



# City Arts Child Protection Policy



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## **SECTION ONE:**

### **Policy Statement**

The following child protection policy has been developed in order to help safeguard and protect children and young people\* who participate in City Arts' initiatives.

The policy is based upon current good practice and is informed by legislation and guidance; evidence from research; and experience of what works.

#### **Purpose of the policy:**

- To help create a safe environment for children and young people and protect them from harm
- To make it clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children and young people.
- To help create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that City Arts is taking it's duty of care seriously.

#### **Principles of the policy:**

- Children and young people have a right to enjoy creative activity, free from all forms of abuse and exploitation
- All children and young people have equal rights to protection from harm
- All children and young people should be encouraged to fulfill their potential and inequalities should be challenged
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children
- City Arts has a duty of care to children and young people who take part in it's activities.

### Criteria of the policy:

- The policy is publicised, promoted and distributed to all relevant audiences
- The policy is approved and endorsed by City Arts' Management Committee
- The policy is mandatory for all staff and volunteers
- The policy is reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation

## Codes of Practice and Behaviour

City Arts strive to carry out its activities in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. Standards of behaviour for all aim to set a clear benchmark of what is acceptable.

Managers and senior staff of City Arts are committed to promoting a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals.

City Arts' Child Protection procedures, guidance and training aims to help staff and volunteers to recognise the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they face to getting help.

Discrimination; prejudice; oppressive behaviour or language in relation to any of the following are not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political persuasion.

Any discriminatory, offensive and violent behaviour are unacceptable and complaints will be acted upon. (*See City Arts Disciplinary Procedures - Procedures Manual*)

For each group project or activity the young people and staff should help each other to design a group agreement outlining acceptable standards of behaviour for all. The staff and young people should then sign the group agreement and where appropriate, be displayed in a prominent position for each session.

Where behaviour from a young person is deemed unacceptable, the staff will discuss the situation at the earliest possible opportunity. Either during the session or at the debriefing session and decide as a staff group the correct course of action. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, options could include asking the young person to apologise and reflect on their behaviour,

organise transport for them to return home immediately or for them to miss the next session but come for the rest of the project.

Staff should ensure that all disciplinary measures / sanctions are non-violent and do not involve humiliating the young person in any way.

See Code of Behaviour for Everyone - NSPCC  
Nottingham City Council code of practice for staff

## Child Protection Procedure

These procedures aim to provide a clear step by step guide on what to do in different circumstances. They clarify roles, responsibilities and lines of communication. Systems for recording information and for dealing with complaints are also provided, to ensure implementation and compliance.

The following child protection procedures are compliant at a national level with the document "Working Together to Safeguard Young People" and at a local level with Nottingham City Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) guidelines and procedures.

**City Arts Nominated Officer for Child Protection** responsible for the implementation of the child protection policy: *City Arts Manager*

Roles and responsibilities:

- To be aware of the local statutory child protection network and their contact details, the role of the ACPC and of local child protection procedures.
- To receive information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and record it.
- To assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- To consult initially with a statutory child protection agency such as local Social Services department, or NSPCC helpline to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns.
- To make a formal referral to local Social Services or the Police.

It is however everybody's shared responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken

Child Protection Procedure

The following procedure must (in conjunction with the ACPC Child Protection Procedures) be followed in all cases of suspected emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect.

This procedure applies, however the case is referred, including anonymous information.

## **SECTION TWO: RECOGNISING ABUSE**

### **Definitions of Abuse**

Abuse can take a number of forms, which are not mutually exclusive. For the purposes of registration on the child protection register there are **FOUR** categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical Harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is called Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

### **Some indicators**

- Bruising on uncommon sites
- Grasp marks on limbs
- Finger marks on face
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Scars (lots of them at different ages)
- Fractures

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in social activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) 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 watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Some indicators**

- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Recurrent urinary infections
- Bruising in the genital region
- Inappropriate sexually explicit behaviours for age
- Lot of sexual knowledge for age

- Social withdrawal
- Sexually abusive behaviour towards other children

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and / or physiological needs, likely to result in a serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing. Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs

#### **Some indicators**

- Children not receiving adequate food
- Exposed to injury through lack of supervision
- Exposed to inadequate/dirty/cold environment
- 'Home alone'
- Parents failing to get appropriate treatment for the child

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as that they only meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

#### **Some indicators**

- Abnormally passive, lethargic or attention seeking behaviour
- Specific habit disorders e.g. soiling, eating inedible substances, self-mutilation
- Seriously delayed social development
- Nervous behaviour
- Weight and height disproportionate to age

### **Children Involved in Sexual Exploitation**

Children involved in prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation such as the production of indecent images, whether it be by photographs, films or the Internet, should be treated primarily as the victims of abuse with the criminal processes focused on those who target them.

Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire ACPCs have developed a multi-agency approach in order that the needs of these young people receive careful, early assessment as they are likely to be in need of welfare services and, in many cases, safeguarding.

