

Diverse Digital

01 October 2013

OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Charity has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, its members provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Through the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for the Charity, and the support of its members, the Charity alongside a growing number of governing bodies, will maintain the professionalism and safeguards of good practice.

The policy outlines the following key areas:

- It recognises the responsibility of all those involved to safeguard and promote the interests and well being of the children with whom they are working;
- It provides a framework to provide protection for children via the recruitment, selection, suitability and deployment of individuals working with young people.
- It emphasises the value of working closely in partnership with others to protect children from harm.
- It acknowledges that the risk of abuse does occur in all facets of life and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard children and all others.

Introduction

These guidelines have been produced by the Charity to help take appropriate action to ensure that all young people enjoy the services provided by the Charity in all its disciplines, in a safe environment.

The Charity is required under its Operational Charter to put a Child Protection policy in place. and to appoint a Child Protection Officer who will be responsible for coordinating the Charity Child Protection Policy and procedures in conjunction with national Guidelines. This consists of a policy statement that states our commitment to providing a safe place for children to take part and/or learn, and to preventing the abuse of children and a simple code of practice and procedures covering

- (i) Recruitment of staff or volunteers who will be in contact with children.
- (ii) The prevention of abuse of children whilst at our events.
- (iii) What to do if abuse is alleged/suspected to have occurred, either at your event/club or elsewhere.

Policy Statement

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.
- As defined in the Children Act 1989, anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

Important : Please note that the term parents is used throughout this document as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.

The policy also applies to people with disabilities and applies to other vulnerable adults.

Good Recruitment Practice

As a general principle, if a good recruitment policy (where appropriate) is adopted by organisations for paid or voluntary, full or part time positions, and the issue of child protection covered in the organisation's risk assessment, both children and staff/volunteers should be adequately protected. Abusers have great difficulty operating in a well-run organisation, with good quality management and training.

Prevention of abuse

Child abuse is a very difficult situation for senior officials. Having the right systems in place can help all concerned. Abusers have great difficulty operating in a well run organisation with good quality management and training.

- The work of the club is planned so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children can occur. Usually this involves taking some simple steps - see Good Practice examples.

- We appoint a member to fulfil the role of Child Protection Co-ordinator
- We train staff and volunteers, line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the detection and prevention of child abuse.
- We give all staff and volunteers clear roles.
- We Issue guidelines on how to deal with the discovery of abuse.
- If young people tell senior officials about abuse, we follow national approved agreed procedures which allow children's complaints to be heard.

Good Practice Guide for Instructors/Volunteers/All Staff

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to the Charity.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

Good Practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (eg. Avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment (eg. No secrets)
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with young event attendees (eg. It is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them, although parents may share rooms with their own children)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process
- Making events fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Charity. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance guidelines
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible (eg for the responsibility of their children) in risk areas.

- Ensuring that when away from home, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms, except where appropriate risk guidelines are in place and preferably other adults present.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people – avoiding excessive pressure and not pushing them against their will.
- Awareness of any medicines being taken by attendees
- Keeping a written record of any incident or injury that occurs, along with the details of any decisions taken and their reasons
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form. (This includes child to child contact).
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun.
- Let allegations a young person makes go unchallenged or unrecorded; always act.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.
- In an emergency situation, which requires assisted help, parents should be fully informed. In such situations, it is important to ensure that everyone is sensitive to the young person and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Club Child Protection Officer

We are required to assess the need to appoint a Club Child Protection Officer and to decide who should be the designated person to be titled the Club Child Protection Officer (CCPO) to handle child protection issues. Prior to appointment, this person will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Check (Enhanced level). This person must have a formal role on the Charity's Trustee Management Committee. Once clearance has been received from the relevant Child Protection Coordinator, the Charity will produce a Child Protection Officer registration card to validate the appointment. The Club Child Protection Officer will require support from the Charity and facilities to provide access to designated training for all other helpers.

