

Writing organisational child protection policies and procedures

NSPCC factsheet

April 2013

Our factsheet explains why organisations need to write child protection policies and provides useful guidance on how to go about producing a policy. It is written for organisations and anyone wanting to understand how organisations are required to keep children safe.

For information and resources tailored to a specific topic contact the NSPCC's information service at help@nspcc.org.uk or call 0808 800 5000.

What is a child protection policy?

A "child protection" or "safeguarding" policy is a statement that makes it clear to staff, parents and children what the organisation or group thinks about safeguarding, and what it will do to keep children safe.

It is considered best practice for all organisations working with children to have a child protection policy in place.

A child protection or safeguarding policy sets out:

- what the organisation wishes to say about keeping children safe
- why the organisation is taking these steps
- how, in broad terms, the organisation is going to meet this responsibility
- who it applies and relates to (for example all staff and volunteers, children up to 18 years old)
- how the organisation will put the policy into action and how it links to other relevant policies and procedures, for example taking **photographs and videos**, internet use, and recruitment.

It should be no longer than one or two sides of A4 paper.

The policy should also:

- identify the organisation or group, its purpose and function
- recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy.

Organisations should also have an **action plan** that states how it will ensure that everyone, including children, is aware of and understands the child protection policy. This needs to

explain how people will be told about the safeguards, including disabled people and people who use different languages.

Writing a child protection policy

When writing a child protection policy, it is useful to think about the ways that people in an organisation or group might raise a concern. For example, situations when:

- a child may disclose something that has upset or harmed them
- someone else might report something that a child has told them, or that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed
- a child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation
- a child's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- the behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child may cause concern
- a child demonstrates worrying behaviour towards other children.

Other tips to bear in mind:

- a child protection policy should be clearly written, using words and phrases that will mean the most to the group or community concerned
 - the child protection policy should be relevant and accessible, involve people from different parts of the organisation (e.g. in a youth club this might include a youth leader, a management committee member, a parent/carer and a young person)
 - your organisation's child protection policies and procedures must be tailored to your organisation. If you are using an existing template, adapt where necessary to ensure it is applicable.
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Child protection procedures

Your organisation will also need clear procedures about what to do when there is a concern about a child. These should include:

- keeping a clear, written record of any concern identified - a sample incident form is available from the [Safe Network website](#) (you may need to create an account and log in to view this free resource)
- reporting any concerns to a line manager, or the designated member of staff who is responsible for safeguarding, who will then decide what (if any) further action is required
- guidelines about how and whether to discuss the concern with the child and/or family.

Subsequent action may involve either contacting children's services, the police, or the [NSPCC](#) on **0808 800 5000**.

A concern should be raised if any of the following circumstances have or are happening to a child:

- [physical abuse](#)
- [emotional abuse](#)
- [neglect](#)
- [sexual abuse](#)

Bear in mind that a child may be suffering from more than one type of abuse.

A sample set of procedures can be found on the [Safe Network](#) website (you may need to create an account and log in to view this free resource).

If the situation is an emergency, you must dial 999. The police have the power to intervene if a child is in immediate danger.

Practical advice and information

The [Safe Network](#) website has a useful section with information on the various stages of writing and implementing a child protection policy.

- [What is safeguarding and why does it matter to my organisation? Explains what constitutes child abuse, and the relevant legislation.](#)
- [Policies and procedures. Covers what needs to be considered when planning an organisation's child protection policies and procedures.](#)
- [Help with writing child protection policies and procedures. Sets out a step by step guide to writing a child protection policy.](#) Includes what to think about before starting to write; what the policy needs to contain (including a sample child protection policy statement); and writing an implementation plan.

The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit has a [sample child protection policy for sporting organisations](#).

Umbrella organisations should have child protection policies and procedures that can be followed.

The NSPCC's child protection policy

The NSPCC works with children and families in a wide range of different ways.

We have individual child protection and safeguarding policies that are specific to the different activities that we undertake (for example: therapeutic services for abused children; working with substance abusing parents; awareness raising in schools; fundraising activities; concerns reported to our helpline).

We do not have a single policy available for other organisations to view.

Maintenance of records

Organisations must consider and develop clear guidelines for the retention, storage and destruction of their records where these relate to child welfare concerns or concerns about possible risk posed by employees (either paid or unpaid).

Can the NSPCC review our policy and procedures?

NSPCC Consultancy can help your organisation understand the effectiveness of your policies and procedures, identify your safeguarding needs or audit your practice. The NSPCC offers tailored services designed around best practice and consistent with UK legislation and guidelines. **Please contact us** to find out how we can help you.

