



TOUCH OF LOVE – CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2024

Child Protection Policy and Procedures for TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH

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Version	3
Policy Contact	Cosmos Ekeh
Date Issued	1 st July 2022
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Next Review Date	20 th June 2025
Approved by	The Board of Trustees

Touch of Love is dedicated to fostering the well-being and development of the most vulnerable in Aberdeen, particularly focusing on children and families in deprived areas. Our initiatives range from extensive food bank services, addressing immediate nutritional needs, to comprehensive programs like the Young Achievers' Club, which supports minority ethnic youth. This Child Protection Policy underscores our commitment to safeguarding the children we serve, ensuring they receive care and support in a secure and nurturing environment.

Child Protection Policy Statement

Touch of Love Outreach is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. Touch of Love Outreach has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In order to achieve this, we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore, we will endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

Touch of Love Outreach will:

1. Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation



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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
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 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
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



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CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES FOR FRIDAY WEEKLY CLUBS

Parental Responsibility and Child Sign-In:

Please escort your children inside the club and personally sign them in. It is imperative that children are not left unattended in the car park as the responsibility for their safety starts only when they are officially signed into the Club. Dropping children at the car park without ensuring they enter the Club premises is strongly discouraged and is at your own risk.

Attendance with Siblings:

If an older sibling is accompanying your child, please ensure they also enter the Club and are properly signed in. Our responsibility begins once the child is signed in and ends when they are signed out.

Outdoor Area Usage:

Children are not permitted to go to the outdoor park and play area unless accompanied by a designated volunteer. We request that parents discuss this with their children to ensure they understand and follow this rule.

Post-Club Care:

Once children leave the premises of Tullos Community Centre, they are no longer under the care of the Youth Club. This includes their time spent outside the designated Club areas.

Children with Additional Needs:

For children identified as having additional needs, we ask that parents provide the necessary care and safeguards required to support their child effectively.

Our commitment to the safety of your children is unwavering, but we need the cooperation of every parent to maintain a secure environment. We cherish the presence of your children and are dedicated to their well-being during Club activities.



CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Section 1 - Introduction

Touch of Love Outreach is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. This Child Protection Policy and Procedures reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed

Cosmos Ekeh / Child Protection Officer 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 Touch of Love Outreach are required to implement the child protection procedures

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 Touch of Love Outreach a Duty of Care for the children and young people we work with. Touch of Love Outreach also recognizes that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. Touch of Love Outreach will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people in its care. Touch of Love Outreach understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2

Touch of Love Outreach has a commitment to children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them

Section 2 - Recruitment

Touch of Love Outreach recognizes 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 Touch of Love Outreach:

All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form

All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self declaration form



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All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references

All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview

A self declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation



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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

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 Touch of Love Outreach will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child Protection. This will include:

Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation

Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided

An assessment of staffs (paid and unpaid) training and development requirements will be completed

The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified

Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided

All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child Protection Policy and procedures

Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided

The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Child Protection Officer 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 Child Protection Officer, Cosmos Ekeh - 07769440138 or cosmos.ekeh@touchoflove.org.uk. 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 (over page) should be followed in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse:



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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

Your 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 COSMOS EKEH (07769440138 or cosmos.ekeh@touchoflove.org.uk) as soon as possible. If the allegation is about the COSMOS EKEH contact the JANE AKADIRI (MANAGER - 07715043399 or jane.akadiri@touchoflove.org.uk). 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 COSMOS EKEH. 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

COSMOS EKEH 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



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includes whether the parent or carer of the young person should be informed of the child protection concerns.

Where an allegation is made against Touch of Love Outreach 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

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 Cosmos Ekeh, 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.



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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 Cosmos Ekeh. If appropriate, Cosmos Ekeh 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

Touch of Love Outreach 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.

