



Tweeddale Youth Action Child Protection Policy

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A Child Protection Policy Statement

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, namely:

- Scottish Borders Child Protection Procedures (updated Jan 2016). Scottish Borders Adult Protection Procedures may be relevant for Young People over the age of 16. Vulnerable Young Person Protocol for children/young people who place themselves at risk.
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 1998
- GIRFEC Principles

Tweeddale Youth Action is fully committed to promoting children’s rights, and to embedding them in practice; notably the rights of every child to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them.

Tweeddale Youth Action has a duty of care to implement effective policies, practice and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In order to achieve this we will ensure that our employed staff and volunteers are carefully recruited, selected, screened, trained, supervised and supported.

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Furthermore, we shall keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

Tweeddale Youth Action will:

1. Ensure that all employed staff and volunteers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
2. Establish best practice in child protection in relation to the recruitment and selection of all employed staff and volunteers.
3. Provide induction training for all newly appointed employed staff and volunteers, giving an overview of the organisation's purpose, values, structure, policies, practice and services. The induction will require completion of specific Child Protection Training.
4. Ensure that all employed staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to work within the standards and procedures detailed in the organisation's **Code of Conduct for working with children and young people** and **Scottish Border's Child Protection Procedures**
5. Ensure that all employed staff and volunteers understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a colleague's 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 employed staff or volunteers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
7. Ensure that all employed staff and volunteers are supervised and supported in their work with children and young people, including regular opportunities to discuss child protection.
8. 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).
9. Ensure that the organisation meets all its responsibilities in adhering to the requirements of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007.
10. Provide opportunities for all employed staff and volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to the care and protection of children and young people. In particular, Child Protection Training will be required to be undertaken by all employed staff and volunteers at least every three years.

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11. Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and that they have access to the organisation's Complaints Procedure.

12. Keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

B Child Protection Policy

Section 1 – Introduction

Tweeddale Youth Action is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. The Tweeddale Youth Action Child Protection Policy and Scottish Border's Child Protection Procedures reflect this commitment and aim to ensure that all aspects of the care and protection of children and young people are **effectively managed**.

Tweeddale Youth Action's Manager is responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy and other policies, procedures, practice and guidelines relating to the welfare of children and young people, and for reporting on them to the Board of Directors.

All employed staff and volunteers within Tweeddale Youth Action are required to adhere to the Scottish Border's 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 Tweeddale Youth Action a **Duty of Care** for the children and young people with whom we work.

Tweeddale Youth Action recognises that all children and young people have the right to **freedom from abuse** as outlined in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child. Tweeddale Youth Action will act consistently to provide a safe environment, free from any form of abuse, for all the children and young people in its care. Tweeddale Youth Action's understanding of abuse can be found in the part of this policy entitled **D Understanding of abuse**.

Tweeddale Youth Action has a commitment to **all 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

Tweeddale Youth Action recognises that appropriate recruitment and selection of employed staff and volunteers play a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. According to the 'Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, any person who is looking after a young person under the age of 18 is deemed to be in a 'position of trust'

The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as employed staff or volunteers to work on behalf of Tweeddale Youth Action:

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- All applicants (employed staff positions and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form.
- All applicants (employed staff positions and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self-declaration form.
- All successful applicants (employed staff positions and volunteers) will be asked to provide references.
- All selected applicants (employed staff positions and volunteers) 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 organization.
- All successful applicants appointed into 'regulated work' positions (as defined in Schedule 2 of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Act 2007) will be required to be Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme members. Existing PVG Scheme members will be required to show their current PVG Scheme Record and agree to a PVG Scheme Record Update being carried out.
- Any applicant found to be fully listed on the Children's List will not be appointed to work (as employed staff or as volunteer) in a regulated work position.

Section 3 – Training

All newly appointed employed staff and volunteers at Tweeddale Youth Action will receive induction training, plus ongoing supervision, support, information and guidance to ensure that they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection.

Induction Training will include:

- Details of the structure of the Tweeddale Youth Action, including details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation.
- Details of Tweeddale Youth Action's Vision, Guiding Principles, and Operational Plans.
- A discussion and assessment of each new employed staff member and/or volunteer's training and development requirements.
- Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of employed staff and volunteers within the organisation.
- Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed employed staff and volunteers.
- Training on, information about and a copy of Tweeddale Youth Action's **Code of Conduct for working with children and young people**, including this Child Protection Policy and the Scottish Border's Child Protection Procedures.



- A requirement that all employed staff and volunteers **agree and sign** the DECLARATION relating to Tweeddale Youth Action's **Code of Conduct for working with children and young people**, including this Child Protection Policy and these Procedures.
- The contact details and roles and responsibilities of Tweeddale Youth Action's Child Protection Officer.

Refresher Child Protection Training will be required to be attended by all employed staff and volunteers at least once every three years.

Section 4 – Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF A YOUNG PERSON?

Is this person in immediate danger? **Call the Police on 999**. Do your best to delay a young person leaving into a potentially dangerous situation. If a young person discloses something of concern to you, offer reassurance and support, try and record exactly what is said, do not ask probing questions or attempt investigation. Explain that your duty of care means that this information will need to be passed on, to a designated individual (manager, co-ordinator and possibly to an outside agency). Fill in 'Report form for child protection concerns'

BELIEVE, OBSERVE, RECORD, REPORT. DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY.



ACT IMMEDIATELY

Discuss your concerns or the disclosure with the Manager **Dave (07926 171980)**.

In their absence contact **Board CPO Chris Clarke (07770 766396)**.

