



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

SLEEP SCOTLAND and TEENS+

Introduction - Sleep Scotland/TEENS+ is committed to the protection of children and young people and regards the safeguarding and promoting of their interests and wellbeing as of paramount concern. Sleep Scotland/TEENS+ considers it the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children and young people with whom they work and with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the policy of each Local Authority for whom our Sleep Counsellors and TEENS+ staff work. This policy is based on those adopted by Local Authorities.

Who needs protection?

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

What is child abuse?

The general definition of child abuse adopted in Scottish Office guidance refers to circumstances where “a child or young person’s basic needs are not being met in a manner which is appropriate to his or her individual needs and stages of development and the child is, or will be, at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s) or a carer (i.e. the person(s), while not a parent, who has/have actual custody of, charge of, or control over a child).”

Additional information is contained in Appendix 1.

What to do if you think a child or young person is at risk of abuse

- Be supportive to the child or young person if appropriate. Listen with care but do not ask any unnecessary questions. Take what the child or young person is saying seriously and advise them you will have to pass the information on.
- Staff members must use their professional judgement when young people are disclosing abuse as to how much information that young person should disclose. However, this should always happen at the young person’s own pace.
- The young person should not be led in any way with regards to questioning and should be encouraged to clarify their statements whenever they seem ambiguous.

- Write down the nature of your concern and anything the child or young person may have told you using, so far as possible, the words used by the child or young person. Remember to sign and date the notes taken.

Procedures

Sleep Scotland

- Immediately report the grounds of your concern to the Director, as the named person who will take steps to pass the information on to the appropriate person or organisation that will investigate the concerns. **Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Where possible, advise the Director on the same day the concern arises.**
- If you are unhappy with the response from the named person you should contact the local Social Work Services Office and outline your concerns and the basis for them. (*see list of important contacts.*)
- As all cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously the named person should contact the local Social Work Services Office immediately. The concerns should be clearly stated including the basis for them. When the local office is closed the Emergency Social Work Service should be alerted. (*see list of important contacts*)
- If you are unhappy with the response from Social Work services you can contact the local Police Office or the Reporter to the Children's Panel and outline your concerns to them. (*see important contacts*)
- It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child or young person. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a child the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.
- The investigating Social Worker / Police Officer may require to speak to the person with whom the concerns originated. You are expected to co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

TEENS+

- When a TEENS+ staff member becomes aware that a child may be being abused, or that a person may be abusing a child or children, the staff member will consult with the Project Manager as soon as possible who should consult with a member of the Steering Group.
- The Project Manager will then attempt to contact the family social worker (where there is one), or the relevant Social Work Manager, or the Social Work Emergency Team, or the Senior Police Officer at the Family Protection Unit either at St Leonard's or Police Head Quarters. (*see list of important contacts*)
- All specialist workers are required to follow the procedures of TEENS+.
- When a volunteer or part-time youth worker within TEENS+ becomes aware that a young person may be being abused, or that a person may be abusing a young person or young persons, that worker shall consult with a paid member of staff as soon as possible and then the above guidelines must be followed.

- One member of staff should remain the TEENS+ link worker and should remain the person holding discussions around disclosure until otherwise agreed at either the Initial Referral Discussion, or at subsequent Case Conferences or Case Discussions.
- If the parent is present when a concern is raised they will usually be informed by the paid member of staff of the need to refer the matter to the Police and Department of Social Work.
- If the parent is not present when the concern is raised, the question of whether to inform them, when and by whom will be discussed at the Initial Referral Discussion. (This takes into account the fact that the alleged perpetrator could be a parent or family member.)

GENERAL

- **Confidentiality**
 - If a child or young person may be at risk of harm this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with the organisation have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. Children, young people and their parents will always be told this.
- **Recording Information**
 - Staff members should keep a full and detailed record of any allegations of child abuse.
 - All recordings should be signed and dated by the member of staff or volunteer concerned, using, whenever possible, the child's own words.
 - Within TEENS+ all concerns must be recorded on the "Record of Concern/Incident Report" form, dated and signed, and passed on to the Project Manager.
 - As TEENS+ staff will often have positive relationships with both young people and parents, it may be the case that staff are expected to take on long term pieces of work with either young people or their parents during and following the investigation of child protection issues. The nature of this work will form part of the Initial Referral Discussion and subsequent Case Conferences and Case Discussions.

