Debts: working protocols

1. **Statement of Intent**
   1. This policy aims to provide insight to the workforce in supporting children and young people with debts
   2. Outlines Omega Care Group response in supporting children and young people with debts
   3. This policy is applicable to all children and young people admitted into Omega Care Group and all members of the workforce must show adherence.
2. **Purpose**
   1. Provide information and guidance into recognising signs of debt and how to respond.
   2. This policy is inclusive of all debts, specifically Drug Debts.
   3. This procedure forms part of the Omega Care Group ‘Substance Misuse and Alcohol Use’ Policy.
3. **Supporting Principles operated by Omega Care Group:**
   1. Maintain a valid Substance Misuse and Alcohol Use Policy, based on current best practice to reduce risk of drug debts
   2. Address substance and alcohol use through the Quality Assurance System (based on the MENTOR system).
   3. Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead with a specific remit to include substance/alcohol use.
   4. Liaise with relevant agencies to ensure best practice: Young Addaction, YPAS, YPDASS, SMASH and others.
   5. Promote young peoples’ understanding and awareness, particularly regarding staying safe though the ‘Signs of Safety Model’.
   6. Address substance and alcohol use within keywork sessions.
   7. Ensure that drug and alcohol issues remain an agenda item at team meetings and supervisions.
   8. Review safety and security protocols for all homes
   9. Establish on-going working relationships with neighbourhood PCSOs and other relevant agencies
   10. Monitor and review systems.
4. **Informing the Child and Young Person**
   1. The Young People’s Induction statement within the young people guide sets out the following to every admission:

* *We are not able to help you pay any debts you may owe, however small. This is inclusive of drug debts.*
* *We do want to support you and help you to stay safe. The best way to do this is to be open and honest with us, and to share any concerns as soon as they arise. By talking through the issues together, we can help you to keep yourself safe.*
* *We will support you in talking to the people and agencies that will act in your best interests.*

1. **Staff Induction Statement**
   1. **I**t is the policy of Omega Care Group to not, under any circumstances, provide resources to enable the payment of any drug debt incurred by a child or young person.
   2. All children and young people should be made fully aware of the organisation’s policy on this issue at their induction.
   3. Staff should address issues of debt in an open, non-judgemental manner, with the best interests of the individual young person at the core of the response.
   4. Should staff become aware of a child or young person in a position of debt, especially drug debts.
   5. Staff will provide support and guidance and take all steps necessary to ensure the safeguarding of the individual and of all other young people and staff in the home.
   6. Staff, as part of their support role, should work directly with child/young people, with appropriate support from external agencies, to actively promote substance and alcohol awareness and use reduction, along with the core principles and practices of staying safe. The Independent Living Programme, developmental sessions and Omega Compass will provide the framework for this, supported by specific, specialist input and information sharing.
   7. All staff must adhere to the Omega Care Group protocol for addressing issues of drug related debt.
2. **Procedure: Staff informed of a Debt**
   1. Let the child/young person know that you are pleased that they have told you. Support as is appropriate.
   2. Inform child/young person that you will have to share this information to ensure their safety and well-being.
   3. Inform the House Manager.
   4. Contact relevant social worker/EDT for advice by telephone. Discuss and review child/ young person’s risk assessment.
   5. Contact police as appropriate (specifically drug debts). Record all advice/actions/log no.
   6. Assess level of new risk with manager. Consider additional staffing or moving the young person.
   7. Refer to social worker and follow up with safeguarding form
   8. House manager is accountable for ensuring the embedding of appropriate safeguard measure
3. **Recording:**

* Following disclosure all information should be recorded in the young person’s own words, including their assessment of their own risk.
* Inform Designated Safeguarding Officer and email report to safeguardingcr@omegacaregroup.org
* Social worker/EDT contacts should be recorded: date, time, name, details of response.
* Current young person’s risk management should be updated.
* Safeguarding Forms should be sent to relevant agencies: Social Care, YOS (if appropriate)
* Relevant police force to be contacted and details to be recorded, along with details of advice/actions.
* Social worker/EDT/Manager updates-record details, follow up with e-mail
* Assessed new level of risk recorded, with reasoning, including actions to be taken.
* Safeguarding Form, YP and Professional Chronology to be completed.
* Monitor and record all further actions and events.
* Review outcomes at managers’ meeting.