Touch of Love Outreach 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 people 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 Cosmos Ekeh & Jane Akadiri and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This policy has been approved by: The Board of Trustees

On behalf of:

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH

Date: 30/04/2024

Signed: Rev. Fr. Franklin Umekachikelu MSP

Date: 30/04/2024

Signed: Maria Watson



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 COSMOS EKEH in a sealed envelope

COSMOS EKEH 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



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

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Follow up action taken by NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD PROTECTION:

Signature:

Designation:

Date:



APPENDIX 2

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH - 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



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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.



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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

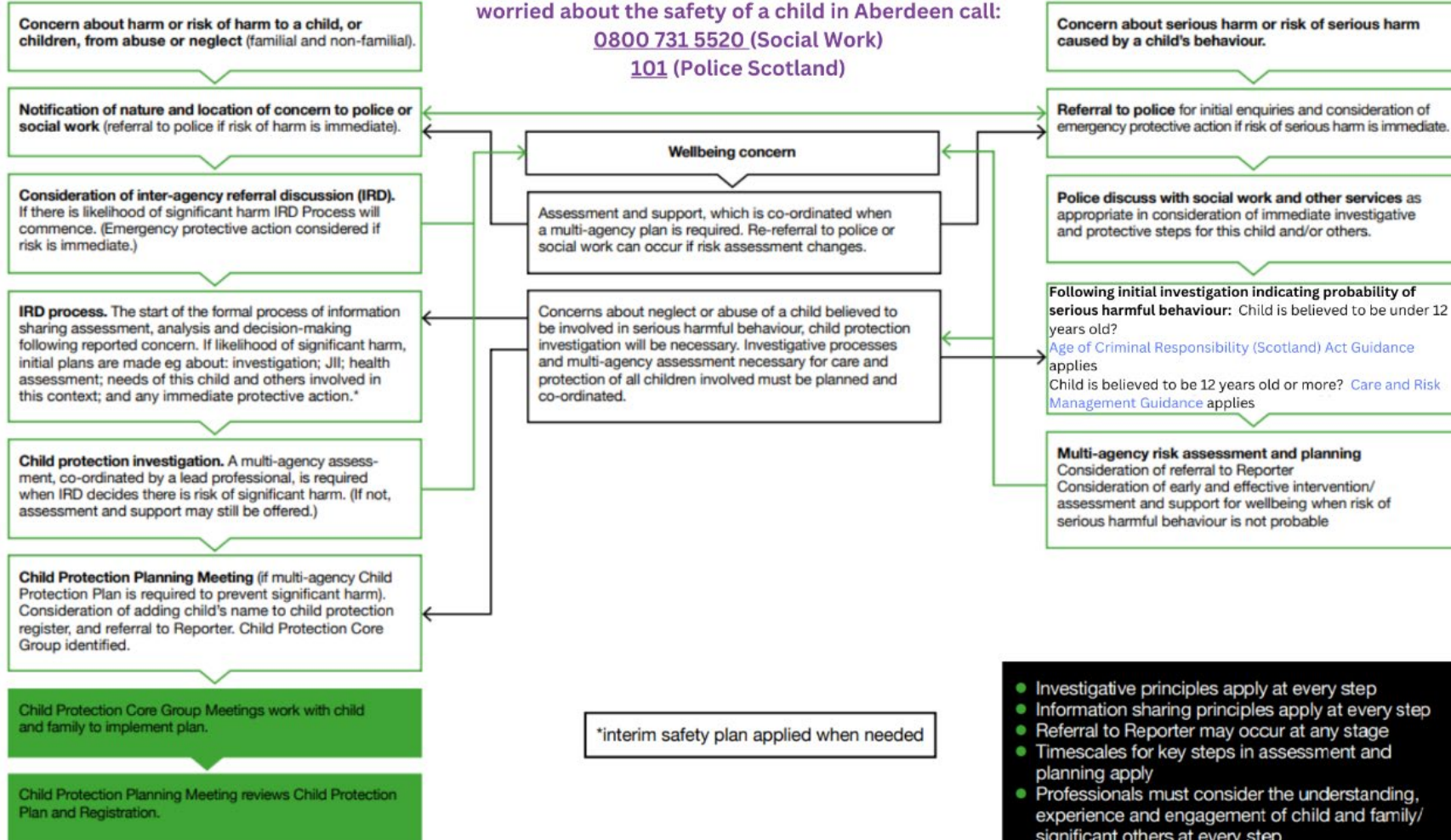
Abusive language or gestures



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Child Protection Process – Aberdeen City Council (Aberdeen Protects)