Refer to the following documents for further details:

Nottingham City: Sexual Exploitation of Children Resource and Information Pack

Nottinghamshire County: Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance and Information Pack 'The Tip of the Iceberg'

Where any agency has concerns that a young person is at risk of sexual exploitation, Social Services must be notified in order that they can undertake an assessment of the child's needs or act in accordance with these procedures. The Social Services lead officer should also be informed of the concern.

In every case where a child is first known or suspected of being involved in sexual exploitation or attempts are being made to procure a child for the purposes of sexual exploitation, there should be a discussion between Police and Social Services to share available information and agree an appropriate strategy for action.

Consideration of whether the involvement in sexual exploitation is encouraged by a child's carer or caused by their failure to prevent it will be taken into account in deciding whether or not the case is handled within child protection procedures.

In addition, the strategy discussion should ensure the co-ordination of information to assist with any criminal investigation to enable the police to gather evidence about abusers and coercers.

Children involved in sexual exploitation may be difficult to reach and under very strong pressure to remain in sexual exploitation. They may be fearful of being involved with the Police and Social Services and may respond best initially to informal contact from health or voluntary sector outreach workers. Gaining the child's trust and confidence is vital if he or she is to be helped to be safe and diverted from sexual exploitation.

In addition, where somebody is discovered to have placed indecent images of children on the Internet, or accessed indecent images of children, the police should normally consider whether that individual might also be involved in the active abuse of children. In particular, the individual's access to children should be established, within the family and employment contexts and in other settings such as work with children as a volunteer. If there are particular concerns about one or more specific children, there may be a need to carry out enquiries in respect of those children within the terms of these procedures.

### Domestic Violence

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic violence. Domestic violence is likely to have a damaging effect on the health and development of children and it will often be appropriate for such children to be regarded as children in need. Everyone working with a family where it is known that there is domestic violence should be alert to the frequent inter-relationship between domestic violence and child protection. Where domestic violence is identified, the implications for any children in the household should be considered, including the possibility that the children may themselves be subject to violence or other harm. Conversely, where it is believed that a child is being abused, those involved with the child and family should be alert to the possibility of domestic violence within the family.

The Police are often the first point of contact with families in which domestic violence takes place. When called to a situation involving incidents of violence, the Nottingham Police Domestic Violence Policy will apply. If a referral is required to Social Services as a child in need or as a child in need of protection, or to another agency, the Police will inform the parent in the family and where appropriate give a copy of the local domestic violence leaflet, which outlines what will happen once a referral is made.

All other agencies who receive information about domestic violence in a household should ascertain if there are any children living in the household and consider if it is necessary to make a referral to Social Services as a child in need or a child in need of protection. Social Services will ensure that information is shared and an appropriate response agreed. It may be helpful to contact the child protection register in order to assist decision making.

If this is the second occasion police have attended a household in relation to concerns about domestic violence and there are children in the household, they will refer to Social Services in accordance with Police Policy to discuss the needs of the children. Children living with domestic violence may benefit from a range of support services and some may need safeguarding from harm, in which case the arrangements for Handling Individual Cases will apply. (See ACPC Inter-Agency Guidance Folder)

All other agencies are reminded of the guidance in Working Together (DH 1999 6.40) which states:

‘Normally, one serious incident or several lesser incidents of domestic violence where there is a child in the household would indicate that the Social Services department should carry out an initial assessment of the child and family including consulting existing records.’

## **Induction, Training and Support**

In order to ensure that staff and volunteers understand and are committed to a safeguarding culture it is important to make them feel valued and supported.

### **Induction training**

A comprehensive Induction Programme will be mandatory for all new starters to City Arts, and also for existing staff who take on new roles.

To include:

City Arts' organisational structure and mission statement

Who's who - roles and responsibilities - contact details

A project brief including aims and objectives

Health and Safety policy and procedure including risk assessment

Child Protection policy and procedure available on site - with NCC Child protection practice guidance booklet issued to all staff

### **Training**

Child Protection awareness training will be provided to all staff that have significant contact with young people, that includes familiarisation with the child protection policy and procedures.

All staff and volunteers are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse.

Staff will need to update their child protection training every 3 years (as recommended by the Nottingham ACPC).

Every opportunity will be made by City Arts to provide or support access to further training opportunities that develop new skills or learning in relation to their work with young people.

Training is provided to those responsible for dealing with complaints and disciplinary processes in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people.

Training and written guidance on safer recruitment practice is provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers working with young people.

## **Access to Advice and Support**

Children and young people are provided with information on where to go to for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying.

Designated child protection staff have access to specialist advice, support and information.

Contacts are established at a local level with the key statutory child protection agencies and ACPC

Arrangements are in place to provide support to individuals both during and following an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint

#### **Supervision and Session Debriefs for staff**

The project debriefs and supervisions are designed to create a safe place to explore challenges staff may be experiencing in their work, to share any concerns and to discuss evaluation, planning and practice.

