



Non-recent Abuse Policy and Practice Guidance

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1. Definition

- 1.1 The term non-recent abuse refers to any allegations of child abuse, which occurred when the victim was a child, and which have been made when the victim is an adult.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Allegations of child abuse are sometimes made by adults and children many years after the abuse has occurred. There is no time limit as to when a complaint can be made. There are many reasons why an allegation was not made at the time it occurred, such as fear of reprisals, the degree of control exercised by the abuser, shame or fear that the allegation may not be believed.
- 2.2 There are a number of ways in which non-recent abuse can come to light e.g. a complaint to the Children's Trust or via a solicitors' letter regarding a compensation claim; the individual may become aware that the abuser is being investigated for a similar matter or; the victim has a suspicion that the abuse is continuing against other children. Where there are parallel processes in

progress the non-recent abuse procedure should still be followed.

- 2.3 Non-recent abuse cases may be complex as the alleged victim may no longer be living in the situation where the incident(s) occurred, or the alleged perpetrator may no longer be linked to the setting or employment role. Such cases should be responded to in the same way as any other concerns. In all cases it is important to ascertain as a matter of urgency if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or caring for children.

3. Significance

- 3.1 The Trust's response to allegations by an adult of abuse experienced as a child must be dealt with on the same merit as a current complaint of abuse because:
- There is a significant likelihood that a person who abused a child/ren in the past will have continued and may still be doing so;
 - Criminal prosecutions can still take place even though the allegations are non-recent in nature and may have taken place many years ago.
- 3.2 An allegation may be made against (for example) a foster carer, adoptive parent, residential care staff, teacher, doctor, police officer, volunteer or any other person who currently has, or previously had contact with children and young people. The alleged abuse may not have been an isolated incident. If it comes to light that the non-recent abuse is part of a wider setting of institutional or organised abuse, the case should be dealt with according to the **Organised and Complex Abuse Guidance**.
- 3.3 These allegations must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the area in which the alleged abuse took place / where the professional worked, and the LADO procedures must be followed.

4. Action to Safeguard

- 4.1 As soon as it is apparent that an adult is revealing childhood abuse, the social worker must explain that relevant information will need to be shared with the police in order to safeguard children. They must record what has been said by the individual and the responses given by the worker. This should be recorded on the **Non-recent Abuse Police Referral Form** and a copy sent to the police. A **Chronology** should also be completed. All records must be dated, and the authorship made clear by a legible signature or name.
- 4.2 If possible, the social worker should establish if the adult is aware of the alleged perpetrators recent or current whereabouts and contact with children. If children/ YP are thought to be at risk this will need to be referred into CASS (Children Advice and Support Service).
- 4.3 Whilst the victim should be asked whether s/he wants a police investigation it should be made clear that dependent upon the nature of the information provided the social worker may need to share this information with the police if it will help to protect children. The individual should be reassured that the police will be able to undertake investigative work for all victims, including those adults who are vulnerable as a result of mental health or learning difficulties;

5 Responding to Complaints

- 5.1 The social worker should:
 - Inform the police by completing a **Non-recent Abuse Police Referral Form** and establish if there is any knowledge regarding the alleged perpetrator's current contact with children;
 - Consideration given to whether a strategy discussion is required if

the alleged perpetrator is believed to be currently caring for, or having access to children. This will include making the necessary referral to Local Authority Children's Services in the area where the alleged perpetrator is known to live.

- 5.2 If an allegation concerns a current employee of the Children's Trust, enquiries should be undertaken by a person independent of the line management of the employee. Please also see guidance on dealing with **allegations against staff or volunteers**.

6 Support to Victims

- 6.1 Individuals making allegations of non-recent abuse may have carried their traumatic experiences with them for a significant number of years. Signposting them to support services is essential. Consideration must be given to the therapeutic needs of the adult and reassurance given that, even without her/his direct involvement all reasonable efforts will be made to look into what they have reported;
- 6.2 Consideration should be given to any risks posed to a vulnerable adult and, if necessary, a referral made to the adult safeguarding coordinator.
- 6.3 There are a number of local, regional and national support groups and charities that should be explored, such as **Victim Support, Birmingham Crisis, BSWA and Gilgal**, Birmingham based charities providing support to victims to come to terms with what has happened to them and helping them to move on with their lives.