



The Protection of Children, Young People and Adults

Introduction

The safeguarding of children and young people is everybody's business.

“The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child contends that all children have an inalienable right to protection from harm. This right of children places a duty on all of us, as parents, professionals and members of the community, to ensure that children are not exposed to avoidable risk of harm and danger and to seek to minimise the effects of such harm where we become aware of it.”

Policy and Procedures

The safeguarding of children and young people covers every aspect of our work:-

All groups working with children and young people should have a Child Protection Policy in place, to ensure that the children and young people with whom they work are protected. Such a policy also creates a safe working environment for workers. On the following pages is a draft policy statement and policy and procedures. These should be fully discussed with everyone concerned and adapted to suit particular local requirements and issues.

At least two people from the Management Team/Committee and/or workers should attend the child protection training that is available, and they will become the named Child Protection Workers for the group. Their responsibilities will be to support a child or young person through a concern or to make a referral to Children's Services.

All staff must be aware of what procedure to follow and the child, young person or adult must be informed that what they say cannot be kept secret and that there is a duty of care to inform the Child Protection Worker, Children's Services or the Police. The information will be kept confidential within these agencies. There will not be any gossiping about the incident(s).

USEFUL CHILDREN'S SERVICES NUMBERS:

0845 607 2000 office hours
01905 768020 other times

1. Adopt a policy on safeguarding the welfare of young people

All groups and organisations have a duty of care for the young people they work with. It is the responsibility of the Management Committee (if you have one) to ensure the implementation of a child protection policy.

It is how the policy is implemented which makes the difference. All staff must read the policies of the group/organisation during their induction and have the opportunity to share any concerns or issues with an experienced member of staff. All policies must be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the organisation's requirements and any government legislation.

2. Apply agreed procedures for protecting young people to all paid staff and volunteers

It is important that all staff are informed of the child protection policy as part of their induction process and it is recorded that they have read and understood the procedures.

A process and timescale for reviewing and updating the policy needs to be agreed by the Management Committee at least annually. This should include looking at current legislation to high-risk activities and off-site activities and residentials. This includes emergency contacts and ratio of staff to young people.

3. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles

It is important that all staff have a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities and accountabilities. This can be provided by a written job description of the work and responsibilities they are required to undertake as a volunteer of the club/organisation. It needs to include any training they are required to undertake and the person they are accountable to. You may want to consider a probationary period which will provide the opportunity for both the worker and Management Committee to review, and allow both parties the option to move on.

4. Use supervision as a means of protecting young people

Staff need to know who to go to if they need to check out a situation they are not sure of, to discuss the relationship the worker has with different individuals and groups of young people, or to evaluate their practice. The worker in charge must be aware of what is happening by observing and asking questions, to prevent a situation where a young person could be highly favoured or harshly treated, as these could be signs of abuse.

5. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving young people

You should follow the club/organisation recruitment and selection process for all staff. Inform staff that if they fail to follow the policies and guidelines set out, then they could be subject to disciplinary process.

6. Before you appoint obtain at least two references from people who have experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with young people

You need to ensure that you request a minimum of two references from an applicant before you offer them a position. You must tell the referees that the applicant will have contact with young people, and request their views of the applicant's suitability for the position.

How would you deal with replies that are vague or ambiguous? You need to have a procedure in place so you can deal with this situation if it arises. Refer to the Recruitment section.

7. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact they have had with young people in an interview before their appointment

You need a minimum of two interviewers. If either are not experienced then it is advisable for them to seek training in order to learn how to assess an applicant's skills, experiences and suitability in working with young people.

Request two references that support their application in working with young people. If an applicant has provided a letter of application then you need to use that information and the requirements of the job description and person specification to look at their suitability. If there are any gaps in employment you need to ask questions to find out the reasons why. It is a good idea to involve young people in the interviews as they are good at picking up inappropriate behaviour "She or he gives me the creeps". You must ensure that the applicant is who they say they are.

8. Find out whether an applicant has had a conviction for criminal offences against young people

It is important that you undertake Criminal Record Bureau (CRE) checks. You can get these completed with the BARN

The club/organisation will have to be affiliated with the organisation and there is a small administration charge for each check.

9. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period

A probationary period for new worker gives both the worker and the group the opportunity to review whether arrangements are working. During this time it is good practice for the new worker to shadow a more experienced worker who can provide support and perhaps identify training needs. Shadowing also provides an opportunity for the new worker to get to know and start forming relationships with members.

If you develop concerns about a new volunteer, eg if they are meeting young people away from the club or developing relationships that are too close to some young people, you can ask them to leave.

10. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse

It is important that all staff know the procedure to follow if they suspect child abuse.

It is important that the member of staff supporting the young person is given support. This should be provided by the senior worker and/or the allocated Child Protection worker.

11. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse

The Management Committee (if you have one) has the responsibility of reviewing policies annually and ensuring that staff are trained and implementing the policies of the club.