Child protection is everyone’s responsibility. If you are worried about the safety of a child in Aberdeen call:
0800 731 5520 (Social Work)
101 (Police Scotland)



- Investigative principles apply at every step
- Information sharing principles apply at every step
- Referral to Reporter may occur at any stage
- Timescales for key steps in assessment and planning apply
- Professionals must consider the understanding, experience and engagement of child and family/significant others at every step
- Assessment of risks and strengths is dynamic. Steps may need to be revisited.



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To access links displayed in the Child Protection Process above, follow links below:

[Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act Guidance](#)

[Care and Risk Management Guidance](#)

Related Links:

[**Child Protection Partnership \(CPP\)**](#)

[**Childline**](#)

[**Children 1st Parentline**](#)

[**ThinkUKnow**](#)

[**CEOP**](#)



APPENDIX 3

Legislation – Children and Young People

Children (Scotland) Act

1995: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents>

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act

2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents>

The Children and Young People (Information Sharing) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in 2017.

It aims to bring clarity and consistency to sharing information for the named person service and child's plan. The progress of the Bill can be found at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/information-sharing/>

Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act

2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/1/contents>

Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act

2005: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/9/contents>

Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Act

2017: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/3/contents>

Legislation-Other

Social Work (Scotland) Act

1968: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/49/contents>

Human Rights Act

1998: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act

2007: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents>

Equality Act 2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act

2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/3/contents/enacted>

Digital Economy Act

2017: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/30/contents/enacted>

Data Protection Act

1998: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Policy and Guidance – Children and Young People

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland

2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/3/introduction/enacted>

Getting it Right for Every Child: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>



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Child Protection Policy and Procedures for TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH

Policy Number	TOL/005/24
Version	3
Policy Contact	Augustina Ezea
Date Issued	1 st October 2020
Reviewed	1 st May 2024
Next Review Date	1st May 2025
Approved by	The Board of Trustees

Touch of Love is a community-focused charity dedicated to nurturing and supporting vulnerable populations in Aberdeen, particularly those facing severe economic and social challenges. Our mission centers on providing comprehensive support through various initiatives tailored to uplift individuals and families, enabling them to achieve stability and thrive.

Our key programs include robust food bank services, the Young Achievers' Club for minority ethnic youth, and holistic support services tailored for ethnic minority women. This Adult Protection Policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding adults who are part of or benefit from our services, ensuring that they participate in a secure and respectful environment.

A. Safeguarding and welfare for Adults policy

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. At Touch of Love Outreach, we understand this to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that may arise from coming into contact with our staff or our programmes, either face to face or online.

This policy applies to all Touch of Love Outreach and the Board of Trustees, as well as to contractors, consultants, freelancers, creative practitioners, student placements, interns or anyone else working on behalf of Touch of Love Outreach.



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This policy is concerned with our commitment and approaches to safeguarding adults at risk of harm.

Touch of Love Outreach's adult safeguarding and welfare policy document is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of all people engaging in our programmes is paramount and the best interests of adults at risk must always be the primary consideration.
- All adults at risk should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- All people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- All adults at risk have a right to express their views on matters that affect them
- Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and to exercise informed consent. 'I am asked what I want as the outcomes of the safeguarding process.'
- Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality – making the response appropriate to the risk
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnership – finding solutions through partnership with organisations supporting an individual and working in their communities
- Accountability and transparency

Touch of Love Outreach will:

