and what will be required of them.

10. **References**

- What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused.
- Every Child Matters
“What to do if you are worried a child is being abused”

**Referral**

Staff have concerns about child’s welfare

Staff discusses with Manager and Operational Network Manager regarding child protection

Still has concerns

Future Directions CIC Manager refers to Social Services immediately following up in writing within 48 hours

Social Worker and Manager acknowledge receipt of referral and decide on next course of action within 1 working day

Initial assessment required (To be undertaken by Social Services)

Concerns about child’s immediate safety

Social Services take immediate action as required

No longer has concerns

No further child protection action, although Future Directions CIC Managers may need to act to ensure services provided

Feedback to referrer on next course of action

No further Social Services involvement at this stage, although other action may be necessary, e.g. onward referral