Supervision should be available to all staff and volunteers, one - to one and confidential if necessary, and should be a well publicised way for staff to raise concerns about unacceptable behavior by other staff or volunteers. These include external contacts also.

The project coordinator or staff manager is responsible for taking notes of any action points or issues of concern raised and these will be regarded as confidential.

## SECTION THREE: RESPONDING TO ABUSE

### 1.1a Child Abuse Referrals

All staff and volunteers of City Arts have a duty to make child protection referrals to Social Services, this also applies to staff working of any partner agencies on behalf of City Arts eg Schools, YOT (Youth Offending Teams), Health.

- i) All staff will receive child protection training and induction pack
- ii) All paid staff must refresh their training every 3 years
- iii) All staff must work to the 'Procedures for Appropriate Behavior with Young People' document produced by Nottingham County Council (Appendix A)
- iv) To make a referral or raise a concern which may lead to a referral, all staff must contact Nottingham City Social Services Office between 9-5 weekdays on 0115 915 5555 and outside these hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0115 915 9299.
- v) Always follow the guidance in the 'ACPC Child Protection Procedures', copies of which are held at all City Arts bases. Reference should also be made to the 'Indicators of Possible Child Abuse' green leaflet issued to all staff
- vi) Always complete a copy of the City Arts' Child Protection Referral Form C.P.1 (Appendix B) within 24 hours of the concern being raised.
  - Keep a copy yourself, under secure conditions.
  - Send a copy to the Social Worker to whom you made the referral or with whom you raised the concern, in order to confirm the telephone conversation. (All correspondence must be marked 'Confidential'.)
  - Give a copy to your Line Manager (eg Project Coordinator or City Arts Manager etc) who will keep it in a secure location.
  - Send a copy to the City Arts Nominated Officer for Child Protection (marked 'Confidential').
- vii) Always keep your Line Manager / Project Manager informed at the earliest opportunity.
- viii) If out of the City on a residential when a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse occurs, then the local Social Services department must be

informed as well as Nottingham City Social Services.

- ix) If the young person who discloses or about whom you have suspicions lives outside of Nottingham, then both Nottingham Social Services and the young person's local Social Services Department must be informed.
- x) If the disclosure or suspicion occurs whilst abroad with a group of young people, both the local authorities, including police, should be informed, along with the Nottingham Social Services.
- xi) In emergency situations where advice cannot be obtained from your line manager/back-up contact/Social Services, contact the Nottingham City Police on 0115 967 0555

### **1.1b Child Abuse Investigation Procedure**

City Arts workers sometimes have close contact with young people. They should be alert to any concerns about a young person's welfare and know how to refer to Social Services. All staff, both paid and voluntary, should be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and have a duty to act on information that may arise concerning child protection concerns in accordance with the child protection procedures.

City Arts workers are often in a very good position to develop open and trusting relationships with young people. They will often have valuable knowledge and information which can assist in any multi-agency assessment of the young person's needs. They are also in a good position to play an important role in a planned multi-agency service to a child.

Working practices and procedures should minimise situations where abuse of children may occur, such as unobserved contact. City Arts workers should be aware of the boundaries around maintaining confidentiality with the young person, insofar as this is consistent with their welfare and should strive to work in partnership with parents.

### **1.1c Inclusive Practice**

When assessing a child's needs, care has to be taken to make sure that fundamental issues shaping children's identity and well-being are understood.

Ensuring equality of opportunity requires sensitivity to and understanding of, diversity. Issues of race, culture, language, religion, sexuality and disability are integral to an holistic assessment process. Stereotyping and assumptions can

result in inaccuracy and a lack of balance in analysing children's needs and can undermine efforts to protect children from other forms of significant harm.

The context in which some children are growing up may be one of discrimination, disadvantage and failure to access appropriate services. The experience of racism is likely to affect the responses of the child and family to assessment and enquiry processes. The effects of racism differ for different communities and individuals, and should not be assumed to be uniform. Ideally staff should make every effort to have knowledge and understanding of parental roles within the child's background.

The need for neutral, high quality, gender appropriate translation or interpretation services should be taken into account when working with children and families whose everyday language is not English. For children with a disability, particular care has to be taken to build on strengths as well as identifying difficulties. The assessment must consider:

- the impact on the child of his or her impairment
- any disabling barriers that the child faces
- how to overcome such barriers.

Many children with a disability have involvement with a number of agencies and professionals. Particular care should be taken to co-ordinate assessments and service provision.

#### **1.1d Consent, Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Principles -

- In carrying out our obligations, we should always strive to work in partnership with children and their families.
- Family members know more about their own situation than any professional could possibly know.
- Family members have the right to know what is being said about them and to contribute to important decisions about their lives and those of their children, unless there are specific reasons why this right is overruled by the child's rights and needs.
- Consent issues do not over-ride the duty on professionals and agencies to promote children's welfare or protect them from harm.

