



## Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures

### CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION - POLICY STATEMENT

**Starpic Project** is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them.

**Starpic Project** has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore we will endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

**Starpic Project** will:

1. Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation
2. Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of all workers (paid staff and volunteers)
3. Provide opportunities for all newly appointed workers (paid and unpaid) through the provision of induction training, which gives an overview of the organisation's purpose, values, structure and services
4. Ensure that all workers understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in the organisations Code of Conduct and Child Protection procedures
5. Ensure that all workers understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a workers conduct towards a child/young person/vulnerable adult, to the organisation's designated person for child protection
6. Ensure that all procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
7. Ensure that the designated child protection officer understands their responsibility to refer any child/vulnerable adult, concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. police and/or social work)
8. Ensure that the organisation meets all its responsibilities in adhering to the requirements of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Act 2007
9. Provide opportunities for all workers (paid and unpaid) to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
10. Ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's complaints procedures
11. Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults



## **CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Section 1 - Introduction**

**Starpic Project** is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. This Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults are managed. Starpic Project training coordinator is responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy statement and other care and protection policies and guidelines. However, all workers (paid or unpaid) for **Starpic Project** are required to implement these protection procedures.

Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that "it shall be the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare". This places on **Starpic Project** a Duty of Care for the children, young people, vulnerable adults and service users we work with. **Starpic Project** also recognises that all children, young people, vulnerable adults and service users have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. **Starpic Project** will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all in its care. **Starpic Project** understanding of abuse can be found in **Appendix 2**.

**Starpic Project** has a commitment to children's and vulnerable adult rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them.

### **Section 2 - Recruitment**

**Starpic Project** recognizes that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as volunteers or staff of **Starpic Project**:

- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form
- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self declaration form
- All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references
- All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview
- A self declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation
- All successful applicants appointed into a 'regulated work' position, as defined by the PVG Act, will be required to become members of the PVG Scheme or, if already a member, provide their PVG Scheme Record and permit access to a PVG Scheme Record Update
- Any applicant found to be fully listed on the Children's List will not be appointed to a regulated work (paid or unpaid) position.



### **Section 3 - Training**

All newly appointed staff and volunteers at **Starpic Project** will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child, and vulnerable adult Protection. All training will be refreshed and updated every 24 months. This will include:

- Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child and and vulnerable adult protection within the organisation
- Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided
- An assessment of staffs (**paid and unpaid**) training and development requirements will be completed
- The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified
- Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided
- All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and Procedures
- Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided
- The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Safeguarding Officer will be provided

### **Section 4 - Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse**

Members of staff (**paid and unpaid**) have a duty to report any suspicions, allegations or disclosures to the **safeguarding officer**. However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and their protection from any potential risk. During the reporting process the person should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

As a worker or volunteer your role in child protection is not to investigate or decide if abuse has taken place. You are protected from legal action if reporting a genuine protection concern. Even if the report turns out to be wrong, if it is made in good faith (*i.e. it is not malicious*) the person providing it is protected.

Your role is to observe, record and report. The following steps should be followed in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse:



## Are you concerned about the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult?

### For example if:

- A child/young person, vulnerable adult has alleged that they are being abused
- You see or suspect abuse
- The organisation has received a third party report that a person is being abused/neglected
- There are signs and indicators which could point to abuse/neglect

## ACT IMMEDIATELY

Discuss your concerns with one of the **safeguarding officers** as soon as possible, if the allegation is about **one of them** contact **the other**. If the safeguarding office is uncontactable you should contact the social work or police (number at the bottom of this page)

These steps should be taken as soon as possible.

### Discussions should focus on:

Nature of concerns; Risks to the child or young person or vulnerable adult; Action and next steps to be taken

### In following the procedures below please bear in mind:

**DO NOT INVESTIGATE** - Staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation any further or interview the child, young person or vulnerable adult regarding the situation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY** - Details of suspicion, allegations or disclosures should only be passed on to the **safeguarding officer** If responding to an allegation from a young person you must not promise to keep the information they disclose confidential.

## RECORD INFORMATION

Detailed written records should be made of all events and what the young person or other individuals have said (where this applies). A form is supplied in **Appendix 1** to help structure this. It can also be used to inform Social Work/Police of the events that have occurred. Above and beyond the facts, any opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented can be recorded but it should be clear they are opinions, rather than facts.

Records should be signed and stored in a secure place.

## SEEK ADVICE and REFER TO APPROPRIATE AGENCY

The **safeguarding officer** should contact the Social Work Department and/or the Police and ask to speak to the Duty Officer about a child protection issue. If the report is received during an evening then the Social Work department Emergency Duty team and/or the Police should be contacted.

Any further action should only be taken in line with the advice given by the Social Work Department. This includes whether the parent or carer of the young person should be informed of the protection concerns. The child, young person or vulnerable adult **MUST** not be permitted to leave and return to any dangerous situation.

