

Writing a Child Protection Policy

Introduction

A Child Protection Policy (CPP) is a document that outlines how your organisation deals with child protection issues. It is a document which should not be left on a shelf but be full of guidelines and procedures which your organisation follows every day. It should be reviewed on a regular basis, ideally annually.

Why have a Child Protection Policy?

There are many reasons why your organisation should have a CPP.

- A good CPP will safeguard the children and young people you serve and the staff and volunteers who deliver the service.
- Having a CPP is a way of ensuring the organisation is fulfilling its duty of care for the children and young people it serves.
- A CPP will give clear direction to staff and volunteers in situations that can be distressing and can ultimately reduce the chances of any harm happening to children and young people in your organisation's care.
- Some funders require a child protection policy to be in place.

Who should have a Child Protection Policy?

Any organisation that directly or indirectly delivers a service to children and young people should have a CPP. Here at High Peak CVS even though we do not have contact with children on a day to day basis we have a policy to cover those situations when children

and young people might be in the building or when as workers we may have contact with children and young people outside the building.

How do you use a Child Protection Policy?

A CPP states what value your organisation or group put on child protection and what will be done in different circumstances to protect children, young people and volunteers, staff and trustees. The policy will be read by funders, new and existing volunteers, staff, trustees and those you are providing a service to i.e. parents, carers and youngsters.

The policy needs to include the practical details of how the policy will be implemented, for example recruitment processes.

So how do you write a policy?

First consider what your policy needs to include. It needs to reflect the activities undertaken.

Descriptions of the different areas that should be included are provided. If you have Internet access at your youth club or take young people away on trips these would need to be covered specifically in your policy.

For each section you include, identify the potential risks and then how you are going to protect and safeguard children, young people and workers. This needs to include the practical elements.

The contents of a CPP

The following pages are outlines of the different sections that make a Child Protection Policy. Use these to write the different sections of your policy. (we also have a sample policy that you can use). These sections have been provided by or taken from other resources developed by The Derbyshire Community Foundation and Tyne and Wear Community Foundation. We are grateful to them for sharing their work.

There are 9 elements to a good CPP, covering:

- Policy statement
- Safe Selection & Recruitment of Staff & Volunteers
- Training
- A Code of Conduct
- The 4 Main forms of Abuse
- Nominated Child Protection Representative
- Responding to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse
- Keeping a Record of Concern
- Links With Health & Safety Policy
- Local Contacts



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In addition, if you are planning to take youngsters away overnight, offer Internet access, or work with particularly vulnerable young people, you may wish to explain in your policy how you will protect youngsters in these situations.

We have included contacts for model policies and examples

1. Policy Statement

A policy statement is the first part of a policy after the title, name of group, date etc. It is a brief outline of what the group or organisation wants to achieve or

aspire to. It may contain some definitions which provide a context for the policy and will include what the aim of the group or organisation is.

2. Safe Selection & Recruitment of Staff

The risk with selection and recruitment is that determined abusers have often managed to gain access to children and young people through this. Your policy and procedures are important safeguards to stop this happening. They will be understood by good applicants and will put ill intentioned people off. Don't assume, check first!

As part of your policy you should set out how **you** recruit and select both staff & volunteers. It is important however that you include certain elements (highlighted below) as these points if carried out, will be the backbone of a strong child protection policy which will be as watertight as possible.

All volunteers and staff, including temporary personnel and helpers should be subject to a careful and rigorous selection and vetting process with the following elements:

- ☺ Completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their birth certificate or passport – it may be useful to include an

- ☺ example of the application you use
- ☺ Taking up 2 references, which are seen before the interview and verified by a follow up phone call
- ☺ An interview preferably by two people – this can be informal/chat if more fitting with the groups running style
- ☺ Identifying reasons for unsubstantiated, gaps in employment or inconsistencies. This is usually addressed in an interview.
- ☺ Carrying out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (see our separate guide on this subject)
- ☺ Allowing no unsupervised access to children and young people until this has been completed, e.g., *appointment subject to references*
- ☺ Advice is sought about recruiting someone with a criminal record
- ☺ A supervised probationary period for new people to the project – *How long will this be for you organisation / group?*

3. Training

For a policy to be effective staff and volunteers must be aware of it and know how to follow the procedures and guidelines! Your policy needs to show how volunteers, staff and trustees will be trained in it.