The role of the Charity Child Protection Officer is crucial in ensuring that the Charity Child Protection Policy and Implementation Procedures work in practice. The Child Protection Officer acts as the first point of contact for anyone in the club (staff, volunteer, parents or children) who has a concern about a child and about poor practice/possible abuse by adults working with children or children with other children. The Child Protection Officer therefore needs to be perceived as being approachable and as having a child-focussed approach. The Child Protection Officer does not need to be a child protection 'expert'. That is the role of the statutory agencies (Police and Social Services). Ideally, they should have a background in

working with children such as teachers, childminders, social workers, Police child protection team officers, child health workers, lawyers who have carried out juvenile legal work.

What to do if abuse is alleged to have occurred

If a young person informs you directly that he/she is being abused outside the Charity environment (ie. at home or some other setting away from the Charity) or through your own

observations or through a third party you become aware of possible abuse outside the Charity

environment, you must REACT IMMEDIATELY.

- Ensure the safety of the young person – if the young person needs immediate medical treatment, take the young person to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of your concerns and ensure they are aware it is a child protection issue;
- If available, contact the Charity’s Child Protection Officer immediately who will follow the reporting procedures detailed below. If the Club Child Protection Officer is not available or cannot be contacted, the person that has concerns about a young person’s welfare should follow the following procedures:

Reporting Procedures

- Seek advice immediately from the local Social Services or Police who will advise on the action to be taken, including advice on contacting parents. Expert advice can also be provided by the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.
- Make a full and factual record of events utilising the Incident Referral Form and forward a copy of the recorded information, as directed by the Social Services and/or Police, and also to the Charity Child Protection Officer
- If the individual being accused is from within the Charity environment, the Charity Child Protection Coordinator will consider suspension of the individual concerned following contact with the Social Services or Police. The case will be referred to the Charity Child Protection Coordinator following completion of the Police/Social Services investigation.
- It is never easy to respond to a young person who tells you that they are being abused and you may feel upset and worried yourself. Make sure that you are offered adequate support by discussing the matter with your Centre/Club Child Protection Officer or the Charity Child Protection Coordinator.

NOTE: A reaction of surprise can put a child off reporting matters further. It takes a lot of guts for a child to report abuse. A good response you can give to the first statement of abuse is *“Well done for telling me. I’m sure we can help you”*

Reinstatement: Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police Enquiries, the Charity Child Protection Coordinator will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be

sensitively handled. IN ALL CASES THE WELFARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD ALWAYS REMAIN PARAMOUNT.

Aftermath : Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to young people, parents and members of staff. Use of Helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory may be a useful resource. (The British Association of Counselling Directory is available from the British Association of Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PJ. Tel: 01788 550 899. Fax: 01788 562 189. Email: bac@bac.co.uk. Internet: <http://www.bac.co.uk>. Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

What should I do if there are allegations of abuse?

Always:

- Stay calm - ensure the young person is safe and feels safe.

NOTE: A reaction of surprise can put a child off reporting matters further. It takes a lot of guts for a child to report abuse. A good response you can give to the first statement of abuse is *“Well done for telling me. I’m sure we can help you”*

- Show and tell the young person that you are taking what he or she says seriously.
- Reassure the young person and stress that he or she is not to blame.
- Be honest; explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- Make a note of what the young person has said as soon as possible after the event.
- Maintain confidentiality - only tell others if it will help protect the young person.

Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Ask inappropriate questions, which may jeopardise any impending police investigation. Don’t lead the witness – if you suggest what you are thinking about as “inappropriate behaviour” the child may adopt these suggestions as elements of the abuse in a misguided attempt to help you justify action. Always ask a non-leading question. (i.e. “what happened?” – not “did they touch you” unless the child has already made the allegation of touching.

If the child has already made the allegation of touching, you can ask “where did they touch you?” but should not ask “did they touch you between your legs?” – keep questions neutral and non-leading such as “did they touch you anywhere else?”).

Once you have adequate information indicating a reportable problem, then let the child talk but stop asking questions – there are trained police and welfare teams who are better at this.

Your job is to identify the abuse, not to investigate it.

