



## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Section 1 - Introduction**

- The Place Youth Club is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. This Child Protection Policy and Procedures reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed
- The Place Youth Club is responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy statement and other care and protection policies and guidelines. However, all workers (paid or unpaid) for The Place Youth Club are required to implement the child protection procedures
- 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". This places on The Place Youth Club a Duty of Care for the children and young people we work with. The Place Youth Club will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people in its care.
- The Place Youth Club has a commitment to children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them.

### **Section 2 - Recruitment**

The Place Youth Club 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 The Place Youth Club:

- 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 The Place Youth Club 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 recognised Child Protection Officer, Janette Douglas. 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
- You 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 child protection officer (Janette Douglas).

**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 designated officer. 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).



**SEEK ADVICE and REFER TO APPROPRIATE AGENCY**

The Child Protection Officer should contact the Social Work Department and/or the Police and ask to speak to the Duty Officer about a child protection issue. If the report is received during an evening, then the Social Work department Emergency Duty team and/or the Police should be contacted. 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 The Place Youth Club 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 [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

## **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 the child protection officer 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 designated officer. 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**

The Place 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.

The Place Youth Club 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 person 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 Place Coordinator and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This policy has been approved by: Anna O'Brien

On behalf of: The Place Youth Club Management Committee

Date: 26/05/22

Signed:

# APPENDIX 1

## Child Welfare Report Form

- A report should be made by the person who has had the initial concerns about a child's welfare using this pro forma
- The report should be handed to the designated officer in a sealed envelope
- The designated officer should contact the appropriate Social Work Dept/Police

Name:

Date:

Who is putting the child/young person at risk? (eg staff member, family member)

Name and contact details of child/young person/s you concern relates to:

Outline your reasons for concern:

Brief outline of any action you have already taken to protect the child/young person:

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Follow up action taken by the Child Protection Officer

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **The Place Youth Club - 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
- excessive 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