They should be well informed, trained and supervised so they are less likely to become involved in actions, which can lead to harm or be misinterpreted and possibly lead to false allegations.

They will also become generally more aware of abuse and possible key signs.

Opportunities to train:

Induction:

- ☺ This is the best way to ensure all staff and volunteers read through and understand the policy – it should be conducted on a one to one basis or in a group session where more established workers can be refreshed with any updates.
- ☺ Some groups will ask for members to sign an induction document to ensure they have understood their moral and legal obligations.

Specific Child Protection Training:

- ☺ It is beneficial to volunteers and staff to undergo training in Child Protection as more of

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an in-depth issue. Many courses operate around the County, some are run by local Councils and CVS's as well as those offered by NSPCC or Barnardos.

- *What type of training will be best for your organisation?*
- *When?*
- *Is their scope to undertake external training?*
- *Will there be refresher training available?*
- *How often?*

4. A code of Conduct

Bad practice or poor conduct can create risks for children, young people and volunteers, staff and trustees. It is possible to reduce situations of possible abuse and to protect children, young people and volunteers, staff and trustees by promoting good practice.

A code of conduct sets clear and concise boundaries for what behaviour is appropriate and promotes an open and safe working environment

It is important that staff and volunteers alike follow the code of conduct set by your club/ group.

A code of conduct should include positive statements about:

- ☺ Listening to children
- ☺ Valuing and respecting children as individuals
- ☺ Encouraging and praising children.
- ☺ Involving children in decision making as appropriate

You must:

- ☺ *Treat all young people and children with respect*
- ☺ *Provide an example you wish others to follow*
- ☺ *Plan activities where more than one other person is present, or at the very least within sight or hearing of others*
- ☺ *Respect a young persons right to personal privacy*
- ☺ *Provide access for young people to talk about any concerns they may have*

- ☺ *Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out behaviour they don't like*
- ☺ *Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.*
- ☺ *Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.*

You must not:

- ☹ *Have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children*
- ☹ *Make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun*
- ☹ *Show favouritism to any individual*
- ☹ *Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes*
- ☹ *Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts*
- ☹ *Rely on your good name to protect you*
- ☹ *Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.*
- ☹ *Believe "it could never happen to me"*

You may also have a code of conduct for the users of your group – a set of simple rules or guidelines which explains what behaviour you expect of them whilst using your facilities /service. This may be put up in a place visible to users.

5. The 4 Main forms of Abuse

By simply acquiring some basic knowledge you will be much more alert and vigilant to the signs of possible abuse and will be taking your responsibility and privilege of working with children as seriously as possible.

The following descriptions are not exhaustive but are a guide to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as

conclusive proof that abuse is occurring. Having these definitions and descriptions avoids misunderstandings over what abuse actually is.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as death or the birth of a new baby in a family, relationship problems between parents, carers etc.

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Recognising child abuse is not easy, it is not your decision to decide whether abuse has /is taking place (do not investigate yourself), but it is your responsibility to act if you do have a concern.

Definitions and signs of the four main forms of abuse are given below, **and should be included in your policy.** *The information and guidance is taken from First Check (NSPCC) – A guide for organisations to safeguard children.*

Neglect

Where adults *persistently or severely* fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

It is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may include failing to provide warm clothing or food, failure or refusal to give children love, affection and attention. Children may also be *consistently* left alone or unsupervised.

Physical Signs may include:

- Running away
- Constant hunger, loss of weight including stealing food from other children
- Poor Personal Hygiene
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions
- Untreated medical problems

Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- No social relationships – unable to make friends, engage in social activities (games, conversation)
- Low self-esteem
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

Physical Abuse

Where adults physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting, or by giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs or poison.

Most children collect cuts and bruises in their daily life! – these types of commonplace falls and rough play tend to show on bony parts of the body, like elbows knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury, or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. on the cheeks or thighs.

Physical Signs may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries
- Bruises, which reflect hand marks or fingertips
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Running away
- Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate physical abuse may include:
 - Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
 - Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
 - Flinching when approached or touched
 - Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
 - Depression
 - Withdrawn behaviour

Sexual Abuse

Girls and boys are abused by adults or other young people - both male and female - who use children of all ages to meet their own sexual needs. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to what is happening. The sexual activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as vaginal or anal rape, or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse.

Usually in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour that may cause you to be concerned.