Further reading

If you would like more resources and information you can [search our catalogue online](#) or contact the [NSPCC's information service](#) who can provide you with a bespoke list.

General reading

Practice guidance for safeguarding children in minority ethnic culture and faith (often socially excluded) communities, groups and families (PDF).

London Safeguarding Children Board, 2011

Guidance to assist insight and effective action to protect and promote the welfare of children living in circumstances that appear complex because their faith, culture, nationality and possibly recent history differs significantly from that of host nation children and families.

Aimed at professionals who have contact with children living in families from minority ethnic groups and communities.

London child protection procedures (PDF). 4th ed

London Safeguarding Children Board, 2010

Updated edition of the London child protection procedures for those working with children or families in statutory or voluntary agencies, and community or faith groups in London. Sets out the roles and responsibilities of agencies and individuals and how they should work together to safeguard children. Covers: sharing information; recognition and response; children in specific circumstances (covering a range of circumstances such as disabled children or children with harmful behaviour); referral and assessment; child protection enquiries, conferences and plans; working with uncooperative families or mobile families; the unexpected death of a child; risk management of offenders; allegations against staff; safer recruitment, supervision and training; and serious case reviews. Includes appendices of forms, frameworks and other documents.

National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2010 (PDF).

Scottish Government, Edinburgh, 2010

Guidance for all services, agencies, professional bodies, organisations and individuals working within an adult and child service context who face, or could face, child protection issues. Provides a national framework for understanding and agreeing processes for working together to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Sets out expectations for strategic planning of services and highlights key responsibilities for services and organisations.

Positively safe: a practical guide to safeguarding (PDF).

Children England, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Safe Network Children England, 2009

Guidance for organisations to ensure they are appropriately safeguarding children. Chapters cover: how to assess and manage risk; including children and young people in the safeguarding process; recruitment, supervision and training for staff and volunteers; code of conduct for workers, parents, children and young people; protecting children from abuse and neglect; handling whistleblowing and complaints; ensuring equal opportunities; and writing a safeguarding policy statement.

Sport and leisure organisations

Sport unlimited safeguarding support toolkit.

NSPCC. Child Protection in Sport Unit, Leicester, 2013

Toolkit to help ensure that all children and young people engaged in Sport Unlimited activities are effectively safeguarded. Provides background information on safeguarding and introduces the mandatory safeguarding standards, in addition to examples of child protection policies, procedures and good practice guidance. The toolkit is continually updated to respond to the needs of users, who are encouraged to submit examples of best practice.

Schools, pre-school and education

The child protection and safeguarding handbook for schools: a comprehensive guide to policy and practice. 2nd ed.

Ann Raymond

Optimus Education, 2013

A comprehensive guide for head teachers, designated senior persons and all school staff to ensure their school meets statutory requirements, to reflect on their practice and to keep children safe. Covers: legislation and guidance, writing a child protection policy, how to deal with an emergency, recognising abuse, responding to disclosure, reporting welfare concerns, record keeping, confidentiality and information-sharing, referring to children's services, off the premises protection, setting up abuse prevention programmes, children with special needs (including sexually harmful behaviour), listening and talking to children, inspection and self-evaluation, training, allegations against staff, safer recruitment, inter-agency cooperation and working with parents and carers. Includes a CD-Rom with PDF and Word files of the complete book.

Safeguarding in schools: best practice (PDF).

Summary

Ofsted, 2011

Illustrates and evaluates safeguarding best practice in schools in England. Based on inspection evidence from the 19% of all maintained primary, secondary and special schools, residential special schools and pupil referral units inspected between September 2009 and July 2010 in which safeguarding was judged as outstanding. Also draws on a more detailed analysis and evaluation of safeguarding practice in a small sample of outstanding schools visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Medical practitioners and hospitals

Protecting children and young people: the responsibilities of all doctors (PDF).

General Medical Council (GMC), 2012

Guidance from the GMC aiming to help doctors to protect children and young people who are living with their families or living away from home, including those being looked after by a local authority. Covers identifying children and young people at risk of or suffering abuse or neglect; working in partnership; communication and support; confidentiality and information sharing; record keeping; giving evidence in court; child protection examinations; and training. Emphasises that all doctors must act on any concerns they have about the safety or welfare of a child or young person. Guidance comes into effect from 3 September 2012.

Safeguarding children and young people: a toolkit for general practice.

Training modules

Royal College of General Practitioners, London, 2011

A toolkit developed by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the NSPCC to ensure staff in general practices know what to do if they have concerns about the safety of a child. Provides templates of child protection policies, procedures and good practice codes. Discusses how to minimise barriers to the implementation of child protection procedures.

Outlines how to monitor and review safeguarding practices and work with other agencies. This updated edition was published in 2011. It should be read in conjunction with the training modules: 'Safeguarding Children and Young People in General Practice: Training Modules [2011]' which are designed for use in in-house staff training to enable practice staff to recognise when a child may be at risk of abuse, to know what to do if there are concerns, to ensure that as a practice, you work with other disciplines and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Child protection and the dental team: an introduction to safeguarding children in dental practice.

Jenny Harris, Peter Sidebotham, Richard Welbury, Raneer Townsend, Martyn Green, Janet Goodwin and Chris Franklin

Committee of Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors (COPDEND), 2013

An online child protection handbook for anyone working in dentistry. Discusses why it is essential to know about child protection, what signs to look out for in identifying children who have been abused, and child protection procedures to be followed if there are concerns about a child. Also looks at organising the dental practice, including writing a child protection policy. Includes resources to help dental teams and supporting documents such as flowcharts, letters and checklists.

Churches and religious organisations

The Church in Wales historic cases review 2009/2010.

Elaine Cloke Church in Wales, 2011

Report of the findings from an 18 month review of 1,381 clergy files, across the 6 dioceses in Wales, for allegations of child abuse. The review, undertaken by an independent officer from the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, referred five files to the Police and Social Services but following investigation, no further action was taken. The report makes 36 recommendations for improving the Church's safeguarding policies including: the appointment of a Provincial Safeguarding Officer to provide professional advice, support and training; updating CRB checks every three years instead of every five; and more training for clergy on child protection, including raising awareness of "grooming" and domestic violence

National Catholic Safeguarding Commission Annual Report 2010-2011.

National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC), 2011

Annual report of the Roman Catholic Church's National Catholic Safeguarding Commission, covering safeguarding during the Papal visit and updates on developments in safeguarding protocols and safeguarding policy within the Catholic Church, including recruitment, responding to survivors of abuse and the management of allegations of abuse. Includes appendix of statistics on all aspects of safeguarding in the Catholic Church, including findings that indicate 83 allegations of abuse against a child or young person were made in 2010 in England and Wales. 61% of these related to incidents from the 1970s or earlier.

Safeguarding children: guidance for madrasahs.

Federation of Muslim Organisations

Madrasah Project, 2010

Guidance on safeguarding children. Outlines what child abuse is, the responsibilities of the Madrasah Management Committee, the role of the designated person, the Honest Broker Scheme, effective recruitment and management of staff, handling complaints and tackling bullying. Loose leaf appendices include a sample: child protection statement; child protection policy; code of conduct; application form and reference letter; behaviour management policy; anti-bullying policy; health and safety policy; and fire safety policy.

Protecting all God's children: the child protection policy for the Church of England (PDF). 4th ed.

House of Bishops

Church House Publishing, 2010

The fourth edition of the House of Bishops' child protection policy, intended to ensure the protection of all children who have contact with the Church of England and its employees. Includes a statement of the general principles of the Church and sets out the responsibilities

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of the Church from the central structures to the dioceses and parishes. Provides guidance on responding to concerns about possible abuse, ministering to known offenders, and safe recruitment of those working with children.

Key facts: a summary of CCPAS' ten safeguarding standards for places of worship and other organisations (PDF).

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service, 2009

Summarises 10 safeguarding standards from 'Safe and Secure - The Manual', the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service's (CCPAS's) web-based guidance on safeguarding children in places of worship and other faith organisations. The standards cover: safeguarding policy, developing safeguarding awareness training, safe recruitment, management of workers, working safely, communicating effectively, responding to concerns, pastoral care, managing those who pose a risk and working in partnership.

Safeguarding children in the church (PDF).

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service, 2009

Summary of research findings regarding safeguarding children who attend churches in the UK. Discusses awareness of child protection issues, training of staff, attitudes towards physical punishment. Also highlights the need for staff to be aware of new safeguarding legislation, vetting and barring and the independent safeguarding authority. Contains advice for churches on how to ensure that they safeguard children effectively.

Contact the NSPCC Information Service with any questions about child protection or related topics:

Tel: 0808 800 5000 | Email: help@nspcc.org.uk | Twitter: [@NSPCCpro](https://twitter.com/NSPCCpro)