

# Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation's Child Protection Policy and Procedure: General Guidance

## Purpose and Principles:

Having a written policy and procedure makes it clear to everyone in your organisation what is expected from them and what their safeguarding responsibilities are.

A safeguarding policy is a statement that makes it clear to all staff and volunteers within your organisation and the children, young people and families that use your services your commitment to safeguarding children.

Your policy should link to the National Guidance for Child Protection 2021 (updated 2023); align with the Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures for Edinburgh and the Lothians and acknowledge any other national legislation or policy that is relevant to the work of your organisation.

Your policy should include an overarching statement on the principles and standards you will uphold.

Your agencies procedures will describe the operational processes your organisation will follow to protect the safety and welfare of children in your care and what staff and volunteers should do if they are concerned about a child.

Your procedures should also cover or be closely linked to other policies and procedures on aspects of practice and governance such as but not limited to:

- Health and Safety
- Safe Recruitment, Management and Supervision of staff & volunteers
- Learning & Development expectations of staff & volunteers
- Employee Codes of Conduct
- Information Sharing and Data Retention
- Social Media and Online Safety
- Anti-bullying
- Unacceptable Behaviour
- Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco
- Complaints Process
- Whistleblowing.

If you work in partnership with other organisations, your procedures may also benefit from being aligned to or working with those other services, particularly, *what are the lines of communication and responsibility?*

In addition, you should consider:

- What expectations are there from service users, staff & volunteers, funders, insurers and the overarching bodies your organisation may belong to?
- How Trustees are involved in the review, development, approval and dissemination of your policy and procedure?
- Having a team meeting to discuss the particular needs of your group. Have you had any safeguarding issues or incidents? Are there any concerns or issues that your staff or volunteers are uncertain of how to deal with? These questions will help inform what is included in your procedures.
- Deciding who will (re)write the documents and what level of consultation there will be with internal and external stakeholders. This makes the policy more relevant if everyone has contributed to it.
- Involving children/ young people and their parents / carers in the development of your policy. Ask for their opinions and suggestions. This illustrates to children and parents / carers that you are taking safeguarding seriously, and that your staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- With UNCRC implementation, you may also wish to consider an easy-read version for children, young people or those with additional support needs.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers undertake an introductory level of Child or Public Protection learning & development. This could be in-house learning provided by a manager or service lead or there are various ways to access this through:
  - free e-learning resources on TURAS,
  - intermediary organisations such as LAYC
  - the ECPC's Multi-agency training calendar
  - buying learning from private or national providers.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers have a copy of your policy and have read and understood it. It should also be made available for parents/carers should they wish to see it. We recommend that you have one on display and/ or available on your website.
- Using your safeguarding policy as an active document. It is good practice to regularly review the policy and keep it up-to-date with any local or national changes.

- Making sure your nominated Child Protection Officer or Lead has the opportunity to remain up to date with policy and guidance changes, best practice and that all trustees, staff and volunteers are kept informed about any changes.

A list of further considerations is provided in **Appendix 3**.

This Guidance will be reviewed by the EVOC-ECPC Liaison Group of the ECPC by January 2027.

## **Appendix 1 Advice and Templates**

[OSCR Safeguarding Guidance](#)

[Youth Scotland's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Templates](#)

[NSPCC Guidance and Template](#)

[Charity Excellent Framework Small Charities Safeguarding Template](#) (please be advised this is an English website and refers to the English DBS and other English Safeguarding Policy, but does provide a framework)

Appendix 3 also provides a template of a Child Protection Policy and Procedure kindly provided by LAYC.

## **Appendix 2 National Policy and Legislation**

The national approach to improving outcomes for children and young people in [Scotland is Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) (Scottish Government, 2022a). This provides a framework for those working with children and their families to provide the right support at the right time.

The key guidance for anyone working with children in Scotland is the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#) (Scottish Government, 2023a).

In Scotland, the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

Depending on your organisation's role, you may also need to include specific legislation such as:

The Police Act 1997; Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and Disclosure Act 2020;

Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations;

United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024.