Physical Signs may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital /anal areas
- Bruising or bleeding near genital /anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate sexual abuse may include:

- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Sexual knowledge, which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Substance or drug abuse

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- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults
- Eating problems, such as anorexia or overeating
- Having nightmares
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent and emotional ill treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. For example, persistent lack of love and affection, constantly shouting, threatening or taunting a child all these actions may make the child very nervous or withdrawn. It may also involve making the child feel or believe that they are worthless or inadequate. Emotional abuse may also occur when an adult places on a child's inappropriate expectations considering the child's age or development.

6. Nominated Child Protection Representative

It is good practice to identify one person in your group who will take responsibility for dealing with allegations or suspicions of child abuse. Without this person it would be unclear who concerns or allegations would be taken to or who should have more intensive training and understanding of the issues. This role also holds the procedure together and provides continuity of child protection issues.

This person may be the leader or manager of the group but it could also fall to someone who has previous knowledge of child protection issues. Within large organisations it may be necessary to have more than one representative especially if there is a wide geographical area.

This system ensures that if any staff member or volunteer has concerns they know **exactly who they can go to** – therefore everyone in your organisation should know who this designated person is and how to contact them.

It may be appropriate to have a second elected person to cover the role in the absence of the original representative

The role of the Nominated Child Protection Representative:

- ✓ Receive information from staff, volunteers,

Bullying is a typical form of emotional abuse, which is often inflicted by other young people.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Physical Signs may include:

- A failure to thrive and grow
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate emotional abuse may include:

- Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self harm

children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and record it.

- ✓ Assess the information promptly and carefully
- ✓ Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency such as the local social services department or health board or the NSPCC, to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns as soon as possible
- ✓ Make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay. It is NOT the role of the organisation to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the job of the social services department who's task this is legally.
- ✓ Make sure the children and young people using the project know:
 - about the child protection policy and procedures
 - You are the person to speak to if they have any concerns
 - Who to speak to if you are not there

In order to carry out the above role effectively the Nominated Child Protection Representative will need to know the following:

- Relevant contact numbers and addresses of statutory agencies (see section 9)
- Basic level training in child protection

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There should be a commitment in the groups or organisation to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in some situations it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced bereavement in the family.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be

responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations, or where concern still exists, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the nominated CP Representative as soon as possible and be recorded.

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO ADVICE CAN BE OBTAINED BY TELEPHONING THE NSPCC (24 HOUR) FREEPHONE HELPLINE ON 0800 800500

7. Responding to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

How you react when a child discloses information of abuse is critical, if handled sensitively then the child will feel as comfortable as possible and false assumptions and an escalation in the problem can hopefully be avoided. If dealt with badly a child may not disclose again; missing a vital opportunity in their life and crucial information and possible evidence may be damaged.

It is essential that staff and volunteers read through and understand the information in your policy. Many adults find it hard to believe situations of abuse and will more often than not experience revulsion at the thought of someone deliberately harming a child. These are normal reactions, but it becomes serious if they prevent us from listening to a child and responding appropriately. Therefore, your policy should include statements like:

- ✓ Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- ✓ Do not show distaste, disgust or anger

- ✓ Don't ask direct questions – who, what, where, when.
- ✓ Don't put words into the child's mouth by suggesting what has happened and by whom
- ✓ Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child who has a speech disability and /or differences in language says.
- ✓ Keep calm and, even if you find what they are saying difficult or painful, keep listening.
- ✓ Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality, which may not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments. Explain early on that the information will need to be shared and what you will do next (as simply as possible).
- ✓ Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using the child's own words – take as soon as possible to your nominated child representative
- ✓ Do not contact or confront the individual who is alleged to be responsible.

8. Keeping a Record of Concern

When a child protection concern arises, it is essential you record what is said or seen and what action was taken as soon as possible. Without this information may be forgotten, recorded long after the event or vital details missing.

An accurate note should be made of:

- ✓ Date & Time of the incident or disclosure
- ✓ Parties who were involved
- ✓ What was said or done and by whom
- ✓ Any action taken by the organisation to investigate the matter
- ✓ Any further action, e.g. suspension of a worker

- ✓ Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
- ✓ Name of person reporting and to whom reported

This record or any other written record should be kept in a specific locked cabinet or drawer to retain confidentiality and kept safe. Access should be limited to only:

- ✓ The person who has completed the form
- ✓ The nominated child protection representative
- ✓ The project leader or manager

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It may be shown to the police or social services and could possibly be used in court, although this is rare. The young person concerned can be shown this

document but discretion should be used. Their permission should be obtained before showing to the parent/carer.

