



Prince's Trust

Safeguarding Policy

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy & Procedures

This is a Prince's Trust staff policy.
This must be adhered to by staff, where applicable.

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Summary of changes since previous version

- Updated to reflect latest legislation and renaming of statutory bodies
- Comprehensive rewrite to provide greater clarity of roles, responsibilities and action required

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1. Introduction

The Prince's Trust believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by a commitment to practices which protect them from harm.

A child is defined in law (Children Act 1989 and Scottish equivalent) as anyone below his or her 18th birthday. Child Protection legislation and guidance therefore only applies to those users of Prince's Trust services up to that age. However, The Trust also works with those over the age of 18 and recognises its duty of care to all the young people with whom it works, including those who can be described as vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults are those who are or may need community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age and illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Therefore, whilst legal frameworks may differ, the spirit of these procedures should be applied in respect of all users of The Trust's services. New procedures will be required from October 2009 to comply with the new vetting and barring process to be established by the Independent Safeguarding Authority – this policy will be revised at that time.

The Trust's approach to the protection of children and young people is based on the principles recognised in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 (and Scottish equivalent) and the Statutory Guidance contained within "Working Together to Safeguard Children".

In particular, The Trust aims to support the five outcomes set out in the legislation as key to children's and young people's wellbeing:

- **Being healthy** – enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- **Staying safe** – being protected from harm and neglect and growing up able to look after themselves
- **Enjoying and achieving** – getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- **Making a positive contribution** – being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- **Achieving economic well-being** – overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life

In addition, The Trust believes that working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is key to promoting young people's welfare.

2. The purpose of this policy and procedures:

- To provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive The Trust's services. This includes the children of adult clients.
- To provide all staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk from, some form of abuse.
- To guide staff on responding appropriately to and reporting child and vulnerable adult protection concerns.
- To ensure compatibility with other Trust policies such as Recruiting Safely (Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures), Diversity and Equality Statement, Whistle Blowing, Recruitment and Selection, Induction and Disciplinary Procedure.

3. To whom the policy applies:

This policy applies to all staff. In this instance "staff" relates to all paid employees, seconded staff, volunteers, mentors, students, agency workers, contract, seasonal and unpaid staff working on behalf of the Prince's Trust in any capacity and in any setting.

4. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

5. Safeguarding Advisers

The Trust has people with special responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding and Child Protection. These staff are trained to carry out their duties.

5.1 **Lead Safeguarding Adviser** – Director, Human Resources

Responsibilities include:

- Developing the Trust's approach to Safeguarding, reviewing the policy and procedures on a regular basis.
- Implementing a training strategy for staff and volunteers to ensure that the policy and procedures are implemented throughout the organisation.
- Providing advice and support to Country/Regional Safeguarding Advisers.
- As required, management of referrals/cases reported and working with senior management to address any issues arising
- Auditing the operation of the policy and procedures

The Director, Human Resources is the Senior Manager leading on Safeguarding and a member of the Trustee board will also be appointed in this regard.

5.2 **Country/Regional Safeguarding Advisers** - Country/Regional Directors or their nominee. Their responsibilities include:

- Being the first point of contact for reports of concerns of abuse or neglect within the Country/Region
- Making links with local statutory agencies and Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (NI and Scotland – Area Child Protection Committees).
- Providing advice, support and training to local offices
- Working with the Lead Safeguarding Adviser to resolve issues
- In consultation with the Lead Safeguarding Adviser and the Country/Regional Director, ensuring that a decision is taken as to whether to refer an issue to the authorities and whether the parents/carers should be informed of the referral
- Reporting concerns to the authorities
- Making and reviewing a plan of action (especially where the decision is taken not to refer)
- Advising Public Relations Department in line with The Trust's Crisis Plan

6. What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment – a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

7 Recognising abuse

Staff are not expected to be Child Protection experts. However, there are a number of circumstances under which staff might have concerns that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been or is being abused:

- They may tell about abuse they have experienced
- A third party – a parent, relative, carer, another young person, other professionals, neighbour – sharing concerns

Staff may also become concerned through observing some of the following indicators. However, many children and young people will exhibit some of these at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or crisis in the family and the staff's knowledge of a young person over a period of time may help them to understand whether there is cause for concern.

- A bruise or injury which is unusual for example on a part of the body which is not normally prone to such injuries for example on the cheeks
- Injuries which require but have not received medical attention
- Cigarette burns or bite marks
- Unexplained changes in behaviour either over time or suddenly for example becoming aggressive, quiet or withdrawn
- Running away from home
- Non attendance at school, projects or activities
- Reluctance to get changed or wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- The young person appears not to trust certain adults with whom you would usually expect them to have or once had a close relationship eg parent, carer, staff member
- The young person being discouraged or unable to make friends or from socialising with others
- The young person becoming unusually dirty or unkempt
- Changes to eating patterns
- The young person developing a disturbed sleeping pattern

- The young person self harms or attempts to self harm
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour

The above list is not exhaustive

8 What to do if you have a concern

All Safeguarding Advisers will have a copy of and should follow the guidance set out in

“What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2003)”.

This guidance was developed by the Government to assist practitioners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, including the legal issues affecting the sharing of information.

8.1 Roles & responsibilities

Both recognising and responding to abuse can be a complex matter. However, staff **must** report any concerns that they have. The Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser and Lead Safeguarding Adviser are available to provide support and discuss staff concerns, including the interpretation of public interest.

IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRINCE'S TRUST OR ITS EMPLOYEES TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT ABUSE HAS TAKEN PLACE. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF TO ACT IF THERE IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN ORDER THAT THE APPROPRIATE AGENCIES CAN INVESTIGATE AND TAKE ANY ACTION NECESSARY.

The legal framework differs depending on the age of the child, young person or vulnerable adult. Where staff concerns relate to someone below their 18th birthday, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser on the same working day. If the member of staff is not happy with the response they receive, or cannot contact the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser, they should refer the matter to the Lead Safeguarding Adviser. If they are still unhappy then they should refer to the Trust's Whistle Blowing Policy.

The member of staff should record the allegation/incident/suspicion. It is important that all concerns are properly recorded. The Trust has a standard Safeguarding & Child Protection form which **MUST** be used to record and report suspected abuse. These forms can be obtained from Trustnet/ Forms/ Human Resources/ Safeguarding/ Reporting Suspected Abuse. Some of the information requested by the form may not be available. Staff should not pursue the questioning of the child or young person for

this information if it is not given freely. There should be no delay in reporting the matter by waiting for all the information.

In completing the form it is important not to write speculative comments but to stick to the facts. Staff's opinion may be crucial but it should be recorded as an opinion and any evidence stated to support these opinions. Records pertaining to issues of child protection may be accessible to third parties such as Children's Services, Police, the Courts and Solicitors.

The Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser to whom the concerns are reported has responsibility for ensuring a decision is reached on whether to refer the matter onto the relevant Children's Services Department and/or the Police. Referrals should preferably be made within the same working day and certainly within 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser to ensure a decision is reached on whether the parents/carers of the child or young person should be informed of the referral.

There may be instances where urgent medical attention is needed and, in these circumstances, it may be necessary to make immediate contact with the Police and/or Children's Services or emergency health services. However, staff should still contact their Safeguarding Adviser at the earliest opportunity.

On occasions, a child or young person may abuse another child. Child protection procedures should be followed in those situations.

If you have concerns about someone over 18 then you should discuss these with the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser in the first instance.

8.2 What to do if someone discloses an abusive act or experience

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult confides to someone that they are being, have been or believe that they may be abused, they have placed that person in a position of trust.

Staff should:

- Make it clear to the individual that they cannot keep secrets and that they have to pass on information if they think the young person has been, is being or may be harmed in some way
- React calmly. Panic may frighten or silence the person
- Tell the person they were right to tell
- Make it clear the person themselves is not to blame

- Take what is said seriously recognising that there may be difficulties in interpreting what is said
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said. Only ask questions if they need to clarify what they are being told –they should not ask about explicit details – it is up to Children’s Services/the Police to investigate fully
- Make a full record of what is being said, heard and seen as soon as possible using The Trust’s reporting form

Do not delay in passing the information onto a line manager and/or Country/Region Safeguarding Adviser.

8.3 What happens to reports?

In the event of a decision to report a concern, the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser will do so by telephone within 24 hours. They will follow up the phone call by putting the concern in writing within 3 days of making the telephone call.

If the child has a known Social Worker they or their manager or, in their absence, the Duty Social Worker, will be informed immediately. If the child is not known to Children’s Services, the Duty Officer will be contacted.

The Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser must ensure that a record is kept of the name of the Social Worker or Social Work Manager to whom the concern is reported and the action proposed.

(Section 9 below notes the roles and responsibilities of delivery partners.)

8.4 Barriers to reporting abuse

Experience in the child protection field over the years has shown that there are many barriers that individuals often have to overcome before raising a concern. There are many common myths about the child protection system. One of the most common is that reporting child abuse means that a child or young person will be removed from his/her parents. This is rarely true and, even when it is, most children are usually returned to parental care.

Some people also have concerns about sharing confidential information. It would normally be considered good practice not to refer a child or young person to another agency without their knowledge and consent. However this principle of confidentiality can be overridden when there are child protection concerns.

The key principles are:

- To gain informed consent where possible

→ It is permissible not to seek consent – or to override a refusal to grant consent – where there is a public interest. Information on what represents sufficient public interest may be obtained from the Safeguarding Adviser who has access to the guidance contained in “What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused”

8.5 Responding to allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour against a member of staff

Regardless of the age of the young person, if an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a member of staff, or a person in a position of trust, then this must be reported to the Lead Safeguarding Adviser immediately.

Concerns about staff must be treated with the same rigour as other concerns. If there are concerns that child abuse has taken place the Lead Safeguarding Adviser will pass this information to the Children’s Services Department and/or the Police for investigation.

The Lead Safeguarding Adviser and senior managers will also need to refer to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation. If the member of staff reporting the incident is not happy with the response they receive from the Lead Safeguarding Adviser then they should refer to The Trust’s Whistle Blowing Policy.

8.6 After an allegation

After an allegation or suspicion about a child protection concern has been investigated, there are likely to be strong feelings among staff, clients, and parents and possibly among the wider community, which will need to be addressed. There are likely to be issues of:

- Communication – rumour or fact
- Guilt and blame – if suspicions have been around for sometime
- Impact – on individuals, of the nature of what occurred and to whom

The line manager, in conjunction with the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser, will give careful thought to the provision of appropriate support to members of staff who might be affected.

9. Working with Partner Organisations

The Prince's Trust is committed to working in partnership with Local Authorities and other agencies. When this involves an agreement for another organisation to provide services on its behalf, The Prince's Trust will ensure that the partner organisation has appropriate safeguarding policies in place which will include child protection policies and procedures, sound recruitment and selection practices and formal complaints procedures for users.

The written contract, agreement or protocol detailing the services to be provided should include the procedure to be followed in the event of concerns about child abuse. The purpose of this is to ensure clarity as to which organisation is responsible for taking action in specific circumstances. If the delivery partner is responsible for taking action, the agreement should stipulate that the Prince's Trust must be informed of all incidents.

If a member of staff becomes aware of allegations of abuse relating to a partner organisation, this should be discussed in the first instance with the Country/Regional Safeguarding Adviser.