



Reach4Reality Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Policy

1. Reach4Reality believes that every child or vulnerable person 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 or vulnerable person being physically or psychologically damaged. In our organisation, if we have suspicions about an individual's physical, sexual or emotional well-being, we will take action
2. Reach4Reality recognises that child and vulnerable person protection should not be treated in isolation - we will 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:
 - We accept that it is our responsibility as an organisation to check that all adults in positions requiring disclosure checks are members of the appropriate Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme and have been appropriately vetted.
 - We will ensure that we have a record of personal details for each member of staff/volunteer (usually collected on an application form).
 - We will ensure we have carried out necessary checks in relation to anyone working with children, young people or vulnerable adults: we will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference, one of whom would, where possible, be their last employer.
 - When appropriate, we will follow up each reference with a telephone call or personal contact during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults. A record of this discussion will be kept in the applicant's file.
 - We will interview prospective volunteers and staff.
 - We will note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and staff in working with children.
 - We will carry out a probationary period for all volunteers and staff of at least 3 months.
 - We will seek the appropriate disclosure through the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme.
 - We will notify Disclosure Scotland if anyone on the Disqualified from Working with Children List applies to work for or volunteer with our group.
 - We will ensure that all staff are given Codes of Practice to work to.
 - We will remove from unsupervised contact with children/vulnerable adults any member of staff or volunteer whom we know or suspect to have caused harm to a child/vulnerable adult or to have placed a child/vulnerable adult at risk of harm and we will notify Disclosure Scotland of our actions and the reasons for them, even if that person has left our organisation.
3. All volunteers and staff are encouraged to share concerns with the group's Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Lead: the Project Coordinator. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the individual is too frightened to go home



or we have very serious doubts about their safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately.

3.1 If our concerns are more general about an individual's welfare, then we will discuss these with the Project Coordinator who would then make a referral to an appropriate professional for assessment of the individual's needs, **immediately** if the situation is urgent or otherwise at the next opportunity in normal working hours, i.e. **within 3 days**. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately. To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below:

- Upon the receipt of any information from a child, or vulnerable person, or suspicions through observations, it is necessary to make an accurate and detailed written record of what they have seen, heard or know, **at the time the event occurs**.
- Share their concerns with the Team Leader/Project Coordinator for the group and agree what action to take, **that same day**.
- Avoid asking any more questions than are necessary to clarify whether there is a concern. Always **REFER** to statutory services to undertake in depth **INVESTIGATION** of any suspicions or allegations about abuse.

3.2 If we have concerns we must act - it may be the final piece of the jigsaw that is needed to protect that child or vulnerable person - or we may prevent, further individuals from being hurt.

Police: 101 (non-urgent); 999 (urgent)

Out of Hours Social Work Emergency Service: 08457 697284

Other relevant numbers below.

Area Children's Disability Service

West Link: Practice Lead: 01463 668667

Central Link: Practice Lead: 01463 668693

East Link: Practice Lead: 01463 701376

Highland Council, Child protection: 0800 0938100 (office hours)

Highland Council, Child protection: 0845 601 4813 (out of hours)

Child and Vulnerable Person Protection Is Everyone's Responsibility



APPENDIX 1

Definitions of Abuse

Because children and young people can be abused in a number of ways, the harm caused cannot be easily categorised. Any information has to be seen in the context of the child or young person's whole situation and circumstances. Different types of abuse may overlap or co-exist. However, it can include;

Physical Injury

Where the nature of the physical injury to a child under the age of 16, is not consistent with the account of how it occurred or where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a person having custody, charge or care of a child, inflicted or knowingly did not prevent the injury.

Physical injury may include the suspected administration of poisonous substances, attempted drowning, smothering and accidents, which have occurred when a child has been left unattended or inadequately supervised.

Signs of possible physical abuse may include :

- a) unexplainable injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- b) improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- c) refusal to discuss injuries
- d) untreated injuries or delay in reporting them
- e) excessive physical punishment
- f) arms and legs being covered even in hot weather
- g) fear of returning home
- h) aggression towards others
- i) running away

Physical Neglect

This applies to those who have been persistently or severely neglected physically to such an extent that their health and development are impaired. Particular attention is drawn to good hygiene, warmth, clothing, supervision, stimulation, safety precautions and medical care. Inadequacy of care in these areas resulting in persistent or severe exposure to circumstances which endanger the child, may constitute a serious neglect.