1. Value, respect and listen to people participating in our programmes
2. Appoint an Adult Safeguarding Officer, to uphold this policy and to give staff and freelance staff the appropriate support to be able to put it into practice
3. Maintain an open and supportive organisational culture where staff can discuss any concerns or issues around adult safeguarding with their colleagues, manager or the Adult Safeguarding Officer.
4. Take seriously any concerns over an adult at risk's safety or welfare and take appropriate action as soon as possible
5. Adopt adult safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and freelancers
6. Develop and implement an effective digital adult safeguarding policy and related procedures
7. Provide effective management and support of staff and freelancers through appropriate training, support and quality assurance measures



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8. Ensure safeguarding is a core part of all project inception meetings and ongoing project meetings
9. Ensure that all freelancers and partners working with Touch of Love Outreach are issued with this policy in advance of work beginning
10. Assess each programme to determine whether basic or enhanced PVG is required for those delivering and obtain the requisite PVG accordingly
11. Recruit staff and freelancers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are carried out
12. Record and store personal information securely – according to GDPR standards
13. Use our adult safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with any agencies who need to know, and involving adults at risk, and, as they wish and with their consent, those in their support network which could be family, carers or friends.
14. Use our adult safeguarding procedures to appropriately manage any allegations against staff or freelancers
15. Create and maintain an anti-bullying environment
16. Ensure we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
17. Ensure we provide a safe physical environment for participants, staff and freelancers, by applying health and safety measures and risk assessments in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
18. Provide a Touch of Love Outreach contact whenever activities are taking place, including out of office hours, to provide advice and support on safeguarding issues. To be agreed at the start of any project.
19. Use risk assessments to ensure that where potential risk to an individual is identified, appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate such a risk
20. Agree with partners how to manage safeguarding jointly during the project. This may include:
 - Provide a copy of our safeguarding policy and request a copy of the partner's
 - Agreeing reporting procedures, including named points of contact in each organisation (as per safeguarding policies)
 - Setting regularly safeguarding meetings to review process – including project leads and practitioners
 - Delivering a shared safeguarding induction to any practitioners hired for the project
 - Signpost to safeguarding legislation and expertise/training
 - Develop and share tools with partners who need them to support good safeguarding practice – including a safeguarding check sheet, risk assessment template, reporting template etc
 - Require funded partners to have a safeguarding policy in place with PVG certificates received for all relevant personnel



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Who is an Adult at risk?

Adult at risk is defined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 as anyone over 16 who:

- Are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests
- Are at risk from harm
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected

An adult is at risk for the purposes above if:

- Another person's conduct is causing or is likely to cause the adult to be harmed, or
- The adult is engaging in (or is likely to engage in) conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm

This policy recognises that young people aged between 16 and 18 years can be considered both adults and children. For those under 18, TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH will apply the child protection policy.

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of everyone the charity interacts with and as such our approach can be summarised under three headings:

- Safeguarding people engaging with our programmes – audiences, participants, donors, research and evaluation participants – particularly adults at risk.
- Ensuring the welfare of people employed by us – staff, freelancers, creative practitioners, student placements, interns and volunteers
- Safeguarding in partnership – how we ensure best safeguarding practice with organisations whom we either co-deliver programmes and opportunities with or fund to deliver events and activities as part of TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH programmes.

B. B. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Setting policy



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TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH's Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring an appropriate adult safeguarding policy is in place and staff are trained in the use of the policy. The policy is regularly reviewed annually by the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer to ensure it is up to date and compliant with current legislation and best practice.

2. Accountability and responsibility for this policy

Accountability for this policy rests with the Director of Operations and Finance but all employees, partners and volunteers have a duty to know what action to take if they are concerned that a participant, or colleague, is at risk.

Individual teams will have specific policies and procedures around their own areas of work and the Adult Safeguarding Officer should be involved in the development and review of such policies. These include, but are not exclusive to:

- Fundraising
- Evaluation and Research
- Press and Media

Heads of Team have a responsibility to ensure that any new activity developed for participants/audiences is appropriate and acceptable. Each team will appoint a safeguarding representative who will attend regular safeguarding and welfare meetings with the Adult Safeguarding Officer to raise any issues their teams may encounter and feedback any safeguarding or welfare practice or issues to the teams. Safeguarding will be a standing item on management meetings to ensure that new projects are discussed and any arising measures/project parameters are agreed before the activity is carried out.

