

## CS18 Recognise and respond to possible abuse of children and young people

### OVERVIEW

This standard is about the need to protect children and young people when there is the possibility that abuse is occurring. It is important that the practitioner is competent to identify the indicators of potential abuse, and that appropriate action is taken according to the practitioner's role and responsibility. It is important that all information collected is recorded, preferably contemporaneously. When the practitioner has concerns, these should also be recorded and the appropriate people informed of them. If the concerns warrant it, immediate action must be taken to protect the child or young person. Depending on the type of abuse, the action should involve a referral to one or more of the statutory agencies for child protection, including the police if necessary. The practitioner has to comply with all legal requirements and codes of practice, and these should always be seen as the principle sources of advice on the action to take. The practitioner should monitor the outcome of the action to ensure that the child or young person is protected. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies. Version No 1

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

1. The legislation which relates to working with children and young people including
  1. confidentiality and information sharing
  2. the provision of services
  3. children's rights
  4. anti-discriminatory practice
  5. child protection
2. The statutory and professional standards and codes of practice for your area of work and how to interpret and apply these
3. How to manage your responsibilities as a professional with organisational and contractual requirements
4. The nature, extent and boundaries of your work role and its relationship to others in your own and other organisations
5. The roles of other practitioners working with children, young people and families and how they relate between and across agencies
6. The importance of working within your own sphere of competence and when you should refer to others

- 7.The ethics concerning consent and confidentiality, and the tensions which may exist between an individual's rights and the organisation's responsibility to individuals
- 8.The law and good practice guidelines on consent, including capacity issues and consent in childhood
- 9.Situations when consent may not be required (e.g. when the child or young person is at risk of harm)
- 10.The rights of individuals to make decisions for themselves and to take risks in the context of their own lives
- 11.How to deal with issues of confidentiality and who has the right of access to information and images that have been recorded
- 12.How to communicate effectively with children and young people, and those involved in their care
- 13.The importance and methods of establishing rapport and respectful, trusting relationships with children and young people and those involved in their care
- 14.The importance of focusing on the child or young person as an individual
- 15.The ways in which those involved in the care of the child or young person should be involved in communication in order to deliver the most effective outcome for the child or young person
- 16.The ways in which communication can be modified and altered for different needs, contexts and beliefs, including the age, understanding and communication preferences of the child or young person and those involved in their care
- 17.The ways in which children and young people communicate by behaviour, as well as through language, and how different forms of behaviour can be interpreted
- 18.The effects of environments and contexts on communication (particularly institutional settings)
- 19.The key government policies relating to the health and well-being of children and young people
- 20.The framework for the assessment of children and young people's needs
- 21.The guidance that is available for your own practice, and the sources of the guidance
- 22.Evidence based practice, and its role in improving services
- 23.Child development, including emotional, physical, intellectual, social, moral and character growth, and how they all affect one another
- 24.Different parenting approaches, backgrounds and routines and the potential impact of these on the health and well-being of children and young people
- 25.The impact of family and environment on the health and well-being of children and young people
- 26.How the needs of children and young people may affect others
- 27.The contributing factors that increase the risk of significant harm to children and young people (e.g. domestic violence)
- 28.Local sources of health and well-being information, advice and support for children and young people, and those involved in their care
- 29.The key government policies and guidance on safeguarding children and young people
- 30.The key statistics and procedures that feature in discussions of the abuse of children and young people
- 31.Recent and proposed legislation, regulations and codes of practice on safeguarding children and young people
- 32.How to obtain information on abuse, and the authoritative sources of guidance
- 33.How to access and use information from case files and public enquiries to develop your own knowledge and understanding of child protection
- 34.The risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children and young people