Signs of possible physical neglect may include :

- a) constant hunger or inappropriate / erratic eating patterns
- b) poor personal hygiene
- c) constant tiredness
- d) lack of adequate clothing
- e) failure to seek appropriate / necessary medical attention
- f) unhygienic home conditions

Failure to Thrive

This applies to those who have been persistently or severely neglected physically to such an extent that their health and development are impaired that they fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (ie physical growth, weight, motor skills) and that this can be medically diagnosed as non-organic.



Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive may include :

- a) significant lack of growth
- b) weight loss
- c) hair loss
- d) poor skin or muscle tone
- e) circulatory disorders
- f) lethargy

Emotional Abuse

The failure to provide for the child's emotional needs eg by persistent coldness, hostility and/or rejection by the parent or caregiver occur to such an extent that the child's behaviour and development are impaired. In some cases, an unnaturally intense and overprotective attitude on the part of the caregiver may also have an adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of the child and may be considered abusive.

Signs of possible emotional abuse may include :

- a) low self esteem
- b) continual self-deprecation
- c) sudden speech disorder / refusal to speak
- d) fear of carers
- e) severe hostility / aggression towards other children
- f) significant decline in concentration span
- g) self harm

Sexual Abuse

The involvement of the child in sexual exploitation (including pornography) with a parent, caregiver or other person within their acquaintance in a trusting relationship. The exploitation will normally violate social taboos and the victim will not be able to give informed consent because of their dependence or developmental immaturity.

Signs of possible sexual abuse may include :

- a) Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- b) Complaints of genital itching or pain
- c) Self harm
- d) Eating disorders
- e) unexplained pregnancy
- f) Acting in a sexually explicit manner
- g) Anxiety / depression / withdrawn
- h) Fear of undressing eg for physical exercise
- i) Low self esteem
- j) Inappropriate sexual awareness
- k) Running away
- l) Developmental regression
- m) Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults



APPENDIX 2 Policy Statement for Reach4Reality

We will:

- Hold a register of every child/protected adult involved with the organisation including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies;
- Treat everyone with respect;
- Remember that some issues are confidential;
- Provide an example we would wish others to follow;
- 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 our actions even if they are well-intentioned;
- Respect an individual's right to personal privacy;
- Provide time for children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk to us;
- Encourage children, young people and adults to respect and care for others;
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- 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/adult protection policy;

Contact numbers for Local Family Teams and the Police are available at www.hcpc.scot

Designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead

Name: Sylvia Longbottom, Project Coordinator

Contact Details: 07796905339 or sylvialongbottom@reach4reality.org.uk



APPENDIX 3 Summary of Good Practice You MUST...

- Treat all children/young people/vulnerable adults with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during Reach4Reality's activities with the children/young people/adults, or at least that you are in sight or hearing of others.
- Respect an individual's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intended.
- Be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or young person/adult may be misinterpreted.
- Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people/adults.
- Operate within Reach4Reality's Child Protection Policy.

You MUST NOT...

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people/adults.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate remarks or gestures in front of children or young people/adults.
- Make suggestive/derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people/adults.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Exaggerate or trivialize safeguarding issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on your good name or that of Reach4Reality to protect you.
- Believe "*It could never happen to me.*"
- Take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggest a more prudent approach.
- Ignore the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures operating within the organisation.

What to do...

If a child or young person/adult discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Allow him/her to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but **DO NOT** investigate.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
- Let them know you are glad they have shared this information with you.
- Advise the child/young person/adult that you **MUST** pass on the information.



If you suspect a child/young person/adult is being abused (emotionally, physically or sexually):

- Report the matter to the Team Leader, a Trustee or the Project Coordinator.

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

- Immediately tell the Team Leader, a Trustee or the Project Coordinator.
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

In all cases:

- Record the facts and report these to the Team Leader, a Trustee or the Project Coordinator.

You must only refer; you **MUST NOT** investigate