Children and Families Social Work on **0131 200 2326** or **Emergency Childcare Services 0800 731 6969**



Where an allegation is made against a **Starpic Project** worker (paid or unpaid), the above process still applies. A referral will be made to Disclosure Scotland if an individual harms a child or vulnerable adult or puts them at risk of harm and as a result of this, we take the decision to remove them or they leave of their own accord, come to the end of a contract, retire or have been made redundant. The form for referral to Disclosure Scotland is available on the Government website [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

## **Section 5 - Responding when a child or young person discloses abuse**

It is likely that a child, young person or vulnerable adult who has been abused will have given a lot of thought as to whether they should disclose the abuse. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that staff and volunteers follow the steps outlined below:

### **Stay Calm**

Remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are trusted, not because you are an expert counsellor. Do not promise to keep the information secret; you may have to inform an appropriate person. You must take any disclosure seriously and reassure the young person that you believe them.

### **Listen and take the allegation seriously**

Listen to what the person is saying. Give them the time and opportunity to tell you as much as they are able and willing to. Do not pressurise them and allow them to disclose information at their own pace. You should not investigate, ask leading questions or ask specific or explicit questions. You should only clarify what they are willing to tell you in their own words. Try to do this in an appropriate place, such as a room where other people can see in through an open door or window. Whilst it's important to respect the person's privacy it should not be at the expense of other child protection measures.

### **Reassure**

Reassure them that you believe what they are saying and that you know it is not their fault. You should also give them some indication of what you will do next with the information that they have given you.

### **Confidentiality**

Reiterate that you cannot promise to keep the information secret. You must take any disclosure seriously. Details of the disclosure should only be passed to the **safeguarding officer**, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities.

Wherever possible you should try not to discuss any concerns that you have about a child young person or vulnerable adult in a way that may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.



**Record**

If you are able to, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to the person why you are doing it. If it's not possible to do so at the time, record the details as soon as possible after the disclosure with as many facts as possible (dates, times, actual words used).

**Look after yourself**

Being trusted with a disclosure of abuse directly from a person can be emotionally draining, worrying and very stressful. Whilst it's essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times, it's important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with the **safeguarding officer**. If appropriate the **safeguarding officer** will arrange additional support for you.

**Section 6 - Protection of Workers** who report care and protection concerns

Deciding to report a colleague or volunteer you suspect of abusing or otherwise harming a child or vulnerable adult can be stressful and difficult and you may be worried about the person concerned taking action against you. The law does give you protection if you raise concerns or report a colleague as long as the report was not malicious or vexatious.

**Section 7 - Data Protection** and management of confidential information

**Starpic Project** is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is kept locked and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is kept and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

**Starpic Project** is also committed to the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults to confidentiality and this will be respected by all workers. However, where a worker feels that the information disclosed by a child, young people or vulnerable adult should be referred to their line manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the person should be told that confidentiality cannot be kept.

**Section 8 - Review** of Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult policy and procedures

This policy and procedures document will be reviewed annually by the **safeguarding officer and company directors**. all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

On behalf of: **Starpic Project**

Name: (print)	<b>Chris Cooney</b> <i>(Executive Director)</i>	Name: (sign)	<i>C.Cooney</i>	Date:	<b>24 / 07 / 2024</b>
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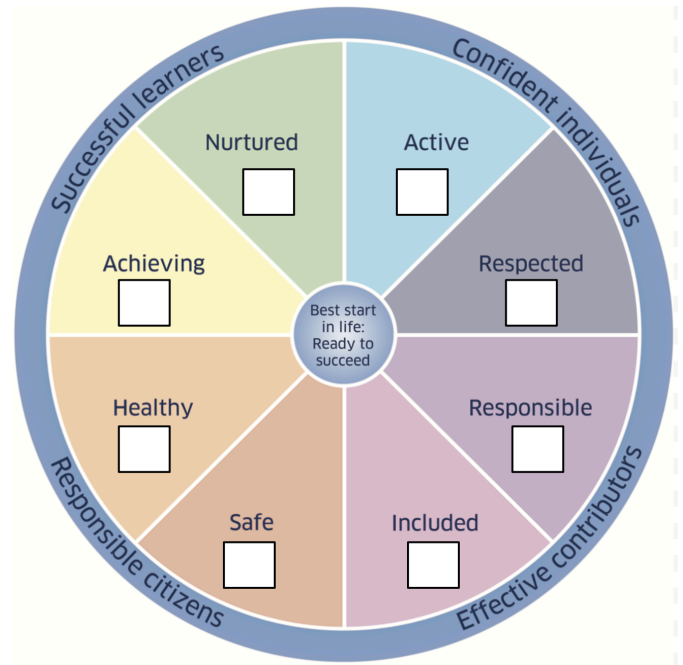
**APPENDIX 1**

**Child Welfare Report Form**

- A report should be made by the person who has had the initial concerns about a persons welfare using this form
- The report should be handed to the **safeguarding Officer** in a sealed envelope

**The Safeguarding Officer** should contact the appropriate Social Work Dept / Police

<b>PERSONS DETAILS</b>	
NAME:	
D.O.B:	
<b>PERSON RECORDING DETAILS</b>	
NAME:	
AGENCY:	
<b>AREA OF CONCERN(S)</b>	
Tick the relevant box(es) on the <b>'Wellbeing Wheel'</b> or use these headings to record the detail below Safe ▾ Healthy ▾ Achieving ▾ Nurtured ▾ Active ▾ Respected ▾ Responsible ▾ Included ▾	



**DESCRIPTION OF CONCERN(S)**

If appropriate include strategies to address the issue and /or any actions taken. Please also summarise any previous concerns.