9. Links With Health & Safety Policy

Your Health & Safety Policy should complement your child protection policy, as the protection of children includes ensuring their physical well-being and safety.

What should a Health & Safety Policy Contain?

Some Considerations:

- ✓ Required standards for premises & equipment (e.g. kite mark)
- ✓ Heating & Ventilation
- ✓ Sanitation facilities

- ✓ Fire precautions
- ✓ Food Hygiene
- ✓ Access to a Telephone
- ✓ First Aid Facilities
- ✓ Whether there are volunteers or staff trained in first aid
- ✓ Regular checking of equipment
- ✓ Emergency numbers
- ✓ Insurance Liability
- ✓ Security

10. Contacts

A CPP should also include relevant, useful contact details for agencies involved in child protection. Useful contacts are shown below:

NSPCC

Publications & Information Unit,
NSPCC, Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London
EC2A 3NH
Tel: 020 7825 2775
www.nspcc.org.uk
24 Hour HelpLine: 0808 800 5000
Textphone (for people who are hard of hearing or deaf): 0800 056 0566
E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Asian Child Protection Helpline

0800 096 7719

Child Protection in Sport Unit

E-mail: cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
www.sportprotects.org.uk

Forum on Children & Violence

8 Wakley St, London EC1V 7QE
Tel: 020 7843 6000
www.ncb.org.uk

Criminal Records Bureau

PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 3EF
Helpline: 0870 90 90 811
www.crb.gov.uk
www.disclosure.gov.uk

The Department of Health website of ACPCs

www.doh.gov.uk/acpc
www.doh.gov.uk/qualityprotects/index.htm

National Childrens Bureau

8 Wakely Street
London
EC1V 7QE
www.ncb.org.uk

OFSTED

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Local Statutory Agencies

High Peak Social Services

Talbot Street, Glossop, SK13 9DG
Tel 01457 728 888, Fax 01457 728 850

Derbyshire Dales Social Services

Portland House Clifton Road
Matlock Bath, Matlock
DE4 3PL
Tel 01629 77 23 23, Fax 01629 77 23 24

Emergency Duty Team

Long Close, Cemetery Lane, Ripley, DE5 3H
Tel 01773 728 222, Fax 01773 728 228

Police Family Unit, Buxton HQ

14 Mosley Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 9DR
Tel 01298 79993, Fax 01298 73606

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Police Headquarters

Butterley Hall, Ripley, Derbyshire
Tel 01773 570 100

NSPCC

Child Protection Team
Albert Road, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 3FZ
Tel 01773 744 877, Fax 01773 570 896

Derbyshire Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board

PO Box 5505, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3WW.

To contact the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board Training Co-ordinator, you can ring **01773 728740** or write to:

Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board

PO Box 5770 De Bradelei House
Belper

Derbyshire DE56 1WW.

Fax: 01773 728742

email: phil.heasman@derbyshire.gov.uk

Useful reference material

Useful websites for model and sample Child Protection Policies:


www.ccpas.co.uk

This is the website of the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service, an independent Christian charity providing professional child protection advice to churches and organisations.

Many sports clubs and associations have their CPPs on their websites. A good example is the British Amateur Rugby League Association's 'Rugby League Child Protection Policy and Implementation Procedures', which can be found at www.barla.org.uk/childprotection/

Further useful documents are:

- the Home Office Publication 'Safe from Harm: A Code of Practice for Safeguarding the Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales'.
- The Dept of Health publication 'The Protection of Children Act 1999: A Practical Guide to the Act for all organisations working with children', found at www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsandStatistics

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This fact sheet is one of a series of fact sheets produced by High Peak CVS. **They can all be downloaded from our website www.highpeakcvs.org.uk/how**

High Peak CVS works to ensure that local voluntary and community groups can access as much support, advice and information as possible. We help groups in many different areas, such as funding, charity registration, practical services including printing, training and links to

training and with legal issues. We have resources, including a meeting room, computers and OHP for use by groups.

To find out how we can help your group, please contact us on 01663 735 350 or email hello@highpeakcvs.org.uk

