

Safeguarding Policy

Forces Children Scotland is committed to the protection of children and young people and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children and young people as of paramount concern. We are also committed to the protection of vulnerable children from exploitative relationships.

Forces Children Scotland considers it the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of all children and young people with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

This policy will apply to all children and young people up to the age of 18. Furthermore, this policy applies to all staff, consultants, volunteers and Trustees of Forces Children Scotland.

Designated Safeguarding Officer

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Trustee Safeguarding officer

Gary Gray - Trustee

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Terminology

For the purposes of this policy, the words “children” or “child” refer to children and young people up to the age of 18.

Child: a child is defined as anyone less than 16 years of age.

Young person: young people aged 16 to 18 years are sometimes classified as children in Scotland. In terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, a 16 to 18 year old will be regarded as a child if he/she is subject to a supervision requirement through a Children's Hearing.

For the purposes of Part V of the Police Act 1997 a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.



Key Principles

The key principles that underwrite this policy are:

- The welfare of all children is paramount.
- All children whatever their age, culture, ability, disability, gender, language, racial origin, parental status, religious belief and/or sexual identity or socio/economic background have the right to protection from harm.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- It is **everyone's** responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.
- Appropriate documentation, education/training and support will be provided to ensure the implementation of this Policy.
- Adults working with children are provided with opportunities for education and training to ensure best practice becomes the norm.
- Working in partnership with children and their parents/carers is essential for the protection of the child.

Forces Children Scotland recognises the statutory responsibility of Local Authority Social Work and Police Scotland to ensure the welfare of children and it is committed to complying with Local Area Child Protection Procedures.

Guidance and Legislation

The Forces Children Scotland Policy and supporting procedures are based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995
- Police Act 1997
- Sex Offenders Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998



- Sexual Offences (amendments) Act 2000
- Disclosure Scotland Code of Conduct “Making Scotland Safer” 2002
- Disclosure Scotland Code of Conduct “Protecting the Vulnerable by Safer Recruitment”
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Exclusions and Exceptions (Scotland) order 2003
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Responsibilities

Forces Children Scotland strives to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm whilst involved with Forces Children Scotland. We will endeavour to promote the highest standards of care for all children.

Roles

Forces Children Scotland will:

- Provide and implement robust procedures, support and guidance to safeguard the well-being of all children.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and protecting children.
- Ensure a culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with children.
- Develop appropriate whistle blowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about the protection of children to be addressed.
- Adopt best practice in recruitment and training of employees and volunteers.
- Respond to all allegations and concerns, swiftly and appropriately.
- Initiate Disciplinary proceedings when necessary.
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer and provide Education, Training and Support to that person.
- Monitor and review the operation of this policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure all persons working with children are fully aware of what is required of them within the guidelines of the Forces Children Scotland Safeguarding Policy
- Ensure all those working with children are recruited in accordance with Forces Children Scotland’s Safe Recruitment procedures.
- Be the first point of contact for staff and volunteers on any issues concerning the well-being of children.
- Conduct the administrative work associated with the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers and



Trustees.

- Act as adviser, when required, to the Forces Children Scotland Board of Trustees on matters of policy & procedures related to Safeguarding and Recruitment
- Ensure that all those working with children attend a relevant organised safeguarding course
- Ensure that all incidents are correctly recorded and reported in accordance with Forces Children Scotland policy and procedures

Trustee Safeguarding officer will:

- Support the Designated Safeguarding officer
- Take on the responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer in their absence to ensure any concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.
- Be responsible for ensuring all members of the Board of Trustees have relevant Safeguarding training.

Monitoring Procedures

The Forces Children Scotland Safeguarding policy and procedures will be regularly monitored and a full policy review will take place tri-annually. The policy will also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- As a result of any changes in legislation
- As a result of any changes in governance of Forces Children Scotland
- Following a procedural review as a result of a significant case

Types of Abuse and Neglect

A number of studies suggest that children and young people are at increased risk of abuse. Various factors contribute to this such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred.

Abuse of children can occur in any environment where there are young people, including the home, at school or in organised groups. Although children and protected adults are more likely to be abused by people they know and trust in their family, any activity that provides significant access to children can present opportunities for individuals who want to harm children. Therefore it is vital that those who have regular contact with children recognise the signs and indicators that a child or protected adult may be being abused and know the appropriate steps to take to report these concerns.

All forms of child abuse involve the elements of a power imbalance, exploitation and the absence of true consent, whether they concern acts of commission or acts of omission. It is important to remember this the

following is not definitive or exhaustive. Any of these signs or behaviours has to be seen in the context of the child's whole situation and in combination with other information related to the child and his/her circumstances. There can be an overlap between different forms of abuse.

The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child. The following definitions are all taken from National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Signs of possible physical abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent;
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
- Refusal to discuss injuries;
- Untreated injuries or delay in reporting them;
- Excessive physical punishment;
- Arms and legs kept covered even in hot weather;
- Fear of returning home;
- Aggression towards others;
- Running away;
- Administration of toxic substances.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from "non-organic failure to thrive", where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation.