### 1.1e The Law on Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The important statutory duties in relation to vulnerable children cannot be met without effective and appropriate sharing of relevant information, some of which may be regarded as confidential between a practitioner and patient or client.

Confidentiality should not be confused with secrecy. Information may be shared in order to comply with a statutory obligation, or if it is in the public interest.

It is important, however, that disclosure of information takes place according to principles of good practice and on a need to know basis. Those seeking disclosure should be clear about the reasons information is required and the purposes for which it is likely to be used.

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights gives everyone the right to 'respect for his (or her) private and family life'. Information about families will normally be kept confidential. Disclosure of information will be through consent or 'in accordance with the law' for:

- Public Safety
- the prevention of disorder or crime
- the protection of health or morals
- for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that personal information is:

- obtained and used in a lawful way
- only disclosed in appropriate circumstances
- accurate
- relevant
- not held longer than is necessary
- kept securely in a locked file

The Data Protection Act defines consent as:

'freely given specific and informed indication of his or her wishes by which the data subject signifies his agreement to personal data relating to him being processed'.

The Data Protection Act allows for disclosure of information without consent on

the basis of the:

- prevention and detection of crime
- apprehension and prosecution of offenders

The Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998 encourage the adoption of sound decision making in this area and the need to be able to justify the course adopted. While encouraging Good Practice, however, their provisions are not intended to inhibit the proper protection and safeguarding of the welfare of the most vulnerable.

Provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 encourage effective sharing of material in the interests of reducing crime and disorder.

### 1.1f Sharing Information With Consent

Research and experience have repeatedly demonstrated that effective working together is more likely to be achieved on the basis of complete openness and honesty with parents/carers and children. This is likely to improve partnership with parents, promote children's welfare and protect them from harm.

If appropriate, prior to concerns about a child being shared with another agency or professional, consent should be obtained from:

- one parent with parental responsibility
- and/or
- the young person, if they have the ability to understand choices and their consequences.

When obtaining consent to disclosing personal information, it should be made clear:

- why the information is to be shared (the reasons for disclosure, the purpose of
- disclosure and the intended outcome)
- with which agencies or named professionals the information will be shared
- what information is to be shared

### 1.1g Sharing Information Without Consent

Normally parents are happy for information to be shared, as they want to do the best for their children. Similarly young people want the best for themselves, however, if a parent or young person refuses to allow information to be shared, the professional will need to decide whether they can lawfully disclose information without consent. In making this judgement, the professional will have to weigh up the nature of the concerns for the child and the reasons given for refusing consent.

In any potential conflict between the responsibilities of professionals towards a child and other family members, the needs of the child must always come first. Countless enquiries into child deaths have emphasised the importance of good information sharing between professionals about a child's health and development and parental capacity to meet the child's needs. When information from a number of sources has been shared and analysed, it can often show that a child is suffering significant harm.

Information can be disclosed where anyone has a well-founded concern that disclosure is necessary to:

- safeguard a particular child or children in general. This includes disclosure of information about an adult who may pose a risk of significant harm to a child. This is reflected in the General Medical Council guidance on confidentiality (Protecting and Providing Information) and the UKCC Guidelines for professional practice for all nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff
- prevent a criminal act taking place, or would interfere in criminal enquiries
- prevent harm to staff (in effect a possible criminal act against the staff member)

When considering whether to disclose information without consent, professionals need to consider whether seeking consent is likely to place the child at further risk:

(see 'Seeking Consent')

- for some children, even where there are well-founded concerns about the child's need for protection, it is appropriate to seek consent to share information. This will help to develop partnership with parents, so helping to protect the child
- in other circumstances, perhaps because of the urgency of the situation, formal consent to share information cannot be obtained. The parents and/or young person should be told that the information has been shared, unless the professional makes a judgment that this will risk further harm to the child
- for some other children it is essential to share information between agencies, but without parental consent, to protect the child or to prevent a crime being committed. This includes allegations where a parent or carer is the alleged perpetrator of a possible criminal offence against the child, including situations where the child may have been subject to sexual abuse.

If in doubt, advice should be obtained from a designated or named person within the agency and, if appropriate, legal advice should be sought.

Personal information that is disclosed without consent should be:

- justifiable - the reasons for disclosing the information should be recorded in case of later challenge
- appropriate and proportionate for the purpose
- to the extent needed to safeguard the child, or prevent a crime.

#### 1.1h Handling Individual Cases

**Any member of staff with concerns for a child's welfare must refer such concerns immediately to the Social Services Department.**

Sometimes concerns will arise about a child from the Social Services Department itself, as new information comes to light about a child and family with whom the service is already in contact, which indicates that the child may need safeguarding from harm. These procedures also apply in these circumstances.

Services for children in need of protection are provided by Social Services as part of its general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in partnership with other agencies.