3. Lead Officers

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH has a Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer, and a deputy, to whom staff can refer any concerns or issues regarding adult safeguarding or discuss and seek guidance on adult safeguarding more generally. The contact details are as follows:

Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer

Philippa Cochrane, Head of Reading Communities

philippa.cochrane@scottishbooktrust.com(this link will open in a new window)

Telephone: 0131 524 0160

Deputy Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer

Katherine Wilkinson, Head of Research and Evaluation

katherine.wilkinson@scottishbooktrust.com(this link will open in a new window)

Telephone: 0131 524 0160

C. Context

The activities carried out by TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH means that a range of employees, freelancers and supported partners may come into contact with adults who are at risk of harm.



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Much of TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH's work with adults involves supporting participants to share personal stories. Our programmes seek to ensure that people from all walks of life and with a diverse spectrum of lived experience have the opportunity to share their stories, to ensure that those stories find an audience of readers and are valued by those who read them. People who are engaging with the creative processes of reading and writing can often find emotions are triggered or emotional states created where they will open up and may share information with their peers, our staff or our freelance practitioners. Whilst such sharing or triggering might not be anything to worry about or cause concern, this aspect of our work can bring specific safeguarding challenges around:

- The disclosure of historic and/or current harm and abuse
- Informed consent around where and how stories are shared
- Responsibilities around the readers who might access them

We recognise that we have responsibilities to ensure the welfare of people in three areas:

1. Safeguarding for adults at risk engaging with our programmes

Adults at risk may participate in our programmes by engaging with our content, attending events, taking part in workshops and activities and by sharing their own creative work, including sharing personal stories. In all instances our programmes must:

- Promote safety in person and online
- Ensure that adults at risk have as much choice and control over their participation as possible
- Focus on improving life for the person concerned
- Balance the promotion of safety and informed decision making with respecting the views and wishes of the individual
- Signpost accessible information and support about how to stay safe and how to raise a concern
- Consider that participating adults come from a diverse range of backgrounds and some may be sensitive to certain issues and situations

2. Ensuring the welfare of people employed by us – staff, freelancers, creative practitioners, student placements, interns and volunteers

Because some of our work is focussed on supporting people to share personal stories that matter to them, employees and freelancers can experience increased mental health and wellbeing impacts. TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH has a responsibility to ensure that employees and freelancers are:

- Supported (through TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH guide materials and/or training) to establish professional boundaries for themselves and participants
- Able to access support immediately following any activity to discuss any concerns around disclosure
- Aware of safeguarding policy and their responsibilities and clear about procedures, appropriate channels and available support for raising any safeguarding concern



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- Provided with appropriate time to plan and debrief sessions – particularly with staff from TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH and any partner organisations
- Aware of procedures and support for lone working

3. Partnership working

How we support best safeguarding practice with organisations with whom we co-deliver programmes and opportunities. TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH engages in two distinct kinds of partnership working:

- Working with partners in active joint delivery of the programme, where the partner organisation brings the expertise in supporting the audience/participants they work with. This work will take the form of co-planned and delivered programmes of work. TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH will agree with partners how safeguarding policy will be incorporated into the project as part of the project inception process.
- Supporting partners financially and in other ways to participate in TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH programmes. This work takes place at arm's length with funded partners reporting to TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH on their activity. TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH will share tools with partners to support good safeguarding practice – including a safeguarding check sheet, risk assessment template, reporting template.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Section 1 - Introduction

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH is committed to safeguarding adults at risk of harm and providing a safe environment for vulnerable adults as defined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. This Adult Protection Policy and Procedures reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of vulnerable adults are effectively managed

AUGUSTINA EZE / SAFEGUARDING OFFICER is responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Adult Protection Policy statement and other care and protection policies and guidelines. However, all workers (paid or unpaid) for **TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH** are required to implement the protection procedures for vulnerable adults.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 states that Adult at risk is anyone over 16 who:

- Are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests



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- **Are at risk from harm**
- **Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected**

An adult is at risk for the purposes above if:

- **Another person's conduct is causing or is likely to cause the adult to be harmed, or**
- **The adult is engaging in (or is likely to engage in) conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm**

This places on TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH a Duty of Care for the vulnerable adults we work with.