- Take sole responsibility - consult someone else (the person in charge or someone you can trust) so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

When recording information, it is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation, into beginning an investigation. Unnecessary interviews with child complainants could prejudice the integrity of evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court. There are particular problems with regard to gaining information from children with limited communication skills. Care should be taken that appropriate means are used to find out what the allegation is about without “leading” the young person. The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are in sight of another adult, but that your conversation won’t be overheard. You also need to be careful about physical contact during an interview because it may not be what the young person wants. The rule is to let the young person initiate any actions and to remain positive and supportive throughout. A Child Protection Incident Report Form is available to download from the Charity website, Child Protection section. This will assist in the recording of information and dealing with any incidents that may occur.

Consider a Codeword for volunteers which identifies a possible abuse circumstance so that it alerts another volunteer to ensure that you are in sight of another adult, (but that your conversation won’t be overheard).

If I do something, might it make things worse?

Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy - it takes courage but it protects a young life. You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens. However, one thing is certain - you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on children can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. The most serious effect is that children can and do die as a result of abuse. They can also develop behavioural difficulties, problems at school, their development can be delayed and they can become depressed and withdrawn. Some of these problems, if left untreated, can persist into adulthood. Some unruly children are unruly because they are abuse victims.

Recognising abuse - What is child abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child’s physical or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school and in a sports or community environment. Child abuse can take many forms:

Physical abuse where adults or other young persons:

- Physically hurt or injure a young person (e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting etc)
- Give children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- Attempt to suffocate or drown young persons.
- Physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the young person’s immature and growing body.

Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- Fail to meet a young person's basic physical needs (e.g. for food, warm clothing, essential medication).
- Consistently leave young persons alone and unsupervised.
- Fail or refuse to give young persons love, affection or attention.
- Neglect might also occur if a teacher or coach fails to ensure young persons are safe or exposes them to undue cold or risk of injury.

Sexual abuse

Boys and girls are sexually abused when adults (male or female) or other young people use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include:

- Full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling.
- Showing children pornographic books, photographs or videos, or taking pictures for pornographic purposes.
- Situations which involve physical contact (e.g. supporting or guiding children) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations may also occur if adults misuse their power over young people.

Emotional abuse

- There is persistent lack of love or affection.
- There is constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising.
- Young persons are frequently being shouted at or taunted.
- There is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse might also include situations where parents or coaches (instructors) subject children to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

Bullying

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. The bully may often be another young person.

Although anyone can be a target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons - being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

How would I recognise if a child is being abused?

It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused even for the most experienced carers. However, some of the more typical symptoms, which should trigger your suspicions would include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.

- sexually explicit language or actions.
- a sudden change in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- a change observed over a long period of time (e.g. the young person losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt).
- a general distrust and avoidance of adults, especially with whom a close relationship would be expected.
- an unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact.
- difficulty in making friends or abnormal restrictions on socialising with others.

NOTE: However, it is important to note that a young person could be displaying some of all of these signs, or behaving in a way which is worrying - this does not necessarily mean the child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs, you may just feel something is wrong.

If you are worried, it is NOT your responsibility to decide if it is abuse BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

Where can I get further help?

If you want to talk things through to gain some advice, you can phone the following 24 hour free telephone numbers. You do not have to give your name but it is helpful if you can.

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
 ChildLine: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

Training

Checks are only part of the process to protect young persons from possible abuse. Appropriate training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/concerns of possible abuse. We try to ensure that Child Protection Officers have access to and attend training in Child protection awareness.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment at Events

There is evidence that some people have used events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young sportspeople in vulnerable positions. It is however rare outside sport and outside travel situations.

- Anyone wishing to record the event should notify the Charity and be recorded by the Child Protection Officer. The Charity may seek accreditation with the event organiser by producing their student club or registration card and a letter from their club/educational establishment outlining their motive for attending the event.

- Professionals should register prior to the event and their identification details should be checked with the issuing authority prior to the event.
- The Charity will consider issuing an identification label on the day, which can serve to highlight those who have accreditation but will ensure that where regular events occur, the identifying label is changed to prevent unofficial replication.
- Public information: the specific details concerning photographic/video and filming equipment should, where possible, be published prominently in event programmes and must be announced over the public address system prior to the start of the event.
- The recommended wording is:

Generally

We would request that any person wishing to engage in any video, zoom or close range photography should register their details with the team before carrying out any such photography. We reserve the right of entry to ask anyone to delete photos taken at the event at any time. If you are concerned about any photography taking place at the event or don't want to be photographed, please let us know.