#### 1.1i Seeking Consent

Normally professionals or any other worker or volunteer should seek to discuss any concerns they have with the family in question, and where possible, seek their agreement to making a referral to Social Services. In some circumstances, however, to do this would place a child at increased risk of significant harm, interfere with criminal enquiries or raise concerns about the safety of staff members, in which case the referring agency should confirm that, at this stage, this is not appropriate and give the reasons why, with the support of an appropriate manager if necessary. This might include allegations of sexual abuse by a parent. Reasons for decisions not to inform parents prior to contacting social services should be recorded on the referring agency's own records (Form C.P.1).

**Parents' lack of agreement to the making of a referral in relation to concerns about the possibility of a child suffering significant harm should not prevent the professional contacting social services with their concerns at the earliest opportunity.**

## SECTION FOUR: REPORTING CONCERNS

### 1.1j Referral

Agencies who are concerned about a child may also make an enquiry of the child protection register in order to ascertain if there is any more information that relates to their concern, for example, other agencies involved. However, this should not replace the need to make a referral to Social Services without delay.

**All staff have a duty and responsibility to act upon anonymous information suggesting a child might be at risk. Anonymous allegations must be responded to and given the same weight as any other referral.**

It is the responsibility of Social Services to clarify with the referrer, including self-referrals for families:

- the nature of the concerns
- how these came to light
- what assessment has been undertaken prior to referral
- what the needs of the child/children and family appear to be
- whether urgent action is needed to keep the child/children safe from harm
- whether consent has been obtained to make the referral and for agency checks to be made and what the family understands will happen next.

At the end of any discussion about a child or family, the referrer and Social Services should be clear about who will be taking what action and when, or that no further action will be taken/is necessary and why.

Workers who phone Social Services should confirm referrals in writing using Form C.P.1 within 24 hours of that referral being made. Workers should also record their concerns and the actions they have taken in the City Arts' Incident Book.

The Social Services Team Manager should decide on the next course of action within 24 hours, normally following the social workers:

- discussion with referrer
- consultation with other appropriate agencies
- consideration of any existing records/historical information
- discussion with the police where a criminal offence may have been committed against a child.

Parents' permission should be sought by Social Services before discussing a referral about them with other agencies. This may be best done by the referring agency at the point of seeking permission for a referral to be made, making clear what this would involve once made. However, should seeking permission to undertake enquiries with other agencies place a child at risk of significant harm, interfere with criminal enquiries or raise concern about the safety of staff members, then an appropriate team manager in Social Services should agree that this is not necessary at this time. This decision should be justified and recorded.

The decision to take action or not about the referral and the reason for this should be recorded by the appropriate team manager. Referrers should be notified by Social Services of this decision. Workers should record it in City Arts' records, e.g. the Incident Book.

This initial consideration should address, on the basis of available evidence, whether there are concerns about either the child's health and development or likely harm which justify further assessment, enquiries and/or intervention. It should particularly consider the urgency of any necessary intervention.

**When responding to a referral from members of the public, identifying details of the referrer should only be disclosed to the subject family with the consent of the referrer.**

Referrals may lead to:

- no further action
- the provision of services or help
- an initial assessment of the needs and circumstances of the child, which may in turn be followed by Section 47 enquiries - Children Act 1989 Child Protection Enquiries (Appendix C)
- immediate Section 47 enquiries

When Social Services decide to take no further action at this early stage, the family must be informed of this decision. If consent has not previously been sought for the referral and the family are unaware that a referral has been made, arrangements should be made to inform the family that a referral was made to Social Services, but that no action is being taken. The family could also be informed what support could be offered from any other agency or organisation.

### **1.1k Initial Assessment**

it may be that the information received at the point of referral clearly indicates that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, in which case enquiries will proceed under Section 47 and these procedures will apply immediately. It will more usually be the case that a referral to Social Services

will be responded to by means of an initial assessment to clarify the referrer's concerns.

It may also be that at any point during an assessment, carried out in accordance with the assessment framework (Appendix E), concerns are established that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm in which case these procedures would apply.

#### 1.1l Next Steps- Suspected Actual or Likely Significant Harm

Where a child is suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, Social Services will co-ordinate a core assessment made by way of section 47 enquiries to enable a decision to be made as to whether action is needed to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. This will involve other agencies.

The Framework of Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Appendix E) is relevant in these circumstances as a structured framework for collecting, drawing together and analysing available information about a child and family.

#### 1.1m Strategy Discussion

Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, there should be an early strategy discussion involving Social Services, the Police and other agencies as appropriate and in particular any referring agency e.g. head teacher from the school. It may be helpful to involve other professionals, e.g. medical advisor, to assist with enquiries.

A strategy discussion may take place at a meeting or by other means (e.g. by telephone). **Any information shared, or decisions reached and the basis for these decisions should be clearly recorded by all parties to the discussion.**

Insofar as is consistent with the child's safety and any criminal investigations taking place, parents should be aware that this discussion is taking place and arrangements would be made for informing them of the outcomes. It will not be usual practice for parents to attend any strategy meeting as confidential information relevant to investigation may be subject to discussion.