### Appendix 3 List of considerations on what to include and why?

This list was generated during the EVOG Network session that took place 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024, facilitated by Lead Officer to Edinburgh Child Protection Committee, Laura Brown.

<b>Aims and scope of document</b>
<p><i>Identify the organisation, its purpose and function. Set out the organisation's commitment to keeping children and vulnerable adults safe and how, in broad terms, the organisation will meet this commitment.</i></p> <p><i>Be clear about who the policy applies to. Should it just be staff and volunteers who work directly with the client group? What about those who have occasional contact with clients such as a caretaker? How does it relate to your stakeholders, board or trustees?</i></p>
<b>Guiding principles</b>
<p><i>The National Guidance for Child Protection (updated 2023) provides a range of overarching principles that you might want to include. This will show how all your practice is linked with key principles like children's rights, accessibility and trauma-informed practice for example.</i></p>
<b>Equality statement</b>
<p><i>The organisation should make sure that all children, young people, and vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity. The policy needs to state their commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and should explicitly recognise the additional needs of those from minority ethnic groups and disabled people and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.</i></p>
<b>Child wellbeing concerns</b>
<p><i>The National Guidance for Child Protection highlights that Child Protection is part of a continuum of wellbeing needs for all children in Scotland and that the same tools and frameworks, developed through GIRFEC, are used to frame and reduce harm or risk of harm for children and young people. Therefore, you may want to make reference to GIRFEC tools and processes.</i></p>
<b>Data Protection</b>
<p><i>Detail how information is recorded and stored, in line with the Data Protection Act.</i></p> <p><i>This should link with a process detailed below for recording incidents, concerns and referrals and storing these securely in compliance with relevant legislation and kept for a time specified by your insurance company.</i></p>
<b>Information Sharing</b>
<p><i>Guidance on confidentiality and information sharing, which clearly states that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.</i></p> <p><i>You may want to include a link to 10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children published by the Information Commissioner's Office.</i></p> <p><i><a href="#">A 10 step guide to sharing information to safeguard children   ICO</a></i></p>

## **Staff, trustees' and volunteers' roles and responsibilities**

*Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer or Lead and their contact details. Your Designated Safeguarding Officer does not have to be an expert in child protection but should take on responsibility for providing advice and support to other staff, and ensuring that safeguarding children remains a priority in all the work that you do.*

## **Partnership working arrangements**

*Increasingly, services and organisations do not work in isolation but as part of a partnership or shared-services. Many of the young people you work with or become worried about will already be experiencing Child's Planning through GIRFEC. In such cases, you may wish to outline clear lines of communication with the Child's Named Person or Lead Professional. Your procedure can outline when to pass on a concern and what the responsibility of different internal or external staff members is.*

*This can make things more transparent to children, families and other services we partner with.*

## **Recognising harm and abuse**

*It is important that all staff and volunteers understand the different forms of abuse that some children may experience and the signs and symptoms of such abuse. The ECPC expects all staff that work with children and young people access training to help them not only identify but also act upon any form of abuse that they may identify, but this section acts as a quick reminder.*

*Some procedures may include this as an appendix or simply provide a link to pages 10-12 of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures for Edinburgh and the Lothians.*

*It is important each charity's safeguarding policy and procedures are tailored to the type of contact the charity has with vulnerable persons, and it also needs to take into account any particular vulnerabilities of children with whom the charity has contact; for example, disabled children who are at increased risk of abuse; babies and toddlers who are vulnerable due to their age and dependence on adults.*

## **How to respond and report a concern?**

*It is important that your procedures provide some detail about how you become aware about a child or young person's safety.*

*For example:*

- a third party or anonymous allegation is received;*
- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;*
- a child or young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;*
- a written report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.*