This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time

Signs of possible physical neglect include:

- Constant hunger or inappropriate/ erratic eating patterns;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Constant tiredness;
- Lack of adequate clothing;
- Failure to seek appropriate/necessary medical attention;
- Unhygienic home conditions.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may involve the imposition of age- or developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children.

Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- Low self-esteem;
- Continual self-deprecation;
- Sudden speech disorder/refusal to speak;
- Fear of carers;
- Severe hostility/aggression towards other children;
- Significant decline in concentration span;
- Self-harm.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material

or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Sleep disturbances or nightmares;
- Complaints of genital itching or pain;
- Self-harm;
- Eating disorders;
- Unexplained pregnancy;
- Acting in sexually explicit manner;
- Anxiety / depression / withdrawn;
- Fear of undressing e.g. for physical exercise;
- Low self-esteem;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Running away;
- Developmental regression;
- Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults.

Significant Harm

Significant harm can result from a specific incident, a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns over a period of time. It is essential that when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm that the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority and not simply the alleged abusive behaviour

To understand and identify significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

- the nature of harm, either through an act of commission or omission;
- the impact on the child's health and development, taking into account their age and stage of development;
- the child's development within the context of their family and wider environment;
- the context in which a harmful incident or behaviour occurred:
- any particular needs, such as a medical condition, communication impairment or disability, that may affect the child's development, make them more vulnerable to harm or influence the level and type of care provided by the family;
- the capacity of parents or carers to meet adequately the child's needs; and
- the wider and environmental family context

Negative Discrimination (including racism)

Children and protected adults may experience harassment or negative discrimination because of their race or ethnic origin, socio-economic status, culture, age, disability, gender, sexuality or religious beliefs.

Although not in itself a category of abuse, it may be necessary for the purposes of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, for negative discriminatory behaviour to be categorised as emotional abuse.

Note: All organisations working with children including those operating where black and ethnic communities are numerically small, should address institutional racism, defined in the McPherson Inquiry report on Stephen Lawrence as: *“The collective failure by an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service to people on account of their race, culture and/or religion”*

Bullying

Bullying is deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying occurs if someone regardless of age persecutes, intimidates or is sarcastic to another. All forms of bullying, both verbal and physical by another child is also a form of abuse.

The lives of many people are made miserable by bullying. Victims of bullying can feel lonely, isolated and deeply unhappy. It can have a devastating effect on a child or protected adult's self-esteem and destroy their self-confidence and concentration. They may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious and less willing to take any sort of risk. They may feel it is somehow their fault or that there is something wrong with them and at worst, bullying causes depression and/or feelings of worthlessness that could lead to suicide.

Grooming

These are practices which may appear to be carried out with the best of intentions but are used by people who sexually abuse children to 'groom' their victim:

How abusers “target and groom” – they:

- engineer 1-1 situations
- develop a special friendship
- make promises of success
- engage family, other coaches, people of influence
- use text, internet chat rooms
- have “special secrets”
- buy gifts to buy affection
- have unnecessary physical contact with young people e.g. excessive handling/supporting, cuddling, kissing, “friendly” taps

Responding to Complaints and Alleged or Suspected Incidents

Dealing with child abuse is rarely straightforward. In some cases the disturbed behavior of the child, or an injury, may suggest that the child has been abused. In many situations, however, the signs will not be clear-cut and decisions about what action to take can be difficult. Abuse may become apparent in a number of ways:



- Through observation
- A child may tell you
- A third party may have reported an incident, or may have a strong suspicion
- You may have a suspicion

What to do

- Be supportive to the child or young person. Listen with care, but do not ask any unnecessary questions. Take what the child or young person is saying seriously, and advise them you will have to pass the information on;
- Immediately report the grounds of your concern to the Forces Children Scotland Designated Safeguarding Officer who will take steps to pass the information on to the relevant person or organisation who will investigate the concerns **Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Where possible, advise the Forces Children Scotland Designated Safeguarding Officer on the same day the concern arises;**
- Write down the nature of your concern and anything the child may have told you using, so far as possible, the words used by the child. Remember to sign and date the notes taken; making it clear that they may be used in any subsequent investigation;
- In the event of a concern being identified or reported during a school or community organisation visit this should be reported immediately to the Head Teacher or member of staff in charge and subsequently reported as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Officer;
- If you are unhappy with the response from the Designated Safeguarding Officer, you should contact the local Social Work Services Office and outline your concerns and the basis for them. (See important contacts).

Confidentiality

If a child or young person may be at risk of harm, this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with Forces Children Scotland have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. Children and their parents/carers will always be told this, unless the concern or allegation is about that parent.

Action to be Taken by the Forces Children Scotland Designated Safeguarding Officer

All cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously and the appropriate Local Authority Social Work Services Office should be contacted immediately. The concerns should be clearly stated including the basis for them. When the local office is closed, the Local Authority Emergency Social Work Service should be

alerted. All telephone calls should be followed up in writing within 48 hours using the Forces Children Scotland "Incident Reporting form" (see appendix).

If you are unhappy with the response from Social Work Services, you can contact Police Scotland or the Reporter to the Children's Panel and outline your concerns to them.

What happens next?