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of everyone the charity interacts with and as such our approach can be summarised under three headings:

- **Safeguarding people engaging with our programmes – audiences, participants, donors, research and evaluation participants – particularly adults at risk.**
- **Ensuring the welfare of people employed by us – staff, freelancers, creative practitioners, student placements, interns and volunteers**
- **Safeguarding in partnership – how we ensure best safeguarding practice with organisations whom we either co-deliver programmes and opportunities with or fund to deliver events and activities as part of TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH programmes.**

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH Trustees and the Volunteers commit to ensuring that appropriate adult safeguarding policy is in place and staff are trained in the use of the policy. The policy is regularly reviewed annually by the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer to ensure it is up to date and compliant with current legislation and best practice.



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TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH Understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH has a commitment to children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them

Section 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH recognizes 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 **TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH**:

All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form

All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self declaration form

All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references

All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview

A self declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation



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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

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 TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child Protection. This will include:

Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation

Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided

An assessment of staffs (paid and unpaid) training and development requirements will be completed

The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified

Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided

All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child Protection Policy and procedures

Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided

The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Child Protection Officer 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 Child Protection Officer, COSMOS EKEH - 07769440138 or cosmos.ekeh@touchoflove.org.uk. 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.



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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 (over page) should be followed in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse:



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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 COSMOS EKEH (07769440138 or cosmos.ekeh@touchoflove.org.uk) as soon as possible. If the allegation is about the COSMOS EKEH contact the JANE AKADIRI (MANAGER - 07715043399 or jane.akadiri@touchoflove.org.uk). 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 COSMOS EKEH. 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

COSMOS EKEH 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



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includes whether the parent or carer of the young person should be informed of the child protection concerns.

Where an allegation is made against TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACHworker (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

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 COSMOS EKEH, 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.



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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 COSMOS EKEH. If appropriate, COSMOS EKEH 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

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH 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.

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH 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 COSMOS EKEH & JANE AKADIRI and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This policy has been approved by: The Board of Trustees

On behalf of:

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH

Date: 30/04/2024

Signed: Rev. Fr. Franklin Umekachikelu MSP

Date: 30/04/2024

Signed: Maria Watson



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 COSMOS EKEH in a sealed envelope

COSMOS EKEH 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



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

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Follow up action taken by NAME OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD PROTECTION:

Signature:

Designation:

Date:



APPENDIX 2

TOUCH OF LOVE OUTREACH- 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



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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



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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.



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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