Supporting the child or young person

- The child or young person is likely to continue to be involved with the organisation following the reporting of the concerns. Links should be maintained with the Social Work Area Services involved in any investigation in order to offer the appropriate support to the child/young person/family.
- It is important that employees and those involved with the child or young person act in a supportive manner. You should
 - Continue to listen with care
 - Reassure the child or you person he/she was right to tell, if appropriate.
 - Affirm the child or young person's feelings as expressed by them
 - Do not question/interrogate the child or young person

- Do not show disbelief
- Avoid being judgmental
- Do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse
- Avoid displaying strong emotions

What if it someone within the organisation that you are concerned about?

If you have observed a member of the organisation acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact Jane Ansell or the TEENS+ Project Manager outlining your concerns and the basis for them. The named person(s) will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve the use of the organisations disciplinary procedures and/or a referral to Social Work Services/ Police.

If the concerns involve the TEENS+ project manager this should be reported to the Director and if they involve the Director then it should be reported to the member of the Board, Sue Harland, or to Social Work Services/Police.

Allegations Against Staff

In the event of allegations or concerns being made regarding any staff member, paid or unpaid, then these shall be brought to the attention of either the Director of Sleep Scotland or the Project Manager of TEENS+ as soon as possible. These matters will then be fully investigated by the Director/Project Manager and brought to the attention of the Management Committee, who will follow the procedures as outlined in the Conditions of Service which apply to both staff and volunteers. The Police will then be contacted if the concerns warrant such action.

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Agency/Organisation	Contact Details
Social Work Services – Local Office	The Manager City of Edinburgh Council Social Work Centre Children & Families 11 Victoria Street Edinburgh EH1 2HE Tel: 0131 226 6731
Social Work Service – Out of Hours	Emergency Duty Team Shrubhill House Shrub Place Edinburgh EH7 4PA Tel: 0131 554 4301 / 0800 7316969
Lothian Police	Family Protection Unit Lothian & Borders Police 14 ST Leonard's Street Edinburgh EH8 9QW Tel: 0131 662 5000 Family Protection Unit Lothian & Borders Police Fettes Avenue Edinburgh EH4 1RB

Appendix 1

The lists below are by no means exhaustive but are designed to give employees and people involved with the organisation some guidance on how to recognise child abuse. Any information has to be seen in the context of the child or young person's whole situation and circumstances.

Different types of abuse may overlap or co-exist.

Physical Abuse

Defined as **"actual or attempted physical injury to a child, under the age of 16 where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented"**.

Possible signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries or delay in reporting them
- Excessive physical punishment
- Arms and legs kept covered even in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

Physical Neglect

Defined as occurring **"when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothes, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care results in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child."**

Signs of possible physical neglect

- Constant hunger or inappropriate/ erratic eating patterns
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Failure to seek appropriate/necessary medical attention
- Unhygienic home conditions

Non-Organic Failure to Thrive

Defined as **"children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight, motor skills, organic reasons must have been**

medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established."

Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive

- Significant lack of growth
- Weight loss
- Hair loss
- Poor skin or muscle tone
- Circulatory disorders
- Lethargy

Emotional Abuse

Defined as **"failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child"**.

Possible signs of emotional abuse

- Low self esteem
- Continual self deprecation
- Sudden speech disorder/ refusal to speak
- Fear of carers
- Severe hostility/ aggression towards other children
- Significant decline in concentration span
- Self harm

Sexual Abuse

Defined as **"any child below the age of 16 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect exploits the child, directly or indirectly, with any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks."**

Possible signs of sexual abuse

- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Complaints of genital itching or pain
- Self harm
- Eating disorders
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Acting in sexually explicit manner
- Anxiety/ depression/ withdrawn
- Fear of undressing e.g. for physical exercise
- Low self esteem
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Running away
- Developmental regression
- Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults