



Child Protection Policy

Child Protection Policy Statement

Lochalsh Youth Community Trust (LYCT) 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. LYCT has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In order to achieve this, we shall ensure our workers and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore we shall endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

LYCT will:

- 1) Ensure that all workers and volunteers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation;
- 2) Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of all workers and volunteers;
- 3) Provide opportunities for all newly appointed workers and volunteers through the provision of induction training, which gives an overview of the organisation's purpose, values, structure and services;
- 4) Ensure that all workers and volunteers understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in the organisations Code of Conduct and Child Protection procedures;
- 5) Ensure that all workers and volunteers understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's designated person for child protection (the Child Protection Officer);
- 6) Ensure that all procedures relating to the conduct of workers and volunteers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner;
- 7) Ensure that the 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)
- 8) Ensure that the organisation meets all its responsibilities in adhering to the requirements of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007;
- 9) Provide opportunities for all workers or volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of children and young people;
- 10) Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and that they will have access to the organisation's complaints procedures;
- 11) 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.

- a) LYCT is committed to providing a safe environment for children and 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.
- b) Charlene Maguire, Chair of LYCT, is responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy statement and other care and protection policies and guidelines and David Ashford is the Child Protection Officer. However, all workers or volunteers for LYCT are required to implement the child protection procedures.
- c) 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 LYCT a Duty of Care for the children and young people it works with. LYCT also 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. LYCT will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any form of abuse, for all the young people in its care. LYCT's understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2.
- d) LYCT 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.

LYCT recognizes that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for young people. The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as workers or volunteers of LYCT

- a) All applicants (workers and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form;
- b) All applicants (workers and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self-declaration form;
- c) All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references;
- d) All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview;
- e) A self-declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation;
- f) All successful applicants appointed into 'regulated work' positions (as defined in Schedule 2 of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Act 2007) will be required to be Protecting Vulnerable (PVG) Scheme members. Existing PVG Scheme Members may be required to show their current PVG Scheme Record and agree to a PVG Scheme Record Update being carried out;
- g) Subject to the provisions of LYCT's Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy, any applicant found to be fully listed on the PVG children's list (to which LYCT will refer) will not be appointed to work (paid or unpaid) in a regulated work position.

Section 3 - Training.

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

- a) Provision of details of the structure of the organisation including details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation;
- b) Provision of details of the organisation's aims and objectives;
- c) Completion of an assessment of workers and volunteers training and development requirements;
- d) Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of workers and volunteers within the organisation;
- e) Provision of clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed workers and volunteers;
- f) A requirement that all workers and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisation's child protection policy and procedures;
- g) Provision of training, information and a copy of the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- h) Provision of the contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisation's Child Protection Officer.

Section 4 - Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse.

All workers and volunteers have a duty to report to David Ashford any suspicions, allegations or disclosures. 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 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 David Ashford as soon as possible. If the allegation is about David Ashford, contact any other Trustee. These steps should be taken without delay.

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** - Workers 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 David Ashford. 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 Police/Social Work 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

David Ashford should contact the Police and/or Social Work 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 LYCT worker or volunteer, the above process still applies. We shall make a referral (send a written report) to Disclosure Scotland if an individual harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm. In consequence, we shall take the decision to remove that person. The form for referral to Disclosure Scotland is available on the Scottish Government's website www.mygov.scot/disclosure-paper-application.

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 the abuse should be disclosed. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that

they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that workers 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. 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 David Ashford, 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 and provide 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 is important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with David Ashford.

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

LYCT 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.

LYCT 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 David Ashford 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 LYCT's Chair and all workers and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This Policy has been approved by Charlene Maguire on behalf of the Trustees of Lochalsh Youth Community Trust:

Date: 29th November 2018

Signed:

Charlene Maguire
Chair

Appendix 1

Report form for Child Protection concerns

- 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 David Ashford where she will add any subsequent actions taken. The form should then be stored securely.
- David Ashford should contact the appropriate Police/Social Work Department.

| |
|---|
| Name: |
| Date: |
| Who is putting the child/young person at risk? (eg: workers family member): |
| Name and contact details of child/young person/s to whom concern relates: |
| Outline your reasons for concern (key points): |
| Brief outline of any action you have already taken to protect the child/young person: |
| Signature: |
| Position: |
| Date: |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Follow up action taken by David Ashford: | |
| Signature: | |
| Position: | Secretary |
| Date: | |

Appendix 2

Understanding of Abuse

LYCT accepts that abuse cannot always be recognised or inferred using a 'checklist' of signs or behaviours. However, it may help workers to look at the following descriptions of the five widely recognised types of abuse and possible signs of them. Workers should be especially alert to the first category which is widespread and often less recognised as 'abuse'.

1. 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:

- a) exposing a child to extreme weather conditions e.g. heat and cold;
- b) failing to seek medical attention for injuries;
- c) exposing a child to risk of injury through the use of unsafe equipment;
- d) exposing a child to a hazardous environment without a proper risk assessment of the activity;
- e) failing to provide adequate nutrition and water.

Signs which **may** raise concerns about physical neglect include:

- f) constant hunger;
- g) poor personal hygiene and/or poor state of clothing;
- h) constant tiredness;
- i) frequent lateness or unexplained non-attendance (particularly at school);
- j) untreated medical problems;
- k) low self-esteem;
- l) poor peer relationships;
- m) stealing.

2. 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:

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

Signs which **may** raise concerns about physical abuse include:

- b) refusal to discuss injuries;
- c) aggression towards others;
- d) improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
- e) fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- f) running away;
- g) untreated injuries;
- h) excessive physical punishment;
- i) avoiding activities due to injuries or possibility of injuries being discovered;
- j) unexplained injuries, particularly if recurrent.

3. 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:

- a) Persistent failure to show any respect to a child (e.g. continually ignoring a child);
- b) Constantly humiliating a child by telling them they are useless;
- c) Continually being aggressive towards a child, making them feel frightened;
- d) 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:

- e) low self-esteem;
- f) significant decline in concentration;
- g) running away;
- h) indiscriminate friendliness and neediness;
- i) extremes of passivity or aggression;
- j) self-harm or mutilation.

4. 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:

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

The following signs **may** raise concerns about sexual abuse:

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

5. Other abusive behaviour towards children and young people

Workers, volunteers and Trustees 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 to go unchallenged.

For example:

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