

# Child Protection and Protection of Vulnerable Adults

## Child Protection Policy and Procedures

### Introduction

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery are committed to the protection of children and regard the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children as of paramount concern. We are also committed to the protection of vulnerable children from exploitative relationships.

Aberdeenshire Community Recovery acknowledge that protecting children is the responsibility of every member of the community, not just child protection services. Aberdeenshire Community Recovery members consider it the duty of all those involved with our activities to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of all children with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

### Who needs protection?

Children and young people under the age of 16 and young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are affected by disability or are vulnerable.

### What is child abuse?

The definition of child abuse adopted in Scottish Government guidance states: "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."

Children and young people under the age of 18 can be physically, sexually, psychologically, emotionally abused or can be neglected.

#### **Physical Abuse, e.g.**

- Unexplained or recurrent injuries/ burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain an injury

#### **Sexual Abuse, e.g.**

- Sexually explicit behaviour, language or knowledge (inappropriate to age/stage of development)
- Self-harm, running away
- Eating disorders
- Sexually transmitted disease

#### **Neglect, e.g.**

- Constant hunger and or tiredness
- Inadequate clothing for weather
- Poor personal hygiene

#### **Psychological/Emotional Abuse, e.g**

- Continual belittling of oneself
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Developmental delay
- Excessively clingy behaviour

## **Child Protection Procedure**

If a member identifies an area of concern regarding the protection and welfare of children in the context of our work, they should follow the following procedures

- Be supportive to the child or young person. Listen with care, but do not ask any unnecessary questions. Take what the child or young person is saying seriously, and advise them you will have to pass the information on;
- Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Immediately phone Social Work Services 01467 537111 (9am - 5pm) and report the grounds of your concern. For out of hours support phone 03456 08 12 06 (weekdays and all weekend). If in doubt or if you need support to report your concerns, contact the Trustees or the Development Officer.
- Write down the nature of your concern and anything the child or young person may have told you using, so far as possible, the words used by the child or young person. Remember to sign and date the notes taken.

## **Confidentiality**

If a child or young person may be at risk of harm, this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those involved with Aberdeenshire Community Recovery activities have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm.

## **What happens next**

It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child or young person. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a child, the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.

The investigating Social Worker / Police Officer may require speaking to the person with whom the concerns originated. You should co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

## **What to do in an emergency**

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, for example a child at risk of immediate harm or injury, contact Police Scotland immediately. Do not delay, as this could result in serious injury to a child. In an emergency phone 999 for police assistance

## **Concerns regarding conduct of a member**

If you have observed a member acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned, and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact the committee outlining your concerns and the basis for them. The committee will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve referral to Social Work Services / Police.

If the concerns involve a committee member this should be reported to the ADP Lead Officer or to Social Work Services/Police.

## **Training and awareness**

Members will be made aware of the existence of the Child Protection Policy, and their responsibilities in relation to the child protection process. For example:

- Through the provision of training
- By issuing a copy of the policy to all new members.

## Protection of Vulnerable Adults Procedure

In the event that a member identifies an area of concern regarding the protection and welfare of vulnerable adults, that member should, in the first instance, use the policies and procedures of their own organisation to identify and alert an appropriate agency.

Contact should be made with Aberdeenshire Council Housing and Social Work Department by calling either the out-of- hours emergency line on: **0845 00 070** ( Monday to Friday 5pm – 8.45am and weekends 24hrs) or the relevant local social work office. A full list can be obtained from [http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/care/help/living/local\\_sw\\_officer.asp](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/care/help/living/local_sw_officer.asp).

If the matter is of immediate concern, contact should be made with Grampian police on **0845 600 5700**. In an emergency (i.e. if a crime is in progress, violence is being used or threatened and/or there is a danger to life) call **999**.