

Child Protection Policy for Coigach Community Hall

Definition

Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child.

This is a very open definition, which encourages us to be open-minded and think about what child abuse is. For those working in the field of Child Protection the definition gets broken down further into Categories of Abuse, namely: Physical Injury, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Physical Neglect and Non-organic Failure to Thrive, this can mean a child at risk through either something a person has done to them OR something a person is failing to do for them.

There may be a time when a child approaches a person in our group as a trusted adult to discuss their life outside in the community. It is vital that we as individuals know how to react to this in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

How to React and Listen

Be aware of the age group you are dealing with

Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues

Allow the child time to speak and not interrupt nor make suggestions to them which could imply making an investigation

Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell what has happened

Do not interrogate or question other than to clarify your own understanding. If the matter is to be investigated further it will be so done by trained professionals. No matter how well you know the child, spare them having to repeat themselves over and over. Apart from anything else, the child may begin to think that you do not believe them.

Be honest tell the child that you cannot keep it a secret you have to talk to someone else who can help.

Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child – think how hard it must be to say it. Some things are very difficult to talk about, you've been chosen because the child feels they can talk to you. If you show anger, disgust, disbelief then the child may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further or feel that your negative feelings are being directed towards them.

Listen to the child – REALLY LISTEN – take what they say seriously. Tell them that they've done the right thing by telling you.

As soon as possible write down everything the child told you, but remember that this is a confidential matter between you and the child. The only person you should discuss it with is the committee member for your organisation who has agreed to act as monitor for child protection issues.

Protection Policy

We recognise that child protection should not be treated in isolation – we take on board guidance given by Highland Child Protection Committee and will address recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees by doing the following:

- 1) Accept that it is our responsibility as a group to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted. Substantial being when an adult has one-to-one contact with the child, is in an isolated position with the child, will be in regular contact with the child and the person is not supervised.
- 2) Ensure that every new volunteer or member of staff will complete a Personal Profile Form. (Appendix 1)
- 3) Make a request for previous addresses on volunteer/application forms.
- 4) Ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference.
- 5) Follow up each reference with a telephone call or personal contact during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children. A record of this discussion will be kept in the applicant's file.
- 6) Interview prospective volunteers and staff.
- 7) Note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and staff working with children.
- 8) Carry out a probationary period for all volunteers and staff of at least 3 months.

We believe that every child regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. If we are suspicious about a child's physical, sexual, or emotional well being we will take action.

All volunteers or staff will be encouraged to share concerns with the hall's committee member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have serious doubts about the child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or the Police immediately. If our concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then we will discuss these with our hall child protection monitor, who would then make a referral to Social Work who will make the necessary arrangements. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately. To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below.

- 1) Upon the receipt of any information from a child or suspicions, it is necessary to record what they have seen, heard or know accurately at the time the event occurs.
- 2) Share their concerns with the monitor for the hall and agree to take action.
- 3) Always REFER **never** INVESTIGATE and suspicions or allegations about abuse.

Hall Contact Person ~~Christina Smith 01854 622373~~ ^{NICK CLOONEY 01854 622405}

Area Social Work Office 01854 613906

Out of Hours Emergency Service 08457 697284

Ullapool Police Station 01854 612017

Policy Statement

The hall committee will:

- 1) Hold a register of every child involved with the group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close at hand in case of emergencies.
- 2) Treat ever one with respect.
- 3) Remember that some issues are confidential.
- 4) Provide an example we would wish others to follow.
- 5) Where possible we will consider activities which do involve more than one adult being present, or at least within sight and hearing of the others.
- 6) Be aware that, someone else may misrepresent our actions even if they are well intentioned.
- 7) Respect a child's right to personal privacy.
- 8) Provide time for children to talk to us.
- 9) Encourage children to respect and care for others.
- 10) Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- 11) Have a group policy for the collection of children after meetings have finished.
- 12) Remember to REFER **not** INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse.
- 13) Only share concerns and seek support from those identified in the group's child protection policy.
- 14) Complete the vetting checklist. (Appendix 2)

Personal Profile Form

To be completed by all new volunteers/employees.

1. Organisation's Name: _____

2. Personal Details

Title: _____ Forename: _____ Surname: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Telephone No (incl STD code): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Occupation: _____ Currently Employed: YES / NO

3. **Qualifications/Training** - Please enter details of any qualifications or training courses you have attended which are relevant to caring for young children.

Date(s)	Title of Qualification/Training	Subjects Studied	Length of Course	Name of Organisation

4. **Experience** - Please give details of experience of working with under 16's or vulnerable people

Where previously have you worked with young people under the age of 16?	In what capacity?	Between which dates?
Other comments:		

5. **Referees** - Please provide the names and addresses of TWO responsible persons for reference purposes. Referees should not be related to you and, where possible, should have a knowledge of your ability to care for or be in the proximity of children. All references will be taken up. *You should secure prior agreement of referees before providing their names.*

Referee 1

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Referee 2

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

6. **Declaration** - I have read and understood the organisation's Child Protection Policy and agree to CONFIDENTIAL vetting procedures. I agree to inform the organisation of any change in circumstances.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Vetting Checklist

■ Name of Organisation: _____

■ Name of Volunteer/Employee: _____

This Checklist and a Child Protection Personal Profile Form must be completed for all new volunteers/employees in your organisation who have substantial access to children.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have you explained the need for vetting to the potential volunteer/employee? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Have you given the volunteer/employee an opportunity to read your Child Protection Policy and discussed any issues arising out of this with him/her? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Have you set up a personnel file for the potential volunteer/employee? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Has the volunteer/employee completed a Child Protection Personal Profile Form? <i>(Please attach the completed form to this check list)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Have you carried out appropriate vetting? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Were the results satisfactory? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Have you taken up two written references?
<i>(Please attach the references to this check list)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Have you followed up these references with either a telephone call or conversation? <i>(Please attach a written record with full details including the date of the call or conversation to this checklist)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Has the above individual been approved as a volunteer/employee with your organisation? <i>(You must be able to answer YES to questions 1-8 above before you sign this form)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

■ Signed: _____

■ Date: _____

■ Name (in block capitals): _____

■ Position held in Organisation: _____