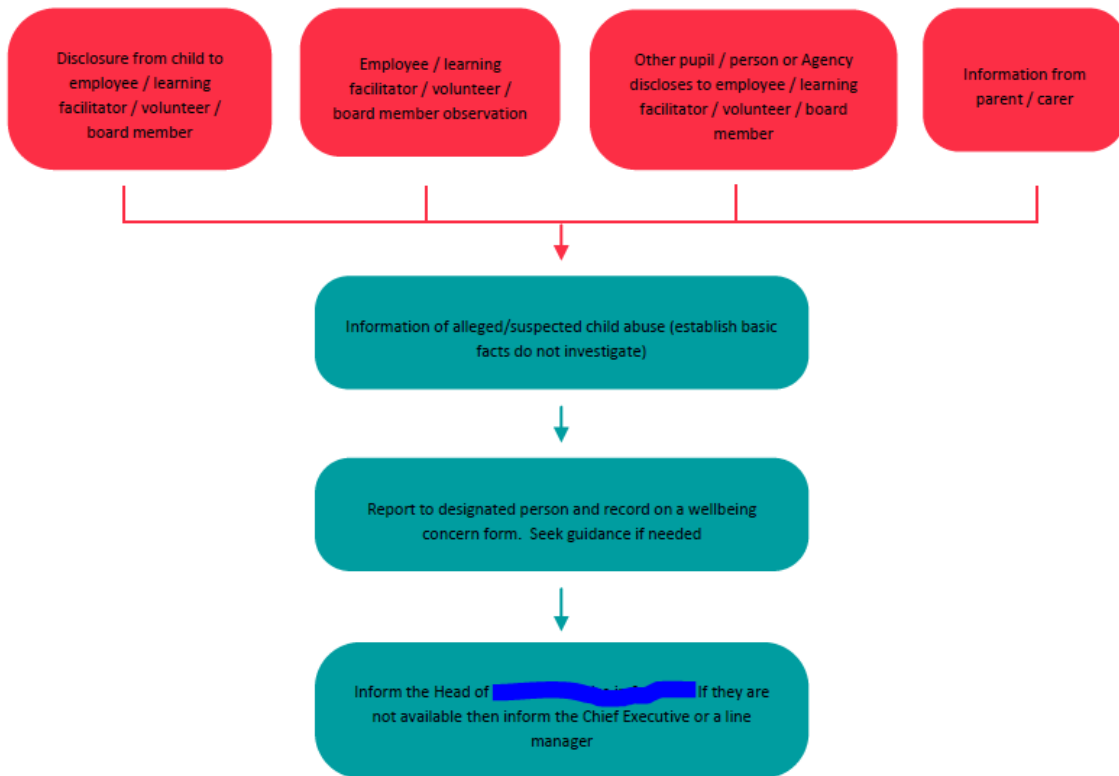
*This should then go on to detail what to do if you are concerned about a child or young person.*

*Many organisations follow a model like the 4 R's:*

- **Recognise** harm or risk of harm to children when you see, hear or experience it*

- *Respond* by sharing your concerns with a Manager or Lead for Child Protection/Safeguarding
- *Record* key information using the child's own words and share and/or store within your service's requirements
- *Report* knowing when to pass information to emergency services (if imminent risk) or to child protection services.

Services can also find it helpful to be able to provide a flow chart for staff/volunteers to follow. For example:



### What to do if a child or young person discloses?

*Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay? But never use leading questions*

*Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously. Act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying.*

*Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others, if this indicates they and or other children are at risk of harm.*

NSPCC have some great advice:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse> - This link includes a short video that could be used in staff training.

## **Recruitment, selection, induction and training (including PVG and Disclosure checks)**

*This should detail all stages of the recruitment, induction and training process.*

*Please note there is a Multi-Agency Learning & Development Strategy for Child Protection that Edinburgh Child Protection Committee will be launching early in 2025.*

*It should include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all trustees, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect (e.g. helpline, email) contact with children or vulnerable person's; in the case of trustees, because of their position within the charity, the view is taken that whenever there is a legal entitlement to obtain a DBS/PVG check in respect of such a trustee, a check should be carried out - this goes beyond circumstances where the trustee comes into contact with children.*

