

# **Play Scotland**

## **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

### **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Statement**

**Play Scotland is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to play and their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them.**

### **Children and Risk**

It is impossible to ensure that no child ever comes to any harm, and it is a policy objective of Play Scotland to encourage children's experience of risk and challenge in play, in line with the Managing Risk in Play Provision statement by the Play Safety Forum and HSE. However, this Child Protection policy and the following guidelines refer to the unacceptable risks to children, young people and vulnerable adults posed by abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

### **Defining Children**

This policy applies to all individuals in any capacity when dealing with children and young people whilst representing Play Scotland. To define what is meant by children and young people it is all persons under the age of 18 years. However, similar safeguards should be applied when dealing with vulnerable people of all ages.

### **Duty of Care**

Play Scotland is committed to taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from possible harm, discrimination or degrading treatment. The Board and CEO implement and review effective policies and procedures, while taking all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children with whom we may come into contact in relation to our work with Play Scotland. In order to achieve this we ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore we endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

**Play Scotland commit to:**

1. Ensure that all workers 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 (paid staff and volunteers)
3. Provide opportunities for all newly appointed workers (paid and unpaid) through the provision of induction training, which gives an overview of the organisation's purpose, values, structure and services, to gain knowledge of child protection procedures
4. Ensure that all workers 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 understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a workers conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's designated person for child protection
6. Ensure that all procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
7. Ensure that the Designated child protection officer (CEO of Play Scotland) 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 (PVG) Act 2007 and any updated legislation
9. Provide opportunities for all workers (paid and unpaid) 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 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**

1. Play Scotland is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures reflect this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed
2. The CEO 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 Play Scotland are required to implement the child protection procedures
3. 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 Play Scotland a Duty of Care for the children and young people we work with. Play Scotland also recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. Play Scotland will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people we may come into contact with in relation to our work as Play Scotland. Play Scotland's understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2
4. Play Scotland has a commitment to children's rights, notably Article 31 UNCRC, and their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them

### **Section 2 - Recruitment**

Play Scotland 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 Play Scotland:

5. All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form
6. All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self-declaration form

7. All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references
8. All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview
9. A self-declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any relevant convictions (and their context) with the organisation
10. 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
11. 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 Play Scotland will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child Protection. This will include:

12. Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation
13. Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided
14. An assessment of staffs (paid and unpaid) training and development requirements will be completed
15. The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified
16. Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided
17. All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child Protection Policy and procedures
18. Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided
19. The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Designated Child Protection Officer, the CEO, 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 CEO. 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 the CEO as soon as possible. If the allegation is about the CEO contact the Chair of Play Scotland. These steps should be taken as soon as possible.

**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 CEO. 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 Social Work/Police 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**

The CEO 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 Play Scotland 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 CEO, 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 CEO. If appropriate, the CEO 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**

Play Scotland 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.

Play Scotland 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 a designated member of the Board and CEO, and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This policy has been approved by:

On behalf of:

Date:

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 CEO in a sealed envelope

The CEO 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:

Key Points

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

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Follow up action taken by CEO

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Play Scotland- 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

[Play Scotland](#)

[Reviewed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019, due for discussion and review August 2020.](#)

[CEO Marguerite Hunter Blair Designated Child Protection Officer](#)

[Training update August 2019 - CPD certificate available](#)

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