

THE BLUE AND GOLD SUPPORTERS' TRUST

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction policy statement.

The Trust has an obligation to ensure that, when dealing with children and vulnerable persons, its members and volunteers provide the highest possible standards of service and care.

The aim of this Policy and Procedures document is to ensure that people representing or volunteering on behalf of the Trust:

- (a) have a clear understanding of their responsibilities when working with children and vulnerable persons
- (b) recognise the signs of abuse and the appropriate course of action to be taken in such circumstances
- (c) understand the risk to themselves and to ensure that good practice is adhered to at all times
- (d) recognise signs of improper behaviour from other people representing or volunteering for the Trust and to take appropriate action should this occur

2. Responsibility

The Trust will, for all services and activities:

- (a) accept moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children and vulnerable persons, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse
- (b) respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable persons
- (c) recruit, train, and supervise its members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable persons from abuse, and themselves from false allegations
- (d) require members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy and Procedures
- (e) require partner organisations to abide by Trust Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy and Procedures, or to have and abide by their own code, policies and procedures
- (f) develop and implement an appropriate monitoring and review system to ensure conformance to the Children and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy and Procedures
- (g) respond to allegations appropriately
- (h) ensure that all members and volunteers involved in any Trust activity which will bring them into contact with children and / or vulnerable persons are subjected to a CRB / DBS check
- (i) carry out a Risk Assessment following the guidelines laid out in the HSE document ' Five Steps to Risk Assessment '

3. Principles

The Trust believes that;

- (a) the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable persons must always be of paramount importance, whatever the circumstances
- (b) everyone who has a role in working with children and vulnerable persons also has a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and protect them from abuse

- (c) all children and vulnerable persons have equal rights to protection from harm irrespective of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religion or belief, and /or sexual identity
- (d) special care is needed in providing services to children and vulnerable persons because their age, inexperience, physical or mental health may make them particularly susceptible to abuse and make it more difficult for them to seek help if they are abused
- (e) sufficient training must be provided to ensure that members and volunteers always maintain good practice in providing services to children and vulnerable persons and are able to respond to potential signs or allegations of abuse

4. Identifying abuse.

(A) Physical abuse This involves actions that physically hurt or injure children vulnerable persons such as hitting, shaking, kicking, slapping, burning, poisoning, and rough handling. It can also take the form of inappropriate restraint or sanctions, including deprivation of food, clothing, warmth, healthcare or educational needs. It can also be caused by omission or failure to protect.

(B) Neglect Where anyone suffers because their health, physical or emotional needs are not properly looked after, leading to impairment of the child or vulnerable persons development

(C) Sexual abuse. Where anyone is subjected to any kind of sexual activity where they have not given consent, are unable to give consent, or are pressurised into giving consent

(D) Emotional / Psychological abuse. Where persistent emotional ill-treatment such as shouting, swearing, humiliation, threatening with punishment, or denial of religious or racial beliefs and practices causes children and vulnerable persons to feel frightened or in danger which may make them nervous or withdrawn

(E) Discriminatory abuse (Direct, indirect, institutional, or transferred) Demonstrated on any grounds including age, culture, language, racial origin, religion, sexual identity, or disability. These can escalate into hate crimes

(F) Financial abuse. Where anyone is subjected to the theft or misuse of money, possessions, property or other goods, or is placed under emotional pressure to give money etc against their will.

(G) Child on child abuse, which may involve vulnerable persons, can be bullying, sexual, or physical

5. Recognising abuse

This is not always easy and it is NOT the responsibility of members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if a child or vulnerable person is at significant risk. However, members and volunteers do have a responsibility to report promptly if they have any concerns. A list of useful contacts is contained at the back of this document

6. Good practice guidelines

All members and volunteers will be encouraged to display exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:-

- (a) always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment with no secrets)
- (b) treating all children and vulnerable persons equally, and with respect and dignity
- (c) always putting the welfare of each child and vulnerable person first, before the winning or achieving of other goals

- (d) maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children and vulnerable persons; ensuring that if any form of manual or physical support is required it should be openly provided and only where appropriate
- (e) making activities enjoyable and promoting fair play
- (f) keeping up to date with skills, qualifications, and insurance requirements
- (g) being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children in any activity related environment
- (h) giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- (i) recognising the developmental needs and capacities of children and vulnerable persons
- (j) ensuring all records, contact details, and personal information is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

It may sometimes be necessary for members and volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children and vulnerable persons. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents where possible, the child, or the vulnerable person for whom the task is being carried out

7. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse and Poor Practice

The Trust will respond to all allegations or suspicions of abuse against children or vulnerable persons in an effective and consistent manner. Even for those experienced in working with children and vulnerable persons it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur, or has already taken place. However, members and volunteers have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or a child) towards children or vulnerable persons. Where actual or potential abuse is suspected the procedure to be followed is:-

- (a) Make a record of the date and time of the incident and disclosure
- (b) The parties involved
- (c) What was said or done by whom
- (d) The full name of the person reporting and to whom reported
- (e) Where appropriate any actions taken; referrals made and or agencies involved, officers names etc
- (f) Reasons why there was no referral to a statutory agency

Confidentiality

The Trust has adopted the principle that the welfare of children and vulnerable persons is paramount. This means that no other considerations will over-ride the right of the child or vulnerable person to be protected from harm although every effort will be made to maintain the confidential nature of the matter in hand

8. Responding to a Disclosure or Allegation of Abuse

Any Trust member or volunteer receiving information concerning disclosure should:-

- (a) react calmly so as not to frighten the child or vulnerable person and listen carefully taking what the child or vulnerable person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child or vulnerable person
- (b) reassure the child or vulnerable person that he or she was right to tell
- (c) find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared. Do NOT make a promise of confidentiality
- (d) ensure the child or vulnerable person is safe – in an emergency situation where there is an immediate risk of harm or need for medical treatment call the Police or Ambulance. Ensure that the medical staff/ police are aware of your concerns and

that this is a child protection issue. The situation should also be referred directly to Adult Social Services / Children's Services, whichever is appropriate

- (e) allow the child or vulnerable person to continue at their own pace. DO NOT interview the child or vulnerable person or other witnesses
- (f) keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Questions should not be leading and should take the form of 'Who?..What?..When? Where?..'
- (g) tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- (h) make a full written record of what has been said, heard and / or seen as soon as possible. Ensure that you sign and date any written records
- (i) maintain confidentiality
- (j) report the matter to the Trust's designated Child Protection Officer who will take advice from the agencies which have been contacted

The person receiving the disclosure should not:-

- (a) allow their shock or distaste to show
- (b) probe for more information than is offered
- (c) speculate or make assumptions
- (d) make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- (e) make promises to keep secrets
- (f) discuss the matter with anyone other than the Trust's designated Child Protection Officer

It is important that everyone across the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has taken place. This the task of the professional protection agencies to whom the matter has been referred

9. This Policy and Procedures document will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains effective and that all legal and good practice requirements are being followed

APPENDIX

- 1 Risk Assessment record
2. Confidentiality and Information Sharing
3. Norfolk Useful Contacts
- 4 Child Protection Training Diary
- 5 Parental Consent Form