The discussion will be used to:

- consider any immediate emergency action if appropriate
- share available information
- decide whether Section 47 enquiries should be initiated or continued if they have already commenced and agree a plan for Section 47 enquiries as part of the core assessment
- plan how enquiries should be handled and by whom including whether

- enquiries should be undertaken with the police, whether a medical is needed and arrangements for interviewing the child and parents (including the need to use video if appropriate)
- decide if support services under Section 17 are appropriate
  - decide on the most appropriate timing of parental participation, where consent has not previously been sought and how they will be notified of the outcome of the discussions.

### 1.3 Workers and Appropriate Behaviour

Procedures are in place that dictates appropriate behavior when dealing with Young People; these are contained within the leaflet 'Appropriate behavior with young people' (Appendix ONE)

<sup>1</sup>Further advice on the issues of race and culture and of disability in assessing children's needs and ensuring equality of opportunity can be found in

'Assessing Children In Need and their Families: Practice Guidance' (DH2000)  
Section 2 chapter 17 page 32 ACPC

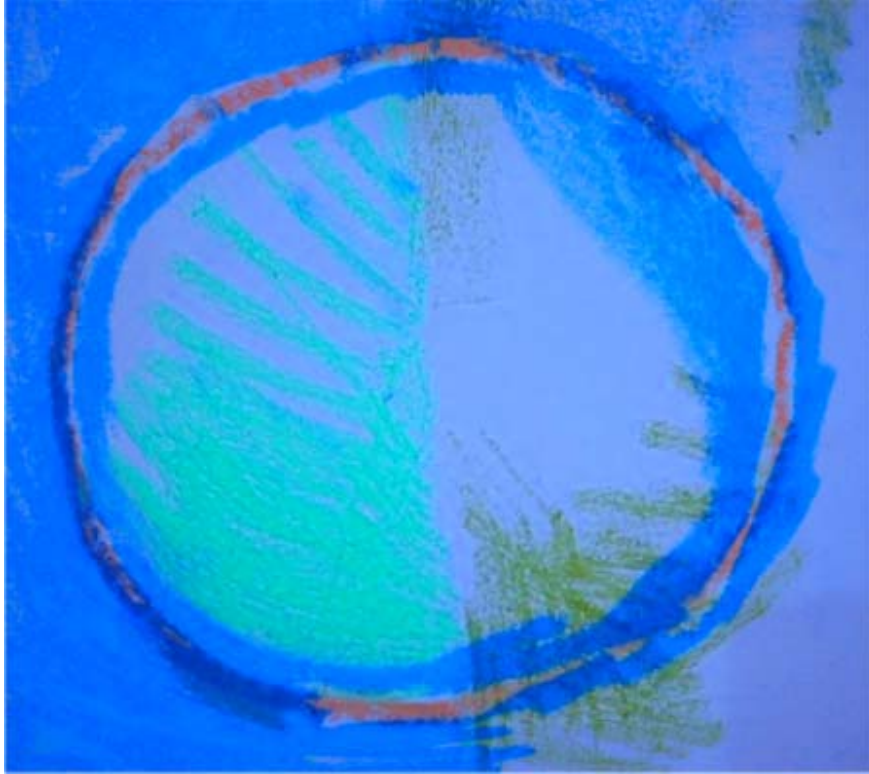
Nottingham City: Sexual Exploitation of Children Resource and Information Pack

Nottinghamshire County: Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance and Information Pack

## Reference Material

- *Working Together to Safeguard Young People* - Home Office, Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment 1999
- *Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport* - Child Protection in Sport Unit
- *Stopcheck* - NSPCC Consultancy Services
- *Youth Worker Staff Manual* - Nottingham County Council
- NCVS CRB induction training

## APPENDIXES



- One: Guidance for appropriate behaviour with young people
- Two: Policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information
- Three: CRB checks - NCVS procedures
- Four: Recruitment and Appointments
- Five: Use of Photography / Video Imagery

## APPENDIX ONE



### Guidance on Appropriate Behaviour with Young People

Through City Arts, staff and volunteers work with a variety of individual young people in the course of their duties. In many instances this will not be an immediately recognised role as 'teacher' or 'social worker' and may be perceived as just as a friendly adult. It is of prime importance, therefore, that all staff behave in ways which are not open to misinterpretation and observe a code of professional conduct.

This means being clear about boundaries between personal and professional life, being prepared for the tensions which may arise between developing a caring and supportive relationships with young people and the need to maintain an appropriate professional conduct.

As a staff committed to working together with young people to raise self-esteem and contribute to personal development, it is important to remember that a vital part of our role is to 'model' appropriate behaviour to young people. This must show how an adult can be anti-oppressive and non-exploitative, but still caring, assertive and able to join in fun.

We need to be able to develop relationships of trust between ourselves and young people, but be clear about the boundaries of our professional role.

When other staff from referring agencies eg Social Services are not present then we as a staff team we have a legal 'duty of care'. This is seen as 'a duty to act as a careful parent would'. This has not been directly defined in the law, but generally interpreted as 'exercising adequate provision'. This will depend upon things such as age, maturity of young people, type of activity, and numbers involved etc and should be discussed in relation to filling in the Risk Assessment form for the activity/ project.

#### **Avoiding Vulnerable Situations**

Staff and volunteers should take particular care not to develop close personal, and or sexual relationships with the young people they are working with as this may be against the law, exploitative or result in preferential treatment.

To avoid situations which could be interpreted as showing sexual interest in the young people you are working with, staff should employ the following strategies|:

- Avoid allowing a situation to arise where you are on your own behind a closed door with a young person, unless part of your directed role.
- Do not invite a young people to your home or visit them at their home alone, unless part of your directed role and you have informed a colleague of your intention.
- Avoid touching young people, either in a casual way or when helping them with equipment except where necessary as part of a directed role.
- Do not use inappropriate terms of endearment in general conversation
- Do not share personal possessions/clothing (except for reasons of health and safety).
- Do not appear to offer preferential treatment to any individuals.
- Avoid giving individual young people lifts in their car, unless part of your directed role (if this does arise in an emergency situation they should sit in the back whilst you drive).

**NB** All employees and volunteers carrying young people in their cars must have appropriate 'Business Use' insurance.

Occasionally members of staff may find that a young person show signs of developing a 'crush' on them. It is important that this is in no way encouraged, but shouldn't be ignored either. These guidelines should be followed:

- A firm statement 'that is not acceptable', delivered in a caring way
- Inform the project coordinator / City Arts manager at the earliest opportunity.
- Have your concerns noted in supervision or sessional recordings.

### **Emergencies**

In case of emergency situations if any of the above become necessary, unless part of your directed role, then inform the project coordinator / City Arts manager or the young person's parent/ carers at the earliest opportunity.

### **Child Protection**

Staff should note that if an allegation of any sort is made against a member of staff then the ACPC Child Protection Procedures require that a member of staff is immediately suspended prior to and during investigation.

### **Substance Misuse**

City Arts policy prohibits any smoking, drinking or drug taking in their projects. Staff will not buy alcohol for any young person regardless of age or allow young people to drink whilst in their care (except when this is part of a controlled social educational project).

City Arts' expects staff not to indulge in any of these activities at any time whilst they are on duty, as we expect staff to provide a good example to young

people. This includes talking about their behaviour outside of work e.g. "I got really drunk/ wasted last weekend".

### **Behaviour**

City Arts strive to carry out it's activities in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. Standards of behaviour for all aim to set a clear benchmark of what is acceptable.

Managers and senior staff of City Arts are committed to promoting a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals.

City Arts' Child Protection procedures, guidance and training aims to help staff and volunteers to recognise the additional vulnerability of some children and the extra barriers they face to getting help.

Discrimination; prejudice; oppressive behaviour or language in relation to any of the following are not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political persuasion.

Any discriminatory, offensive and violent behaviour are unacceptable and complaints will be acted upon.

For each group project or activity the young people and staff should help each other to design a group agreement outlining acceptable standards of behaviour for all. The staff and young people should then sign the group agreement and where appropriate, be displayed in a prominent position for each session.

Where behaviour from a young person is deemed unacceptable, the staff will discuss the situation at the earliest possible opportunity. Either during the session or at the debriefing session and decide as a staff group the correct course of action. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, options could include asking the young person to apologise and reflect on their behaviour, organise transport for them to return home immediately or for them to miss the next session but come for the rest of the project.

Staff should ensure that all disciplinary measures / sanctions are non-violent and do not involve humiliating the young person in any way. No form of physical punishment is legal, and could amount to assault or threat of assault. Restraint is only to be used as a last resort, and only 'reasonable' force can be used.

Staff should wear appropriate clothing according to the activity they are undertaking with young people.

It is not appropriate to indulge in work related activities for personal gain or to accept gifts or favours from either young people or local adults (except as a

'leaving present'). Staff should equally not enter into financial transactions for goods with young people, give or lend money or buy gifts for them.

It is not appropriate to support / employ young people you know through youth work in your personal/private life.

There will always be circumstances where there will be a need for using 'professional judgement'. So if in doubt, SEEK ADVICE.

Resources Used:

- Procedures for Appropriate behaviour with Young people written by Culture and Community Young Person's Division Nottingham County Council
- NSPCC 'Stopcheck' publication.
- Nottingham City Council Youth Service Health and Safety and Professional Boundaries training notes.

## APPENDIX TWO



### Policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information

In accordance with the Criminal Records Bureau's Code of Practice for registered persons and other recipients of Disclosure Information, City Arts will ensure the following practice:

- Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular post and the information provided on a disclosure certificate will only be used for recruitment purposes.
- All correspondence between NCVS and City Arts will be marked PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL to be opened by the named addressee only.
- City Arts will ensure that an individual's consent is given before seeking a disclosure.
- Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.
- Disclosure information will be stored in a locked no-portable container, for a maximum of 6 months. Only those authorised to see this information in the course of their duties will have access to this container.
- Discarded disclosure information will be destroyed by shredding
- No image or photocopy of the disclosure information will be made, however the following details may be retained:
  - Date of issue*
  - Name of subject*
  - Disclosure type*
  - Position for which disclosure was requested*
  - Recruitment decision taken*
- City Arts will ensure that all staff with access to disclosure information are aware of this policy and received relevant training and support.
- City Arts will make a copy of this policy available to any applicant (paid or voluntary) that requires a disclosure.

## APPENDIX THREE



### CRB checks - NCVS procedures

#### 14.4 Criminal Records Checks - Volunteers

City Arts must make a distinction between adults who act as volunteers and young people whose prime involvement with the Service is as users benefiting from the aims of the Service. With this in mind, all volunteers must have a minimum age of 18 years.

This does not mean that those under 18 cannot assist, but in doing so they must still be regarded as users of the Service, who will benefit from their contact with Youth Workers e.g. where 17 year olds might act as voluntary helpers with junior youth work, they are doing so to broaden their experience and gain skills as users of City Arts. Young people under the age of 18 may act as members of voluntary youth club management committees. Where they do so, it is, again, as members of the City Arts, gaining a broad range of life skills from their involvement.

The involvement of young people under the age of 18 should not be confused with adults who are staff whether they be paid or voluntary. Those under the age of 18 when attending events of any type e.g. residential or trips in the UK or abroad will do so as users of the City Arts.

The following procedure applies to all adult volunteers involved in work with young people through City Arts:

Details of all volunteers should be maintained at units of work, on the Volunteer Registration Form (YC290). Potential volunteers should complete the Application form and be made aware of the responsibilities of becoming a Registered Volunteer. The responsibility for registration will rest with the Project Co-ordinator.

#### **NCVS**

Potential volunteers may attend the unit of work during clearance procedure time. This period should be used for induction, and areas of involvement will be at the discretion of the Project Coordinator, but it should be noted that uncleared volunteers must not be left unsupervised with young people at any time or attend residential.

## APPENDIX FOUR



### Recruitment and Appointments

When recruiting staff to work in contact with children and young people the subsequent procedures should be followed:

Within their application the candidates should be asked to sign a written declaration stating that they have no past convictions, cautions or bind-overs and no pending cases affecting why they might be considered unsuitable for work with young people. All candidates working with young people will be subject to an enhanced criminal records check (CRB Disclosure).

It is necessary to obtain two references who are not family, and ideally who have first hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work or contact with young people.

Posts will be offered 'Subject to Personnel Checks'. (This will include references, medical and criminal records checks and evidence of identity.)

Any young people who have taken part in activities and continue their involvement by becoming volunteers should be assessed by the Project Coordinator regarding their suitability to work with young people.

All staff should have their CRB checks repeated periodically; once every 18 months is the current recommendation.

If a member of staff takes up new duties that bring him or her into regular contact with young people, then a CRB check should be made. *See Appendix 3*

### Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

City Arts will treat any applicant for any position (paid or voluntary) fairly and not discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

City Arts will request a standard or enhanced disclosure only where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought.

Where a position requires a disclosure City Arts will make this clear on the application form, job/role description and any other information provided by the job / role.

At interview City Arts will ensure that open and measured discussions can take place on the subject of offences.

Failure to reveal information at interview, that is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to a withdrawal of an offer of an employment / voluntary position.

At interview or when receiving a disclosure which shows a conviction, City Arts will take into consideration:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered.
- The seriousness of the offence revealed
- The length of time since the offence took place
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place

City Arts will ensure that all its staff and volunteers involved in the recruitment process are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

Any applicant for any post that requires a disclosure may receive a copy of this policy.

*Additional Information - APPENDIX 2*

## **APPENDIX FIVE**



### **Use of Photography / Video Imagery**

Prior to the project written consent will be obtained by all young people and their parents / carers for the public display of photographs and video footage and any other imagery identifying that individual young person. (See Photo Consent Form)

**This may include:**

**Use of imagery for project displays and exhibitions**

**Use of imagery for public displays / professional use**

**Images sent out to press with releases etc**

#### **Use of captions**

When ever possible the young people involved in our projects will be asked to provide captions for their own images if they are being submitted for any of the usages above. When this is not possible, the City Arts Management will be asked to clear any captions in order to safeguard against inappropriate labelling of work.

#### **Internet use**

It is City Arts Policy not to use identifiable images of young people on our website - or to submit such imagery for inclusion on other organisations websites. Documentary pictures avoiding defining features of participants, or images that have been cropped or distorted to remove identifying features may be used. All images will be subject to consent from the parent / guardian of the Young Person (See consent forms above).

#### **Storage of imagery**

All photographic and video evidence will be catalogued and stored for up to 7 years after the date of the project. Where sensitive information/imagery is stored if it is paper based / on tape, we will maintain the archive in a locked cupboard. If the date is computer based - we will password protect folders.