Safe guarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

"Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, for example, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger."
What is abuse (safeguardingni.org)

There are four main types of abuse. (Types of child abuse | Childrens Safeguarding Board (nsscp.co.uk))
Physical abuse
Emotional abuse
Sexual abuse and exploitation
Neglect

Statement of intent

We the staff and committee of Ladybird childcare services take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard of all the children entrusted to our care.

In accordance with the trust guidelines **our duty of care and getting it right** we will endeavour to safeguard children attending the childcare facility by:

- Pre employments interviews
- Police checks, social services check and vetting
- At least two references are taken up for all adults prior to employment or volunteering.
- All appointments will be subject to satisfactory vetting procedures by social services/Access NI checks
- All appointments of staff will be subject to a probationary period
- The childcare manager and childcare deputy manager will take part in designated officer training. This is to be updated every three years
- Procedure for reporting suspected abuse will be clear and informative and visible in the main entrance hall and available from the office on request
- Ensuring all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the facility procedures and lines of communication
- Childcare staff will undertake training in our duty to care and getting it right
- At least 50% of staff will be qualified in childcare and staff not qualified will work towards a recognised qualification as well as induction training laid out in the minimum standards guidelines.
- Childcare staff/trainee/placements and volunteers will be given clear instructions on tasks and limits that apply to them as newcomers during the induction process
- Appropriate adult child ratios will be maintained and childcare staff or volunteers are not to be left alone for extended periods of time with individual children
- The layout of the room will permit constant supervision of the children

- Appropriate activities to develop children's self-esteem with regard to self-protection are provided
- **Designated officers are Tracy Harrison, Laura Redfern and Joan Young**

Please see separate Kilcooley women's centre policy regarding vulnerable people

Responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse

We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, sexual, exploitation as well as neglect.
When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect or exploitation, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, behaviour, or their play.
Where such evidence is apparent, the staff will make a dated record of concern and passes this information onto the deputy manager, who will then liaise with the childcare manager (both designated officers) on what action to be taken.
This may be a conversation with the parent or contacting Gateway or our link social worker for advice, however this list is not exhaustive and each case is discussed on individual circumstances.

Bruising on Pre Mobile Babies

Aim: To provide health and social care professionals with a clear pathway for referral, assessment and management of pre-mobile babies presenting with bruising/marks (which could be due to injury) which cannot be explained by previous treatment and care provided by health professionals1 . Comprehensive clinical assessment should take place. Collating and analysing information should lead to a considered and safe response for children and their families.
Definition: A pre-mobile baby is a baby who is not yet crawling, not actively rolling as a means of mobility (including those only able to flip from back to front), not bottom shuffling, not pulling to stand, not cruising nor walking independently.

Key Messages: 1. Bruising is the most common presenting feature of physical abuse in children.
2. Bruising/marks (which could be due to injury) should prompt suspicion of maltreatment.
3. Bruising/marks (which could be due to injury) on any pre-mobile baby should prompt an immediate referral to a senior paediatrician for urgent medical assessment and enquiry to social services.
4. Bruising/marks (which could be due to injury) assessed as having no accidental explanation consistent with the clinical findings must be referred to children's social services for investigation.

For full protocol of bruising on pre mobile babies see separate SBNI document.

Dealing with allegations against staff

Parents need to know how to make a complaint against staff/trainee/placements and volunteers within the setting, which may include an allegation.
We follow the guidelines set out by Social Services when responding to any disclosures by children or staff, by first recording the details of such alleged incident. (Staff member will be informed if a complaint is made against them)
We refer any such allegation immediately to the local Gateway Social Service department to investigate.
We will co-operate entirely within any investigation carried out by Social Services in conjunction with the PSNI Early Years department.
Ensure careful consideration is given to the kind of support that the member of staff will require during any investigation, which takes place.
Ensure the rest of the team are appropriately briefed; confidentiality will dictate the level of information shared.
Our policy is to suspend the member of staff on full pay for the duration of the investigation, this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the children and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

If a member of staff, volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we must notify the **Disclosure and barring** service so that their name may be included on the list for the protection of Children and Vulnerable adults.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff;
Offers reassurance to the child
Listens to the child and gives reassurance that they will take action
The member of staff must not question the child, ask leading questions, react or make presumptions

Recording adverse and untoward incidents and disclosures
Below is an example for recording allegations or suspicions of abuse:
Name of child
Age of child
Any specific factors child mentioned
The date and time of the observation or the disclosure
An objective record of the observation or disclosure
Staff name to which the concern was reported to
Names of any other person present at the time
These records are immediately reported to a Designated officer who will decide the action.
Any paperwork is filed in the child protection folder locked in the cabinet in the office.

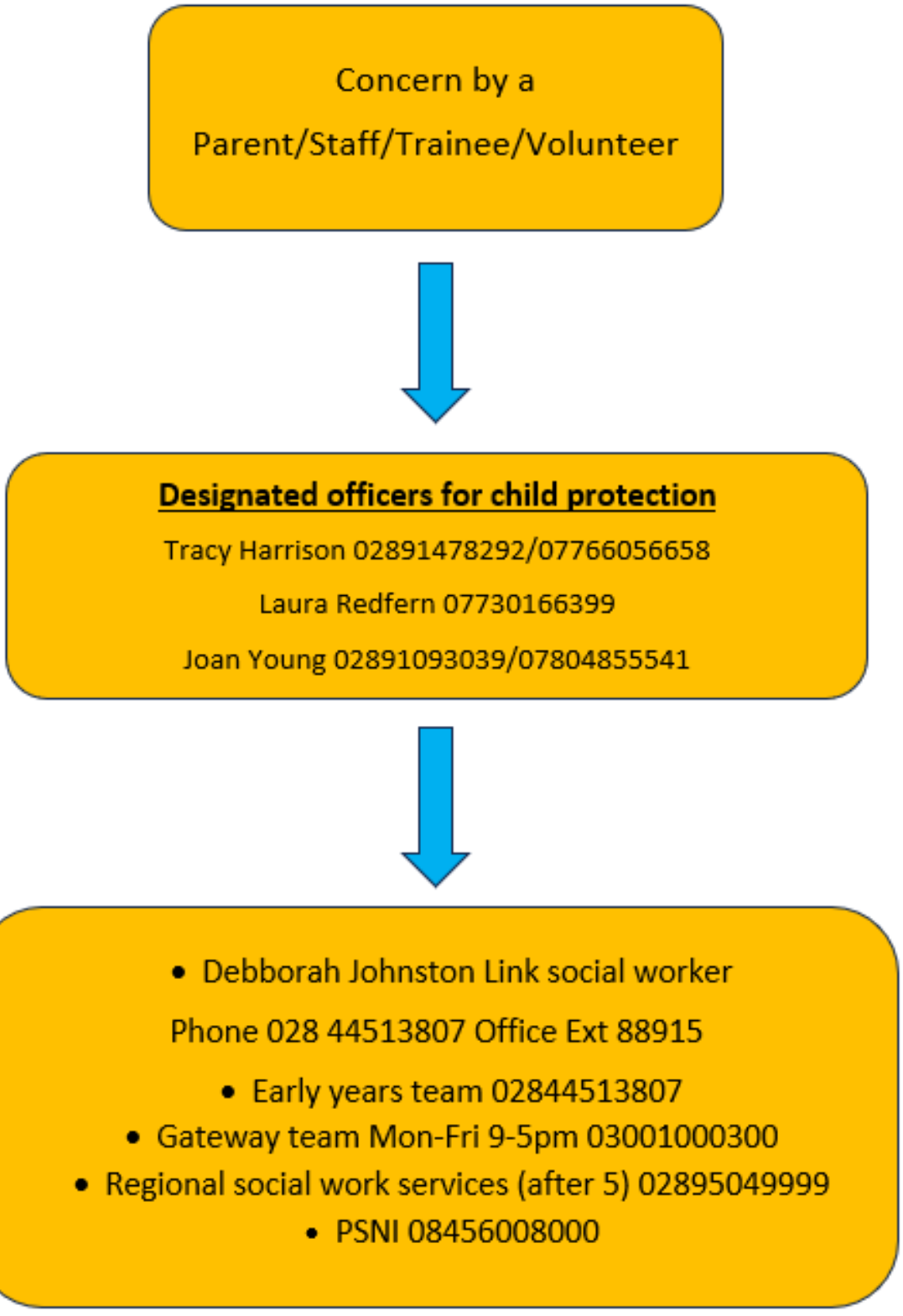
Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact.
If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidelines of the local Gateway Social Services do not allow this. This would usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the investigating officer will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Gateway Social Services team.
Staff will only be told what they need to know to care for that child in line with our confidentiality policy

Support to families

The facility believes in the building trusting and supportive relationships with families, and staff/trainee/placements and volunteers who attend Ladybirds childcare services.
The facility makes clear to parents its role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concern, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local Gateway Social Services department. (This information is included on the registration forms).
The facility continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
We follow the Child Protection plan as set by the Social Services department in relation to the facilities designed role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to any investigation.

Reporting Concerns Flow Chart