



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

Effective from: 04/09/2024

Author: Practice Governance & Training Sub-Committee

Next Review: 04/09/2025

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

The purpose of this policy, and associated procedures, is to:

- protect children and young people who receive Cruse Scotland's services from harm. This includes the children of adults using our services; and
- provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

This policy, and associated procedures, applies to anyone working on behalf of Cruse Scotland - all employees, volunteers, supervisors and members of the Board.

Contact Details

Designated Child Protection Lead (DCPL):

Nicola Reed, Director of Client Services.

Email Nicola.reed@crusescotland.org.uk,

Tel: 07488 372280

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in Scotland.

The key guidance for anyone working with children in Scotland is the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023](#).

In Scotland, the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

Where a young person between the age of 16 and 18 requires support and protection, services will need to consider which legal framework best fits each persons' needs and circumstances. The National guidance for child protection in Scotland gives more detail about this and explains how professionals should act to protect young people from harm in different circumstances (Scottish Government, 2023a).

Aims

The main aims of this policy are to:

- set out the responsibilities of employees, volunteers, supervisors and members of the Board in relation to child protection issues,
- recognise the many forms of child abuse and the signs and indicators that

might be a cause for concern

- ensure that children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations,
- ensure that all employees and volunteers are aware that child protection is the responsibility of every adult who has involvement with children,
- provide information on the ways in which abuse or neglect may present in the child
- provide advice on Disclosure Scotland vetting procedures such as the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme

Responsibilities

Responsibility for developing and maintaining a child-safe environment rests with everyone at some level.

Directorate responsibilities:

- to ensure that this policy is communicated to all employees, volunteers, supervisors and members of the Board.
- to ensure that the policy and procedures are adhered to by all employees, volunteers, supervisors and members of the Board.

The DCPL has a duty to:

- Make sure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children and young people at Cruse Scotland, including members of the Board, understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Cruse Scotland's activities.
- Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Cruse Scotland may present a risk to children or young people.
- Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as:
 - a. the local authority child protection services
 - b. the police.

This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.

- provide appropriate guidance and support to employees, volunteers, supervisors and members of the Board who report childcare protection concerns,
- Report regularly to the board of trustees on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation.

Line Managers have a duty to:

- understand, explain and promote the policy and procedures to their employees and volunteers.
- encourage employees, and volunteers, to raise any concerns they have regarding all forms of child abuse as outlined below.
- be responsive and supportive to an employee, and volunteers, who so raises a concern.

Employees and volunteers have a duty to:

- familiarise themselves with this policy and procedures.
- advise their line manager or supervisor immediately if they are under suspicion or accused of any conduct that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- raise any concerns they have relating to child protection concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Definitions

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Children (Scotland) Act 2020 provide a major part of the legal framework for child welfare and protection in Scotland and are based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ("UNCRC").

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

It also states that children should have the right to express their views on any issues or decisions affecting them.

The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 received Royal Assent in October 2020, bringing the law further into line with children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 received Royal Assent on 16 January 2024, with most of its provisions coming into force on 16 July 2024.

Child Abuse and Child Neglect

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2023a) categorises abuse and neglect as including:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
 - Child sexual abuse
 - Child sexual exploitation
- Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Neglect
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage

Sections 1.33-1.49 of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 – updated 2023 document offers further detail of types of harm that may be included within these broad categories.

The NSPCC has some helpful guidance on how to recognise some signs of Abuse and Neglect here: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

Child Protection Procedures

Child protection should not be treated in isolation – it will be necessary to take on board guidance given by the local Child Protection Committee/Agency and to address the recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees by doing the following:

Administrative Procedures

1. We accept that it is our responsibility as an organisation/group to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted and are members of the PVG scheme.
2. We will ensure that every new volunteer or employee will complete a New Starts Form.
3. We will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written

reference.

4. We will interview all prospective volunteers and employees.
5. We will note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and employees in working with children.
6. We will carry out an introductory period for all volunteers and employees of at least 3 months.
7. We will hold a register of every child involved with the organisation/group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies.

Behavioural Procedures

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. In our organisation if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well-being, we will take action.

Volunteers and employees must, at all times:

- acknowledge the age group they work with, where possible consider activities which involve more than one adult being present or at least within sight and hearing of others,
- be aware that someone else might misinterpret actions even if they are well intentioned,
- provide time for children to talk to us,
- encourage children to respect and care for others,
- take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour,
- have an organisational/group policy for the collection of children after meetings have finished,
- respect a child's right to personal privacy,
- never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues,
- refrain from interrogating or questioning a child other than to clarify understanding. (If the matter is to be investigated further it will be so done by trained professionals),
- be honest - in that you may have to talk to someone else who can help,
- remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child,
- listen to the child - REALLY LISTEN - taking what they say seriously,
- share concerns with the committee member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues,
- remember to REFER not INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse,
- only share concerns and seek support from those identified in the organisation's child protection policy,
- complete a Child Protection Concerns Report available from your line manager.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

You have a concern, or have been told about, a child who has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, poor practice, or wider welfare issues.

Is the child in immediate danger or need immediate medical attention?

No

Yes

Contact emergency services by phoning **999**

Is a serious crime in progress or been committed?

No

Yes

Contact the police **999**

Speak to your Area Manager, Supervisor, or Designated Child Protection Lead and report your concerns without delay.
If none of the above are contactable, if you have concerns that the Designated Child Protection Lead is implicated or may not act appropriately contact Fiona Arnott-Barron, Cruse Scotland CEO.

As soon as possible complete a Safeguarding Children Concerns Report and submit to your Area Manager or Designated Child Protection Lead. **Always be mindful of the need for confidentiality.**

Child Protection concerns will generally be reported by the DCPL - however, if you want to report concerns directly:
Contact the child's Local Authority Child Protection Team
(Contact details: <https://www.childprotection.scot/useful-links/council-social-work/>)
Phone **101** for Police non-urgent reports. Before reporting concerns, these can be discussed further with NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000** or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk

Changes Sheet

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