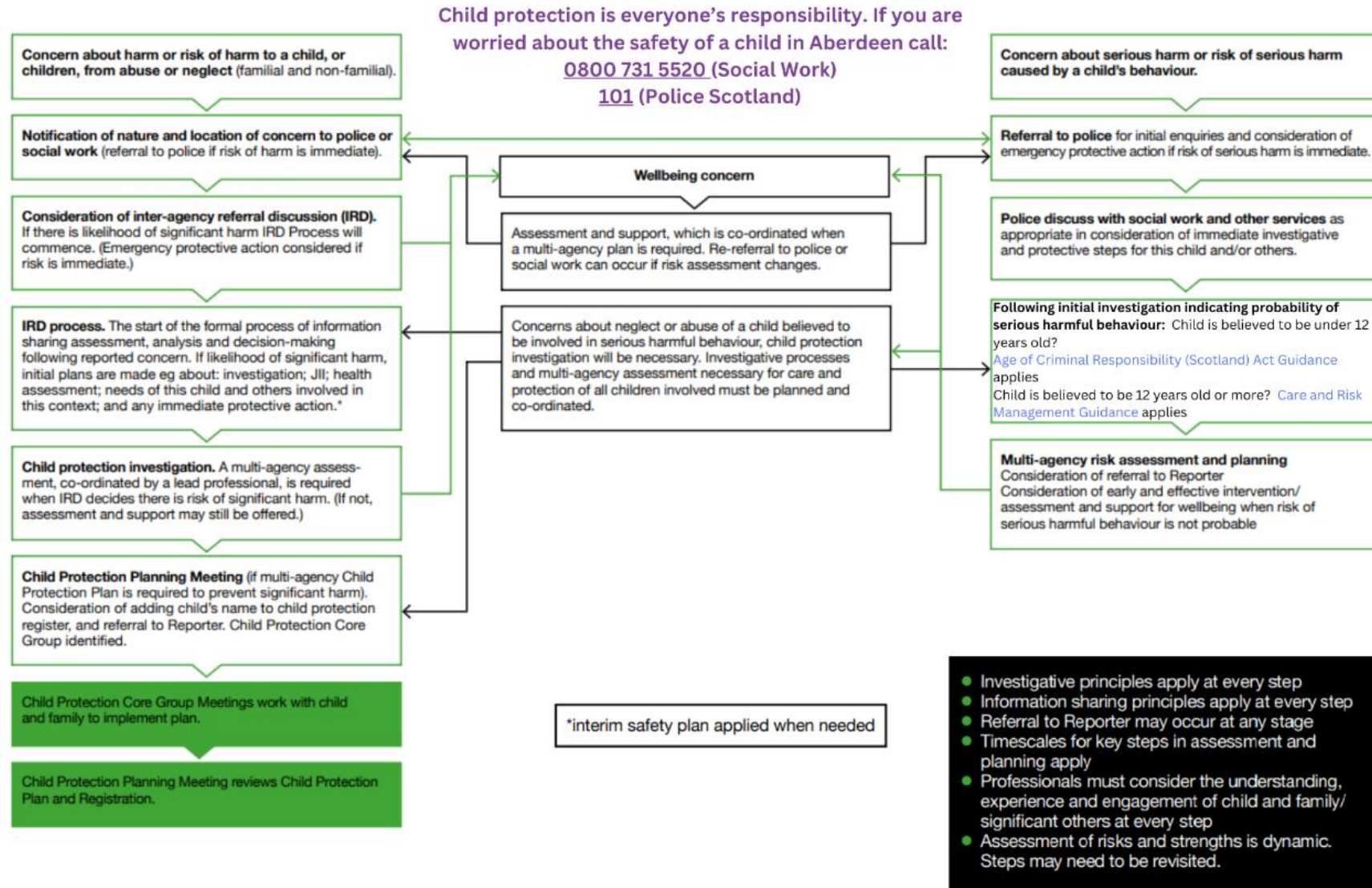
Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged

Abusive language or gestures



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Child Protection Process – Aberdeen City Council (Aberdeen Protects)





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To access links displayed in the Child Protection Process above, follow links below:

[Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act Guidance](#)

[Care and Risk Management Guidance](#)

Related Links:

[**Child Protection Partnership \(CPP\)**](#)

[**Childline**](#)

[**Children 1st Parentline**](#)

[**ThinkUKnow**](#)

[**CEOP**](#)



APPENDIX 3

Legislation – Children and Young People

Children (Scotland) Act

1995: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/contents>

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act

2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents>

The Children and Young People (Information Sharing) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in 2017.

It aims to bring clarity and consistency to sharing information for the named person service and child's plan. The progress of the Bill can be found at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/information-sharing/>

Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act

2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/1/contents>

Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act

2005: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/9/contents>

Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Act

2017: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/3/contents>

Legislation-Other

Social Work (Scotland) Act

1968: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/49/contents>

Human Rights Act

1998: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act

2007: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents>

Equality Act 2010: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act

2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/3/contents/enacted>

Digital Economy Act

2017: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/30/contents/enacted>

Data Protection Act

1998: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Policy and Guidance – Children and Young People

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland

2014: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/3/introduction/enacted>



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Getting it Right for Every

Child: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>