If the allegation is about the **Manager** you should contact the **Board CPO Chris Clarke (07770 766396) directly**.

If none of these are available the staff concerned should contact Integrated Children's Services as below.

DO NOT INFORM PARENTS/CARERS WITHOUT THE ADVICE OF LOCAL INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICE TEAM.



SEEK ADVICE and REFER TO APPROPRIATE AGENCY

Dave, Katie, Chris or in their absence the staff member concerned should contact the **Child Protection Team (01896 662787)**. If out of hours (Opening Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:45am-5:00pm; Friday 8:45am-3:45pm) then they should contact the **Social Work Emergency Duty Team (01896 752111)** and ask to report a Child Protection concern.

Where an allegation is made against a Tweeddale Youth Action employed staff member or volunteer the above process still applies.

If a member of staff/volunteer harms a young person or puts them at risk of harm and as a result of this Tweeddale Youth Action take the decision to terminate their employment (in the case of paid staff) or end volunteering agreement (in case of volunteers, or would have done so had they not left of their own accord, come to the end of their contract, retired or been made redundant, Tweeddale Youth Action will make a referral (send a written report) to Disclosure Scotland. The form for referral to Disclosure Scotland is available on the Scottish 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 employed staff and volunteers follow the steps outlined below:

Stay calm

Remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are a trusted adult, 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; 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 is important to respect the young person's privacy it should not be at the expense of other child protection measures.

Reassure

Reassure the child/young person 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 be passed on only to the Tweeddale Youth Action Manager, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities.

Wherever possible you should avoid discussing 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.

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 is 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 is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times, it is important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with the Manager and/or your supervisor.

Section 6 – Whistleblowing

Deciding to report a colleague or volunteer you suspect of abusing or otherwise harming a child/young person can be stressful and difficult and discussion with your line manager (or the project manager) may be helpful in the first instance.

Section 7 – Data Protection and management of confidential information

Tweeddale Youth Action is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is kept in a locked cabinet 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. Outdated information will be destroyed appropriately.

Tweeddale Youth Action is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality and this will be respected by all employed staff and volunteers. However, where an employee or volunteer feels that the information disclosed by a child or young person should be referred to the Manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that confidentiality cannot be kept, see Tweeddale Youth Action Confidentiality Policy.

Section 8 – Review of Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Manager and any changes approved by the Board of Directors. All employed staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

C Understanding of Abuse

Tweeddale Youth Action accepts that abuse should never be inferred, nor can it be specifically identified using a 'checklist' of signs or behaviours. However, it may help employed staff and volunteers to consider the following descriptions of five widely recognised types of abuse and some possible indicators. Employed staff and volunteers should also be alert to the content of the fifth category, 'other', which is widespread, has a variety of forms, is often verbal in nature, and often less recognised as 'abuse'.

Taken from Scottish Border's Child Protection Procedures Section 1: Introduction

What is child abuse and child neglect? And What is harm and significant harm in a child protection context.

(www.sb-cpc-procedures.org.uk/contents/introduction/)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.

While it is no longer necessary to identify a specific category of abuse when adding a child's name to the Child Protection Register, it is still helpful to consider and understand the different ways in which children can be abused. The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has or could have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age – or developmentally-inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional

abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from "non-organic failure to thrive", where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

Impact on children

Abuse affects children in many ways and the effects can emerge some considerable time after the actual event. These may be triggered by apparently unrelated incidents. Children may suffer from depression, post traumatic stress, self harming behaviour (more prevalent in adolescent females) and eating disorders. Behavioural difficulties may mask depression caused by abuse, particularly in boys.

Workers working with children who self-harm should always bear in mind that they may have suffered from abuse.

Other abusive behaviour

Employed staff, volunteers and Board members should 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 should not be allowed or go unchallenged

For example:

- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or any physical characteristics
- Racism or sectarianism of any form
- Favouritism and exclusion – all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

D Child Protection: Basic guidelines when a young person tells you that they have been abused

- Keep calm. Don't be shocked. Try to act normally.
- Accept what the young person says. Offer immediate support, understanding, and explain that you cannot keep the disclosure a secret.
- Treat the allegation seriously.
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing by telling you, and that you will do everything you can to help them.
- Let them know that you need to talk to someone else. Don't promise them confidentiality.
- Let the child or the young person speak freely. Do not push for information. Let them know that you will have to pass on the information to the Manager.
- Record everything that was said including the date and time as well as the incidents disclosed.
- Do not investigate and do not ask leading questions eg. Did you? Were you?
- You must report to the Manager, or in their absence the Project Co-ordinator or Chair of the Board, who will then report to the Local Integrated Children's Service Office.

E Report form for Child Protection concerns

- Using the form on the following page, a report should be made by the person who has had the initial concerns about a child/young person's welfare or by anyone receiving a direct disclosure.
- The report should be handed to the Tweeddale Youth Action Manager and he/she will add any subsequent actions taken. The form should then be stored securely.
- The Manager will follow Child Protection flow chart where necessary.



Tweeddale Youth Action Child Protection Concerns Reporting Form.

Name of person reporting
Date
Who is putting the child/young person at risk? (eg employed staff member, family member)
Name and contact details of child/young person/s your concern relates to
Outline your reasons for concern (key points)
Brief outline of any action you have already taken to protect the child/young person
Signature of person reporting
Designation/role within Tweeddale Youth Action
Date
Follow up action taken by Tweeddale Youth Action Manager (or other, in their absence)
Signature
Designation/role within Tweeddale Youth Action
Date

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