<b>SIGNATURE:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> ____ / ____ / ____
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It does not have to be the recorder that discusses the concern(s) with the parent or carer but agreement should be reached about who is the most appropriate person within the agency to do this and the parent or carer's views recorded here.

HAS THE CONCERN(S) BEEN SHARED WITH THE **PARENT/CARER?** Yes/No **SELECT** ▾

What is the parent/Carer saying about the concern(s)

HAS THE CONCERN(S) BEEN SHARED WITH THE **PERSON?** Yes/No **SELECT** ▾

What is the young person / vulnerable adult saying about the concern(s)

**ONLY COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF RELEVANT TO AGENCY STRUCTURE**

HAS THE CONCERN(S) BEEN SHARED WITH ANYONE ELSE? Yes/No **SELECT** ▾

If 'YES' please specify	
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Comments / Action:

**THIS SECTION MUST ALWAYS BE COMPLETED BY THE NAMED PERSON**

(or person acting on their behalf)

ACTION BEING TAKEN IN RELATION TO THIS WELLBEING CONCERN?

**SELECT** ▾

Continue to monitor    Initiate Protection Procedures    Carry out Assessment of Need

Discuss with Lead Professional (if allocated)

Comments / Action:

FEEDBACK GIVEN TO **REFERRER?** Yes/No **SELECT** ▾    DATE: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Date:</b> ___ / ___ / ___
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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Starpic Project - Understanding of Abuse**

Abuse to children or vulnerable adult is described under the following headings:

#### **Neglect**

The persistent or severe neglect of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, whether wilful or unintentional, which results in serious impairment to physical health and development. For example:

- exposing a child/person to extreme weather conditions e.g. heat and cold.
- failing to seek medical attention for injuries.
- exposing a child/person to risk of injury through the use of unsafe equipment.
- exposing a child/person to a hazardous environment without a proper risk assessment of the activity.
- failing to provide adequate nutrition and water.

#### **Signs which may raise concerns about physical neglect include:**

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene and/or poor state of clothing
- constant tiredness
- frequent lateness or unexplained non-attendance (particularly at school)
- untreated medical problems
- low self-esteem
- poor peer relationships
- stealing

#### **Physical Injury**

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, young person or vulnerable adult where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. For example: Deliberately hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise harming a child.

#### **Signs which may raise concerns about physical abuse include:**

- refusal to discuss injuries aggression towards others
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- running away
- untreated injuries
- excessive physical punishment
- avoiding activities due to injuries or possibility of injuries being discovered
- unexplained injuries, particularly if recurrent



### **Emotional Abuse**

The adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, caused by failure to provide for their basic emotional needs. For example:

- Persistent failure to show any respect to a child (e.g. continually ignoring a child)
- Constantly humiliating a child by telling them they are useless.
- Continually being aggressive towards a child, making them feel frightened.
- Acting in a way which is detrimental to the child's self-esteem (e.g name calling, sarcasm, constant criticism)

### **Signs which may raise concerns about emotional abuse include:**

- low self-esteem
- significant decline in concentration
- running away
- indiscriminate friendliness and neediness
- extremes of passivity or aggression
- self-harm or mutilation

### **Sexual Abuse**

Any child or young person below the age of 18 or vulnerable adult may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person, by design or neglect, exploits the child, young person or vulnerable adult directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person including organised networks. This includes forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, and non-contact acts such as forcing children or vulnerable adults to look at or be involved in the production of pornographic material, to watch sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. For example:

- exposure to sexually explicit inappropriate language or jokes.
- showing pornographic material or using a child or vulnerable adult to produce such material.
- inappropriate touching.

### **The following signs may raise concerns about sexual abuse:**

- lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults, fear of a particular adult
- social isolation - being withdrawn or introverted, poor peer relationship
- sleep disturbance (nightmares, bedwetting, fear of sleeping alone)
- running away from home
- drug, alcohol or solvent abuse
- display of sexual knowledge beyond the child's age

### **Other abusive behaviour towards children, young people and vulnerable adult**

Staff, volunteers, service users, committee members, directors and trustees should also be aware of other, perhaps less obvious, forms of abuse. These may be dismissed by perpetrators as 'just fun' or 'having a laugh' with young people but can have a serious impact and cannot be allowed or go unchallenged:

- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism if any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures