

# ETHNIC HEALTH FORUM

[www.ethnichealth.org.uk](http://www.ethnichealth.org.uk)

Charity Number: 1123223

Child Protection Policy

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Prepared by:

1. *Usman Akram*
2. *Yasmin Hussain*

## **Child Protection Policy**

*This policy outlines a code of practice, which will safeguard the welfare of children and young people within our activities, projects and general care. The main principle of this policy is to act as a set of guidelines for our staff and volunteers who have substantial contact with children and young people.*

### **Responsibility/Duty of Care**

We have a duty of care towards all children and young people coming into our activities. Parents and carers have a right to expect that staff and volunteers who run activities for children and young people will not abuse their positions of trust and cause physical, sexual or emotional harm to those in their care.

### **Planning for Activities and projects**

Before any activity is planned we will make sure that people are clear on their roles and responsibilities and that the following are considered:

- If the activity is going to be carried out by children/young people
- The staff/child ratio required and availability of staff.
- If the activity is the sole activity at the time within the area.
- The age groups of children involved and any special needs requirements.
- The skills and experience of staff
- The general health and safety requirements of the project e.g. space

### **Staff and Volunteers**

- Staff need to be aware of any strangers who on the site of activities, who they are and their reasons for being on the site. Staff also need to know where they are in relation to the children/young people.
- Staff need to reduce opportunities for abuse, by the way they use the premises. We will supervise the children at all times.
- We will also aim to ensure that we limit the occasions that a single adult is in the company of a lone child.
- We will ensure that no activity takes place without being supervised by at least 2 responsible trained adults.
- Two workers will also supervise toilet breaks.
- Workers will ensure that staff are not using their position to form a relationship with a child/young person and will be informed clearly that at no time should they encourage children/young people in their care to their home.

## **Management responsibility**

- Management has a responsibility to be aware of the emotional state of staff and its volunteers.
- Management must always know the person, to whom each staff/volunteer is accountable.

## **How to deal with discovery or disclosure of abuse**

- Staff and volunteers must use team/staff meetings and supervision as various means of discussing problems and issues of child protection.
- Activity leaders and workers must build good relationships with parents as well as children.
- Staff have a duty in law to take action if they have grounds for suspecting abuse is taking place. Concern first and foremost must be for the child. Workers may feel caught between their responsibilities to the parent and the child. However, the worker's duty must be with the child. In any situation where child abuse is suspected, the social services department must be informed. Recordings of observations or discussions should be kept.
- If child abuse is suspected, confidentiality and sensitivity must be regarded at all times.
- Staff and volunteers must inform their senior manager.

## **Whistle Blowing Procedure**

It is important that the project has guidance for staff and volunteers to share in confidence with the designated person concerns they may have about another member of staff or volunteer.

It can be very difficult to report concerns about a member of staff or volunteer but all staff and volunteers have a duty to do this. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from suspected abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately. Furthermore it is also helpful to explain that a whistleblower is a witness, not a complainant. This will help all persons separate the message from the messenger.

Allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer should be fully recorded and reported appropriately to Project Manager.

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned, and consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate to children, parents, members of staff and volunteers.

Should any uncertainty about how to proceed with a whistle blowing situation arise, immediate advice from Local Authorities Children's Social Care or the NSPCC should be sought.

### **Protection of workers**

- Although these guidelines are for the protection of children and young people, they are also there to protect the workers.
- An anxiety shared at an early stage can prevent trouble. E.g. A worker may be the object of provocative behaviour from a young person of the opposite sex. This must be reported to the their project manager/person in charge.
- If a worker is accused by a child or young person of any abuse or sexual advance, the worker must always know that Ethnic Health Forum supports their right to fair and just treatment. Police involvement should always be authorised by the Project Manager.

### **Appointing Staff:**

#### **Criminal Records Bureau**

When recruiting new staff a criminal record check must be requested for all workers and volunteers who will be working with children and young people. This will be done via an umbrella agency that is registered to undertake these checks.

#### **Disclosure**

In addition to the standard disclosure anyone having substantial contact with children and young people will require an enhanced disclosure. This contains details of all convictions on the Police National Computer (PNC). It includes spent convictions (i.e. convictions which happened some time ago and normally no longer need to be revealed as specified in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974). It also contains details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings. Where appropriate, information contained on the government department lists held by Departments of Health and Education will be included. The process from application to disclosure should take a maximum of six weeks.

#### **Procedure**

- The requirement for an enhanced disclosure from a successful candidate will be included in candidates' application packs and on the application form.
- All applicants called for interview should be encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process.
- When a job offer is made the letter must state that this is subject to the receipt of satisfactory references. The candidate must be asked to complete and sign an application for the relevant disclosure. Once processed a copy of the disclosure will be sent to the applicant. Depending on the content of this disclosure, either the candidate's application can be accepted (s)he can be called in for further discussion or the application can be declined with a brief explanation of the reasons.
- Each case should be considered on its merits taking into account the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the applicant's offences. Where a manager is unsure of the appropriate approach guidance and professional advice should be taken where appropriate.

### **Subsequent checks**

Once in post, follow up checks will be made every three years to ensure that an offence has not been committed during the period of employment.

### **Code of Practice**

There is a code of practice governing disclosures, which is to ensure that the process works fairly and that sensitive personal information is handled appropriately.

The CRB Code of Practice should be made available to all job applicants where a Disclosure will be requested.

As a charity using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service via a local agency to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the charity complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.

Disclosure information will never be kept on an applicant's personnel file and will be always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

## **Handling**

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

## **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

## **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six-months, we will consult the CRB about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject before doing so.

## **Disposal**

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means.

## **References**

Two written references will always be sought. If at all possible, one should be from a previous employer and relate to the applicant's record of and suitability for working with children and young people. The other should be a character reference from someone, other than just a friend, who is able to comment with some insight. It is important to telephone referees as well as getting written responses. Sometimes people will say on the phone what they are unwilling to put in writing.

## **Training**

It is important all workers and volunteers have access to and attend training on this area of work. It is the responsibility of Project worker and Project managers to ensure guidelines are understood and training needs are met.

Ethnic Health Forum (EHF)  
**INCIDENT RECORD FORM**

<b>EHF Project Name:</b>	
<b>Your Name:</b>	
<b>Your Position:</b>	
<b>Child's Name</b>	
<b>Child's Address:</b>	
<b>Parents/Carers Name and Address:</b>	
<b>Child's Date of Birth:</b>	
<b>Date and Time of any Incident:</b>	
<b>Your Observations:</b>	
<b>Exactly What the Child Said and What You Said</b> (Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)	
<b>Action Taken so far:</b>	
<b>External Agencies Contacted (Date &amp; Time)</b>	
<b>POLICE</b>	<b>If yes – which:</b>
<b>Yes/No</b>	

	<p><b>Name and Contact Number:</b></p> <p><b>Details of Advice Received:</b></p>
<p><b>Local Authorities Children's Social Care</b></p> <p><b>Yes/No</b></p>	<p><b>If yes – which:</b></p> <p><b>Name and Contact Number :</b></p> <p><b>Details of Advice Received:</b></p>
<p><b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b></p> <p><b>Yes/No</b></p>	<p><b>If yes – which:</b></p> <p><b>Name and Contact Number:</b></p> <p><b>Details of Advice Received:</b></p>
<p><b>Other (e.g. NSPCC)</b></p>	<p><b>Which:</b></p> <p><b>Name and Contact Number:</b></p> <p><b>Details of Advice Received:</b></p>
<p><b>Signature:</b></p> <p><b>Print Name:</b></p>	
<p><b>Date:</b></p>	