It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child or young person. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a child, the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.

The investigating Social Worker / Police Officer may require speaking to the person with whom the concerns originated. You should co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

What to do in an Emergency

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, for example a child at risk of immediate harm or injury, contact Police Scotland **immediately**. Do not delay, as this could result in serious injury to a child.

For telephone numbers see appendix 3 or call 999.

What if it is someone within the organisation that you are concerned about?

If you have observed a member of Forces Children Scotland acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned, and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer outlining your concerns and the basis for them. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve the use of the organisations disciplinary procedures and / or a referral to Social Work Services / Police.

If the concerns involve the Designated Safeguarding Officer, this should be reported to the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Supporting the Child or Young Person

Whilst the nature of Forces Children Scotland's work means that direct, regular contact with a child is limited, it may be the case that the child or young person will continue to be involved with the organisation following the reporting of the concerns. If so, be prepared to maintain links with the Social Work Services office involved in any investigation to provide support to the child if appropriate. It is important that employees and those involved with the child or young person act in a supportive manner. You should:

- Continue to listen with care;
- Reassure the child or young person he/she was right to tell, if appropriate;
- Affirm the child or young person's feelings as expressed by them;
- Do not question/interrogate the child or young person;



- Do not show disbelief;
- Avoid being judgmental;
- Do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse; and
- Avoid displaying strong emotions.

Historical Abuse

Where a child or adult discloses historical abuse, this reporting procedure must be followed. A full discussion should take place with the Designated Safeguarding Officer to agree what action is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others.

What to Do if You Have General Welfare Concerns About a Child

There are many circumstances that may cause harm to a child, and require a response, but fall short of a concern that a child is being abused. Nevertheless, a build-up of concerns over time may in time become serious enough that the child is considered to be at risk of abuse.

Where you have general welfare concerns about a child you should:

- Discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Liaise with other agencies that are working with the child where appropriate and in consultation with the DSO
- Record your actions and note your concern on the chronology of significant events. You should review general welfare concerns periodically, to see whether the build-up of concerns is significant enough to pass on to Social Work Services or a Head Teacher where appropriate

Appendix: 1 Safeguarding Policy Incident Report Form

Appendix: 2 Whistleblowing

The protection of children and young people requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. Forces Children Scotland supports an environment where people feel free to raise their concerns with the knowledge that all concerns will be taken seriously.

The term 'whistleblowing' is often used in such circumstances to describe the raising of a concern about practices, procedures or conduct of an individual.



Concerns should be raised without delay to either the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the CEO or the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The earlier concerns are reported, the easier it will be to take action.

Forces Children Scotland will follow up all complaints, concerns or allegations relating to child protection matters including those which are raised anonymously. In some cases, without an identified complainant, FCS is unlikely to be able to proceed with disciplinary actions, but in all cases, an initial assessment will be made to consider whether there is sufficient substance in the complaint, the credibility of the referral and the likelihood of identifying others who can confirm the allegations to warrant some initial enquiries or risk assessment.

All concerns raised under this procedure will be treated seriously and depending upon the nature of the matter it may be referred to the police. In these circumstances, the whistleblower may be asked to provide a written statement and give evidence to the police and/or at a Forces Children Scotland hearing. Forces Children Scotland will provide support to the whistleblower during this process.

Forces Children Scotland will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect anyone who has raised a concern in good faith. Anyone who is found to have victimised or harassed a whistleblower will face disciplinary action. Anyone who raises concerns known to be untrue may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Appendix: 3

Safeguarding Process - Lamplight

Once informed of a safeguarding concern:

1. Staff to inform manager of concern via phone call and/or email.
2. Staff to flag safeguarding concern on the Safeguarding tab of the YP record in Lamplight (this flags it at the top of the profile as Current Concern: Yes)
3. Manager confirms action to be taken by member of staff and themselves.
4. School/partner organisation informed of concern.
5. School/partner organisation informs staff what steps will be taken and timelines for action.
6. Staff to create Safeguarding work record for the YP in Lamplight
7. Safeguarding concern recorded on a word document which is password protected and then attached to LL Safeguarding work record.
 - a. There is a password generation protocol in place – please see admin for the protocol for your department which are not to be shared between teams.
 - b. Delete the original document.
8. Manager informs Safeguarding Lead by phone/email - by sending YP Lamplight record ID.
9. Safeguarding Lead will review document on LL
10. Manager to update Safeguarding log with relevant information.
 - a. Safeguarding Log is held in closed drive accessible only to Managers.
11. Other staff currently working with YP to be notified concern has been raised and given further information where appropriate.

Forces Children Scotland



Appendix: 4

Useful Contacts:

Forces Children Scotland

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
0808 800 5000

Childline Scotland
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Parentline Scotland
0808 800 2222

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
www.ceop.gov.uk

Internet Safety:
www.thinkuknow.co.uk

respectme, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service
enquire@respectme.org.uk

LGBT YOUTH SCOTLAND
info@lgbtyouth.org.uk

City of Edinburgh Social Work Department
0131 200 2324
socialcaredirect@edinburgh.gov.uk

Out of hours
0800 731 6969

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