## **Management and supervision**

*Systems to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with vulnerable persons are monitored and supervised and that they have opportunities to learn about safeguarding in accordance with their roles and responsibilities; safeguarding induction training is now mandatory for all those who work directly with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their families and/or carers.*

## **Managing allegations against staff and Whistleblowing**

*All Groups should have procedures in place to ensure that any allegation made against a member of staff is dealt with appropriately.*

*This should include how staff or volunteers could safely raise an issue about a colleague or manager.*

*The section may make reference to a code of behaviour/conduct for trustees, staff, and volunteers; the consequences of breaching the code are clear and linked to disciplinary and grievance procedures.*

## **Duties to refer a staff or volunteer member**

*Make reference to the legal duties to refer to Disclosure Scotland if someone is dismissed or leaves their role because of conduct.*

*You may also wish to refer to OSCR's notifiable events.*

## **Complaints Procedure**

*A complaints procedure which is an open and well publicised way in which adults and children can voice concerns about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour.*

## **Review process and date**

*Provide the date the policy comes into force and any review dates. Has the policy been reviewed and updated? Do you feel the policy is being implemented and is a 'living document,' or is it simply copied from somewhere else to 'tick a box' and not really adhered to?*

## **Useful Contacts**



*Details of how to contact your partners and local public protection referral processes.*

**Reference to intersecting policies/procedures**

*Explain how this policy links to other relevant organisational policies and procedures such as those relating to data protection.*

**National legislative/policy framework**

*Briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy. Some key legislation includes The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (commonly known as PVG); Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations; Human Rights Act 1998, and various United Nations Conventions.*

## Appendix 4 Child Protection Policy and Procedures: example

### Child Protection Policy Statement

**Organisation name** is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. Organisation name has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. To achieve this, we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore, we will endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

**Organisation name** will:

Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation

Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of all workers (paid staff and volunteers)

Provide opportunities for all newly appointed workers (paid and unpaid) through the provision of induction training, which gives an overview of the organisation's purpose, values, structure and services

Ensure that all workers understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in the organisations Code of Conduct and Child Protection procedures

Ensure that all workers understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a workers conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's designated person for child protection

Ensure that all procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner

Ensure that the designated child protection officer understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. police and/or social work)

Ensure that the organisation meets all its responsibilities in adhering to the requirements of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Act 2007

Provide opportunities for all workers (paid and unpaid) to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of children and young people

Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's complaints procedures

Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people

## Child Protection Procedures

### Section 1 – Introduction

**Organisation name** is committed to providing a safe environment for all. The Board of Trustees understand that children should be protected and kept safe from harm. In order to achieve this the Board of Trustees approve all policies and procedures and the effective management of developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy statement and procedures are devolved to the manager and CPO

**Organisation name** child protection procedures will be made explicit to all staff members and volunteers and are required to implement the child protection procedures when required.

*Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that "it shall be the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare".*

The National Child Protection Guidance for Scotland 2021 states the protection of children and young people includes unborn babies, and children and young people under the age of 18 years.

[national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023.pdf \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

This places on **Organisation name** a Duty of Care for the children and young people we work with and

- recognizes that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child.
- will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people in its care. Organisation name understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2

### Section 2 - Recruitment

**Organisation name** recognises that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as volunteers or staff of **Organisation name**:

- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form
- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self declaration form
- All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references
- All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview
- A self declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation

- All successful applicants appointed into a 'regulated work' position, as defined by the PVG Act, will be required to become members of the PVG Scheme or, if already a member, provide their PVG Scheme Record and permit access to a PVG Scheme Record Update
- Any applicant found to be fully listed on the Children's List will not be appointed to a regulated work (paid or unpaid) position.