- 35.The different forms and extent of abuse that can affect children and young people and their impact on children's development
- 36.The importance of being alert to indicators of potential abuse
- 37.Indicators of potential abuse including unexplained changes in behaviour, physical signs of abuse or neglect, and those expressed through play, artwork and the way in which children and young people approach relationships with other children and/or adults
- 38.How different interpretations can be placed on indicators of potential abuse and how to analyse objectively
- 39.The impact which abuse or neglect may have on children's and young people's health and well-being as a whole
- 40.The cumulative effects of neglect and the different indicators of neglect
- 41.The children and young people who are more vulnerable to abuse, e.g. those with learning difficulties
- 42.Assumptions, values and discriminatory attitudes that can influence practice and prevent some children and young people from having equality of opportunity and equal protection from harm
- 43.The statutory agencies for child protection, their statutory roles and responsibilities, and the local policies and protocols for referrals to them
- 44.What the local systems, procedures and protocols are for safeguarding children and young people
- 45.The role of different people within your organisation in safeguarding children and young people, including those with lead responsibilities
- 46.How abuse is investigated in different settings, who leads investigations, and who is involved in investigations
- 47.What to do if agencies or practitioners fail to comply with agreed policies and protocols for safeguarding children and young people
- 48.The purpose of pursuing concerns about the welfare of children and young people, what decisions are required at each stage of the process, and what are the intended outcomes for the child or young person and their family
- 49.The importance of sharing information in the context of children's well-being and safety, how it can help and the dangers of not doing so
- 50.How the Data Protection Act supports information sharing
- 51.Appropriate ICT and language skills to observe, record and report incidents of possible abuse and how to distinguish between observation, facts, information gained from others and opinion
- 52.How to determine the amount of information people need, balancing this with the risks involved, the rights and interests of the child or young person, and legal duty of care
- 53.The importance of working co-operatively with parents; when this is inappropriate, and how to deal with this situation if it occurs
- 54.What actions can be taken to safeguard children and young people
- 55.How to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguards
- 56.Issues related to aggression, anger and violence, and how to respond to conflict situations involving adults, peers or the children or young people themselves
- 57.How to deal with the distress and trauma of the child protection process itself to the child, family, yourself and other practitioners
- 58.How to access advice and advocacy for the child or young person
- 59.The personal issues that may arise in this sort of work
- 60.How to access counselling, supervision, advice, support and debriefing for yourself
- 61.The personal responsibility to update yourself with training on child protection matters on a regular basis
- 62.The importance of, and methods for, talking and listening to adults in order to protect

## PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

1. comply fully and at all times with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice, organisational policies and procedures, and inter-agency protocols
2. review and apply the relevant advice and guidance on safeguarding children and young people
3. collate all relevant information relating to the care of the child or young person from appropriate sources
4. communicate with the child or young person in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference
5. seek advice from social services or the police about the nature of any communication with the child or young person and those involved in their care when you have serious concerns about the safety of the child or young person
6. review the assessment of the child or young person and identify any changes in their presentation and behaviour
7. ensure that the collection of information relating to possible abuse is conducted in a sensitive manner and will neither jeopardise:
  1. the safety of the child or young person
  2. any subsequent investigation
  3. the child or young person achieving appropriate mental health support
8. review the information and identify any factors that suggest that the child or young person might be at risk of harm
9. identify any indicators of potential abuse and, where possible and appropriate, discuss the possible reasons for presentation of these with practitioners involved in the child or young person's care, to exclude any mistaken identification of abuse
10. record all concerns, discussions with the child or young person, any decision as to whether abuse is possibly taking place, and the reasons for those decisions
11. discuss your concerns with your manager and other relevant professionals and identify and record any differences of opinion
12. seek to discuss your concerns with the child or young person, and with their parents, and seek their agreement to make a referral to social services unless you consider such a discussion would place the child or young person at risk of significant harm
13. refer any concerns about child abuse or neglect to the relevant people
14. record all interactions and communications accurately and as soon as possible and pass these to the relevant people without delay
15. review and assess all available information relating to the care and possible abuse of the child or young person
16. consider and include any information you have on the child's development needs and their parents' ability to respond to these needs within the context of the wider family and environment, when referring a child or young person for further investigation
17. assess the current and likely future effect of the possible abuse on the health and well-being of the child or young person
18. review and revise the care plan for the child or young person to ensure appropriate follow-up of health and well-being needs

19. agree with the relevant people the actions to be taken to protect the child or young person from abuse, and confirm with them clear and unequivocal timescales
20. monitor the situation to confirm that action is taken by the relevant people to protect the child or young person, consistent with legal and organisational requirements
21. contribute to any investigation, assessment and further action related to the possible abuse as requested by relevant people

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004): Dimension: HWB3 Protection of health and wellbeing.