(If there is a TV crew:

We're lucky today to have a TV crew here from XXXX TV and they're making a film about [explain]. They'll be wandering around filming and may talk to you. If you don't want to be shown on TV, please come and get a badge from us. The TV Crew know not to film anyone with the NO TV badge . Also feel free to say you don't want to talk to them even if you haven't got a badge on.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent coaches, instructors and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such films.

We're filming today for a promotional video for the Charity's own use. We'll be wandering around filming and may talk to you. If you don't want to be filmed, please come and get a badge from us and we won't film you or ask you questions.

Review period

The Policy and Guidelines as agreed are seen as a live document, capable of being reviewed and amended according to need on an ongoing basis. For the sake of continuity and consistency, any review period other than that occasioned by changes in the enabling Act(s) should not be less than one year.

The Charity welcomes any written comments or suggestions regarding the Policy and Guidelines, and their application, at any time.

KEY STEPS

What should I do if there are allegations of abuse? Always:

- Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what s/he says seriously.
- Reassure the child and stress that s/he is not to blame.
- Be honest, explain you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse.
- Make a note of what the child has said as soon as possible after the event.
- Maintain confidentiality - only tell others if it will help protect the child.

Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Ask inappropriate questions, which may jeopardise any impending police investigation.
- Take sole responsibility - consult someone else (the person in charge or someone you can trust) so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

If I do something, might it make things worse?

Taking appropriate action if you are worried about abuse is never easy - it takes courage but it protects a young life.

You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about children being removed from their families as a result of abuse but in reality this rarely happens.

One thing is certain - you cannot ignore it. The effects of abuse on children can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not receive help to cope with the abuse. The most serious effect is that children can and do die as a result of abuse. They can develop behavioural difficulties, problems at school, their development can be delayed and they can become depressed and withdrawn. Some of these problems, if left untreated, can persist into adulthood.

Recording information

When recording information, it is important that you do not carry the process beyond gathering information about the allegation, into beginning an investigation. Unnecessary interviews with child complainants could prejudice the integrity of

evidence that may eventually have to be presented in court. There are particular problems with regard to gaining information from children with limited communication skills. Care should be taken that appropriate means are used to find out what the allegation is about without "leading" the child. The environment for recording information needs to be considered carefully. Try and ensure that you are in sight of another adult, but that your conversation won't be overheard. You also need to be careful about physical contact during an interview because it may not be what the child wants. The rule is to let the child initiate any actions and to remain positive and supportive throughout.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Whilst being able to access criminal records can be seen as a positive move for organisations in the private and voluntary sectors, it is important not to see it in isolation. The CRB has been set up to increase access to information, in order to help provide protection for children and vulnerable people against those who might wish to harm them. The aim is to make justifiable levels of information available to people responsible for recruitment decisions so that they can decide for themselves if someone has an unsuitable background. This is done through the Criminal Records Bureau checking process and the subsequent issue of a Disclosure document.

Charges: The Criminal Records Bureau should make no charge to volunteers and unpaid staff and the Charity makes no charge to volunteers for the administration of this service. The Charity conducts all such activities in line with the Criminal Records Bureau code of practice, the Charity policy statement on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information and the Charity policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders (see section 8.2).

Contact: Criminal Records Bureau - Information line: 0870 90 90 811 Website: www.disclosure.gov.uk

Disclosure: As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Charity complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information and has written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request. A disclosure is only requested where one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a disclosure is required, all application forms and associated documentation will contain a statement that a disclosure will be required. We ensure that all those in the Charity and its agents who are involved in the process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. We make every subject of a CRB disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB code of practice and

make copy available on request. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position when reviewing any appointment held. Storage and access : Disclosure information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling : In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom disclosures or disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage : Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention: Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep disclosure information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult CRB about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal: Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means, e.g. by shredding. While awaiting destruction, disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure request, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

Recruitment of Ex-offenders : The Charity is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, licensed officials or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background and we will have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders. Normally, applications from those with criminal records will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there is an assessment of no risk to the children involved in events, and subject to that criteria, the Charity will select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.