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Policy on protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young adults

The Children Act 1989 states that the child's welfare is paramount and that every child has a right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare
- A clear statement of the agencies responsibilities to children, made available to staff
- Clear lines of accountability for work on safeguarding and promoting well being
- Safe recruitment procedures for those coming into contact with children and young people
- Appropriate training for staff
- Effective working relations within the agency and with other agencies to safeguard and promote well-being, and to share information effectively

Child protection and safeguarding children policy statement

Myhomecare.ie is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people when they come into contact with the services that we provide. Myhomecare.ie will promote the safeguarding of children in all our services affecting them and consult with young people in policy and service delivery matters which affect them so that they may help shape our services.

This policy applies to all staff that may come into contact with children and young people in the course of their work, whether in someone's home, on agency premises or in the community.

Many staff are in regular contact with children and young people, they are in a position to observe outward signs of abuse; they can and should alert others when such signs are observed. All staff share a responsibility to be mindful of the potential for abuse and to refer suspected cases to management or to the Police.

Scope

This policy and related procedures and guidance apply to all staff whose work involves contact with children and young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable young people.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that the activities that they are involved in during the course of their work are carried out in accordance with this policy and procedures relating to it.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that the activities and services they provide have adequate procedures to protect and safeguard young people. Managers are responsible for ensuring that procedures are followed by their staff.

Recruitment

All Myhomecare.ie staff will be appointed in line with Myhomecare.ie recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure that all necessary checks are carried out on individuals expected to work with children and young people.

Pre selection checks must include the following;

- Completion of an application form including a self-disclosure about criminal records
- Consent to obtain information from the Garda Vetting Office to check for convictions for criminal offences against children in accordance with current legislation
- Receipt of three references in accordance with Myhomecare.ie recruitment and selection procedures
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of identity

Screening by the Garda vetting office will be undertaken on all staff that work with children and vulnerable adults as part of their normal duties. A register of designated posts, which are subject to Garda vetting checks, is maintained by the Human Resources Department.

Training

The child protection and safeguarding process includes training after recruitment. Myhomecare.ie is committed to ensuring that all employees that work directly or indirectly with children and young people have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the requirement for reporting suspected concerns of possible or potential child abuse.

All staff who come into contact with children and young people as part of their job shall be provided with recognised and up to date training in;

- Child protection awareness
- Diversity awareness
- First Aid (where appropriate)
- Procedures on working with children/young people

Child protection and safeguarding children procedures

All staff must be aware of, and have been provided with, or have access to a copy of the Myhomecare.ie's Child Protection and Safeguarding children policy and procedures.

- It is the function of the HSE to promote the welfare of children in its area who are not receiving adequate care and protection (section 3 (1) Child care Act 1991)
- It is the policy of the HSE that any employee who is of the opinion that
- A child is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused
- A child's health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected (section 18(1) (a) and (b) Child Care Act 1991)

If staff suspect the above then they must complete the standard reporting form entitled 'Initial Referral of Welfare concern or Suspected Child Abuse' and forward to the principle Social Worker within 24 hours. In consultation with their line manager; in the event of an out of hour emergency An Garda Siochana should be contacted, the referral form to follow.

Additionally, in accordance with the requirements of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 the CEO has designated officers of the HSE as 'Designated Officers' to receive reports on child abuse from any person who is of the opinion that,

- A child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, sexually abused
- A child's health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected (section 18(1)(a) and(b) Child Care Act 1991)

Complaints may be reported to:

- Homecare Supervisor
- Homecare Nursing Manager
- Designated Officers of the HSE
- Ombudsman

All employees should make reference to

- Chapter 3 - appendix 1 of Children First – National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children DOH&C 1999) with regards to definition of and signs and symptoms of child abuse: and chapter 4 which outlines the basis for reporting and standard reporting procedure
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, in accordance with the power granted to him under Section 2 , subsection (2) and (3) of the act, the minister has directed (1st April 2003) that the designated officers listed in the letter of 21st January 1999 be amended to the list of designated officers.