### Section 3 - Training

All newly appointed staff and volunteers at Organisation name will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child Protection. This will include:

- Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation
- Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided
- An assessment of staffs (paid and unpaid) training and development requirements will be completed
- The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified
- Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided
- All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided
- The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Child Protection Officer will be provided

### Section 4 - Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse

Members of staff (paid and unpaid) have a duty to report any suspicions, allegations or disclosures to the Child Protection advisor **NAME**. However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child or young person and their protection from any potential risk. During the reporting process the young person should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

As a worker or volunteer your role in child protection is not to investigate or decide if abuse has taken place. Your role is to observe, record and report. The following steps (over page) should be followed in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse:

Are you concerned about the safety of a child or young person?

For example if:

A child/young person has alleged that they are being abused

Your see or suspect abuse

The organisation has received a third party report that a child/young person is being abused/neglected

There are signs and indicators which could point to abuse/neglect



### **ACT IMMEDIATELY**

Discuss your concerns with the **CPO NAME** as soon as possible. If the allegation is about the CPO contact the **LINE MANAGER NAME** These steps should be taken as soon as possible.

Discussions should focus on:

Nature of concerns; Risks to the child or young person; Action and next steps to be taken



In following the procedures below please bear in mind:

**DO NOT INVESTIGATE** - Staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation any further or interview the child or young person regarding the situation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** - Details of suspicion, allegations or disclosures should only be passed on to the **CPO NAME**. If responding to an allegation from a young person you must not promise to keep the information, they disclose confidential.



### **RECORD INFORMATION**

Detailed written records should be made of all events and what the young person or other individuals have said (where this applies). A form is supplied in Appendix 1 to help structure this. It can also be used to inform Social Work/Police of the events that have occurred. Above and beyond the facts, any opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented can be recorded but it should be clear they are opinions, rather than facts. Records should be signed and stored in a secure place



**SEEK ADVICE and REFER TO APPROPRIATE AGENCY** – see appendix 1 contact details

**CPO NAME** will follow the process [Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency Child Protection Procedures](#). These procedures set out what agencies will do when children or young people may be at risk of abuse or neglect or have been harmed. Any further action should only be taken in line with the advice given by the Social Work Department. This includes whether the parent or carer of the young person should be informed of the child protection concerns.

Where an allegation is made against a (your organisation) worker (paid or unpaid), the above process still applies. A referral will be made to Disclosure Scotland if an individual harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm and as a result of this, we take the decision to remove them or they leave of their own accord, come to the end of a contract, retire or have been made redundant. The form for referral to Disclosure Scotland is available on the Government website <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-employer-referral>

## Section 5 - Responding when a child or young person discloses abuse

It is likely that a child or young person who has been abused will have given a lot of thought as to whether they should disclose the abuse. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that staff and volunteers follow the steps outlined below:

### **Stay calm**

Remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are trusted, not because you are an expert counsellor. Do not promise to keep the information secret; you may have to inform an appropriate person. You must take any disclosure seriously and reassure the young person that you believe them.

### **Listen and take the allegation seriously**

Listen to what the child or young person is saying. Give them the time and opportunity to tell you as much as they are able and willing to. Do not pressurise them and allow them to disclose information at their own pace. You should not investigate, ask leading questions or ask specific or explicit questions. You should only clarify what they are willing to tell you in their own words. Try to do this in an appropriate place, such as a room where other people can see in through an open door or window. Whilst it's important to respect the young person's privacy it should not be at the expense of other child protection measures.

### **Reassure**

Reassure them that you believe what they are saying and that you know it is not their fault. You should also give them some indication of what you will do next with the information that they have given you.

### **Confidentiality**

Reiterate that you cannot promise to keep the information secret. You must take any disclosure seriously. Details of the disclosure should only be passed on to CPO NAME, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities

Wherever possible you should try not to discuss any concerns that you have about a child or young person in a way that may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.

### **Record**

If you are able to, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to the young person why you are doing it. If it's not possible to do so at the time, record the details as soon as possible after the disclosure with as many facts as possible (dates, times, actual words used).

## Look after yourself

Being trusted with a disclosure of abuse directly from a young person can be emotionally draining, worrying and very stressful. Whilst it's essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times, it's important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with the CPO NAME. If appropriate, they will arrange additional support for you.

