**Transcript for EA CPSS - Level One Training, Programme 2 of 2**

Welcome to the second of our 2 awareness raising sessions.

In the first session we learned about what safeguarding is, and about the different categories of child abuse. This session will focus on the main policies and procedures and explain how we should respond. The EA Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures was published in March 2019. This document is easily available on the EA Intranet. If you do not have access to a computer, please ask your line manager to provide you with a copy.

All children and young people have a fundamental right to be safeguarded from harm. Their welfare must be promoted and they must be given every opportunity to develop to their full potential.

The primary responsibility for safeguarding children and young people rests with their parents or carers, however, those who work with children, young people or families, in whatever capacity, have a particular responsibility to promote and protect their welfare and ensure they are safe.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy gives greater detail on the particular responsibilities that you have as employees. Some staff in our organisation, such as those within the CPSS, have specialised child protection roles. But all staff have some level of responsibility for child protection.

This is not an optional extra, this is central to your role within the EA.

It is worth remembering that some children have additional needs that make them more vulnerable to different types of abuse. This could be to do with their age, disability or the fact that they are a newcomer to Northern Ireland.

The key principles on screen underpin our practice and reflect the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children Northern Ireland Order 1995, which is the key domestic legislation informing all our safeguarding practice.

The first and most important principle is that the child or young person’s welfare is paramount. This should be the overriding concern when considering any issue or trying to come to a difficult decision. Alongside this, it is important that the voice of the child or young person should be heard, especially when it comes to decisions that affect them.

Parental responsibility is key. In all Safeguarding work, Parents should be supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together.

No organisation can effectively safeguard children on their own and the EA will always strive to work in partnership with parents, children, statutory bodies and voluntary groups, to ensure that children are safe.

Prevention of harm is our ultimate goal. What this means for you is, if you report a concern early, there is a greater chance that help can be provided to a child and their family.

Many of our services are working hard in preventative roles with vulnerable children.

As a statutory body, we are duty bound to operate in a lawful and proportionate manner. We are also obligated to take clear steps to protect a child if there are reasonable concerns.

All of our decision making should be based on firm evidence. There are many staff within the organisation who have been trained in child protection issues, and they are well placed to make difficult decisions in what can be very complex and unclear situations. Your role is to raise any concerns with the appropriate person. We will explore this in more detail.

If you have a concern about a child, it is your responsibility to report this to the appropriate person.

If you're based in, or are visiting a school, a site providing learning support or Education Other Than At School, you should immediately ask to speak to the ‘Designated Teacher’ for Child Protection. This person is usually a member of the senior leadership team.

Education Other Than at School sites and EA Learning Support settings fall under the EA Child Protection Policy. Schools will have their own Child Protection policies, but the broad principles will be exactly the same.

Within an EA Youth Work setting, you should seek out the Designated Youth Worker. In all cases, once you have told the designated person, they will be able to consult with the EA Child Protection Support Service if further advice is needed.

After you have told the appropriate person in the school or education setting, you should also inform your line manager in the EA.

If you are visiting a family home and you become concerned about a child, you should immediately contact your line manager to discuss this. If you are outside of working hours, you should contact the Regional Emergency Social Work Service on 028 9504 9999. If you feel a child is in immediate danger then you should call the PSNI.

You must make a written record of what your concerns are and this should be signed, dated and given to the designated person. This record should be factual and detail any actions you have taken. There is a template you should use, called a ‘Note of Concern’ that is provided as an appendix to the EA Child Protection Policy.

The designated person will store this record according to EA data protection guidance on child protection records. This record may well be lawfully shared with social services and the Police depending on the situation.

 If the designated person decides to make a referral to social services, they may need your input to do this. You may hear the term ‘UNOCINI’. This stands for 'Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland' and is the form used to refer concerns into Social Services.

Remember, you should not investigate. This is the role of Social Services and the Police. They have specialist training in this area and it should be left to them. If you do try and investigate, this could have potential negative repercussions in any possible future trial. Any concerns you raise, should be treated in the strictest of confidence. You should not discuss them with anyone other than the designated person, your line-manager or a relevant EA officer. In some scenarios you may also be asked to make a statement to the Police and/or Social Services.

In this section, we will deal with how you should act if a child makes a disclosure of abuse to you. This is one of the most important pieces of information you will hear in this presentation. How you respond to a child will help determine how they feel about making a disclosure of abuse.  A positive experience at this difficult time will help in dealing with the range of feelings he or she may experience. These could include fear, anxiety, shame, mistrust and worry about the outcomes for them and their family.

It can also be difficult and emotional for you as the member of staff to hear what a child has experienced. This can cause you distress and anxiety. However, in the moment you need to remain calm for the sake of the child. They have put their trust in you so it is important that you handle this situation properly.

It is important that you do take the child seriously. You must listen closely to what they are telling you. You should reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you. This is likely to be a difficult moment for them and they may have lots of conflicting feelings. It is important to provide emotional support to the child or young person.

If you need to clarify some of the basic details that they have told you, then you can do this. But you must not use any leading questions.

After a child has disclosed something to you, you should make an accurate record as soon as is practical. Use the ‘Note of Concern’. Remember, you can find this as an appendix on the EA Child Protection Policy and procedures. You must also inform your line manager straight away. If you are in a school or youth work setting, then you must inform the designated teacher or designated youth worker.

When appropriate, please do make sure you talk to your line manager and EA Wellbeing staff about your own feelings you may have had about any disclosures of abuse. You are only human, and these things can have an impact on us all.  The EA has a duty of care to you as a member of staff.

Now we have looked at the things that you should do, we will explore what you shouldn’t do if a child discloses child abuse to you.

As already discussed, it is vitally important that you do not investigate more about the things that the child is telling you. It is OK to clarify the basic facts, but no more than that.

As well as having a negative impact on any potential Police or Social Services action, you also risk traumatising a child by asking them to unnecessarily repeat sensitive information.

You should never promise confidentiality to the child. You should explain to them that you will have to pass on what they have told you so that you can help keep them safe.

Once you have passed the information on to the relevant person, then you should not discuss the disclosure with anyone, with the exception of your line manager, a relevant EA Officer, the Police or Social Services.

EA employees come to work to do their job to the highest standards, ensuring children are safe and can access high quality opportunities for learning and development.

However, we unfortunately have to be aware that abuse of children by EA and other school staff does happen. This is no different to any organisation working with vulnerable people.

This is a very serious matter and must be dealt with promptly and sensitively for all concerned. The EA has responsibilities as an employer to treat its employees in a fair manner. However, the overriding principle here is that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern.

If you have any concerns about abuse perpetrated by an EA staff member then you must report this as soon as possible. You must tell your line manager without delay.

If the concern is about your line manager, then you should tell their line manager. It is good practice to acquaint yourself with your directorate structure and relevant personnel.

I recognise that highlighting concerns about a colleague will be challenging, emotive and stressful.  However, you must put the needs of the child first. As with other concerns of abuse, you should make a written record as soon as is possible.

There is a very clear process in place for managing allegations against members of staff. This process involves a high level of confidentiality, discretion and sensitivity. It is essential that all staff follow the guidelines to primarily protect the child but also to protect all staff concerned.

It is important that whatever role you have in the organisation, you understand that Child Protection is everyone's responsibility. It is your responsibility. We cannot help support children to be the best that they can be, if we cannot ensure their safety.

If you have a concern that a child is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, then you should report it. When a child is at risk of harm, often it is many pieces of small information that add up to a bigger picture. I would encourage you to have confidence that within the EA, we have the structures, policy, skills, experience and partnerships to properly manage allegations of child abuse.

We have now come to the end of this training. Thank you for your attention. I hope you have been able to increase your understanding of child protection and safeguarding. I also hope that you know what you need to do if you suspect a child is at risk. Depending on your role within the organisation, you may be offered further child protection training that will build on what you have learned today.

You may have found some of the material challenging and it is important to look after yourself. If needed, you should seek support from your line manager or EA Health and Wellbeing services, or via your own GP. If you have any further questions then please consult the EA Policy and Procedure and the leaflet that accompanies this training. If these do not resolve your query, you may wish to speak to  your line manager.

Thank you again for completing this training and I wish you every success in the part you play to inspire, support and challenge all our children and young people, to be the best that they can be.