### Section 6 - Protection of Workers who report care and protection concerns

Deciding to report a colleague or volunteer you suspect of abusing or otherwise harming a child can be stressful and difficult and you may be worried about the person concerned taking action against you. The law does give you protection if you raise concerns or report a colleague as long as the report was not malicious or vexatious.

### Section 7 - Data Protection and management of confidential information

Organisation name is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is kept locked and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is kept and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

Organisation name is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality, and this will be respected by all workers. However, where a worker feels that the information disclosed by a child or young people should be referred to their line manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that confidentiality cannot be kept.

### Section 8 - Review of Child Protection policy and procedures

This policy and procedures document will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees, the **Director NAME** and the **CPO NAME** and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This policy has been approved by:

Signature:

Signature:

Position:

Position:

Date:

Date:

Signature:

Position:

Date:

Policy/Procedure Template Appendix 1

Refer a child to Social Care Direct

If you think that a child needs immediate protection you must call Children and Families Social Work on

0131 200 2327

Make a referral online

You can use this form if you want to contact Social Care Direct for a child.

[Ask Social Care Direct for advice – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)

[Wellbeing Concern Form.pdf \(edinburgh.gov.uk\)](#)



## Policy/Procedure Template Appendix 2

### Understanding of Abuse

Abuse to children or vulnerable young people is described under the following headings:

#### Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or young person, whether wilful or unintentional, which results in serious impairment to physical health and development. For example:

- exposing a child to extreme weather conditions e.g. heat and cold.
- failing to seek medical attention for injuries.
- exposing a child to risk of injury through the use of unsafe equipment.
- exposing a child to a hazardous environment without a proper risk assessment of the activity.
- failing to provide adequate nutrition and water.
- Signs which may raise concerns about physical neglect include:
  - constant hunger
  - poor personal hygiene and/or poor state of clothing
  - constant tiredness
  - frequent lateness or unexplained non-attendance (particularly at school)
  - untreated medical problems
  - low self-esteem
  - poor peer relationships
  - stealing

#### Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child or young person where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. For example:

Deliberately hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise harming a child.

Signs which may raise concerns about physical abuse include:

- refusal to discuss injuries
- aggression towards others
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- running away
- untreated injuries
- physical punishment
- avoiding activities due to injuries or possibility of injuries being discovered
- unexplained injuries, particularly if recurrent

### Emotional Abuse

The adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person, caused by failure to provide for their basic emotional needs. For example:

- Persistent failure to show any respect to a child (e.g. continually ignoring a child)
- Constantly humiliating a child by telling them they are useless.
- Continually being aggressive towards a child, making them feel frightened.
- Acting in a way which is detrimental to the child's self-esteem (e.g name calling, sarcasm, constant criticism)
- Signs which may raise concerns about emotional abuse include:
  - low self-esteem
  - significant decline in concentration
  - running away
  - indiscriminate friendliness and neediness
  - extremes of passivity or aggression
  - self-harm or mutilation

### Sexual Abuse

Any child or young person below the age of 18 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person, by design or neglect, exploits the child or young person directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person including organised networks. This

includes forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, and non-contact acts such as forcing children to look at or be involved in the production of pornographic material, to watch sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. For example:

- exposure to sexually explicit inappropriate language or jokes.
- showing a child pornographic material or using a child to produce such material.
- inappropriate touching.

The following signs may raise concerns about sexual abuse:

- lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults, fear of a particular adult
- social isolation - being withdrawn or introverted, poor peer relationship
- sleep disturbance (nightmares, bedwetting, fear of sleeping alone)
- running away from home
- drug, alcohol or solvent abuse
- display of sexual knowledge beyond the child's age

Other abusive behaviour towards children and young people

Staff, volunteers and committee members should also be aware of other, perhaps less obvious, forms of abuse. These may be dismissed by perpetrators as 'just fun' or 'having a laugh' with young people but can have a serious impact and cannot be allowed or go unchallenged:

- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism if any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures