

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Child Protection Policy



SOUTH LANARKSHIRE
Leisure & Culture

www.slleisureandculture.co.uk

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1. Introduction

Vision

The shared vision for Child Protection in Lanarkshire is that;

All children and young people in Lanarkshire have the right to be cared for and protected from abuse and harm in a safe environment in which their rights are respected. All agencies will work together in a collaborative way to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Lanarkshire.

Supporting this vision South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture will promote activities where children and young people are able to participate in sport, physical activity, art and cultural activities and play in an environment where they are safe, included, nurtured and respected. They should be able to maximise their full potential through access to good quality health, education and leisure and cultural services.

The key principles, which underpin this policy, are:

- Anyone under the age of 18 should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.
- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All children whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff working with children have knowledge of best practice and appropriate conduct in their work with children.

The guidelines are procedural and should not therefore be deviated from, unless to do otherwise would jeopardise the safety and welfare of the child.



2. What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults, and often by people they know and trust (*Please note however that children can abuse other children and that coaches/instructors should be diligent in eradicating bullying, name calling etc). The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010 defines child abuse as:

Physical

Emotional

Sexual

Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

In the leisure and culture context physical abuse might also be deemed to occur if the nature and intensity of training or activity disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body, or predisposes the child to injury resulting from fatigue or overuse.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age – or developmentally – inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child: it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

In the leisure and culture context emotional abuse might also be deemed to occur where a child is placed under unrealistic pressure or bullied to perform to high expectations. Repeated failure to ignore or respond to a child's effort or progress would also constitute emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative 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 in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

2. What is Child Abuse? continued.

Neglect

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from 'non-organic failure to thrive', where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

In the leisure and culture context neglect might be deemed to occur if an adult has not ensured the safety of a child or has allowed play whilst exposing a child to undue cold.



3. Recognising Abuse

Dealing with child abuse is rarely straightforward. Even for those experienced in working with child abuse it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture staff are not experts at such recognition. As such any concerns with respect to the welfare of a child should be discussed immediately with the most senior person available (see section 4).

It is not the responsibility of staff to decide that child abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to follow through on any concerns.

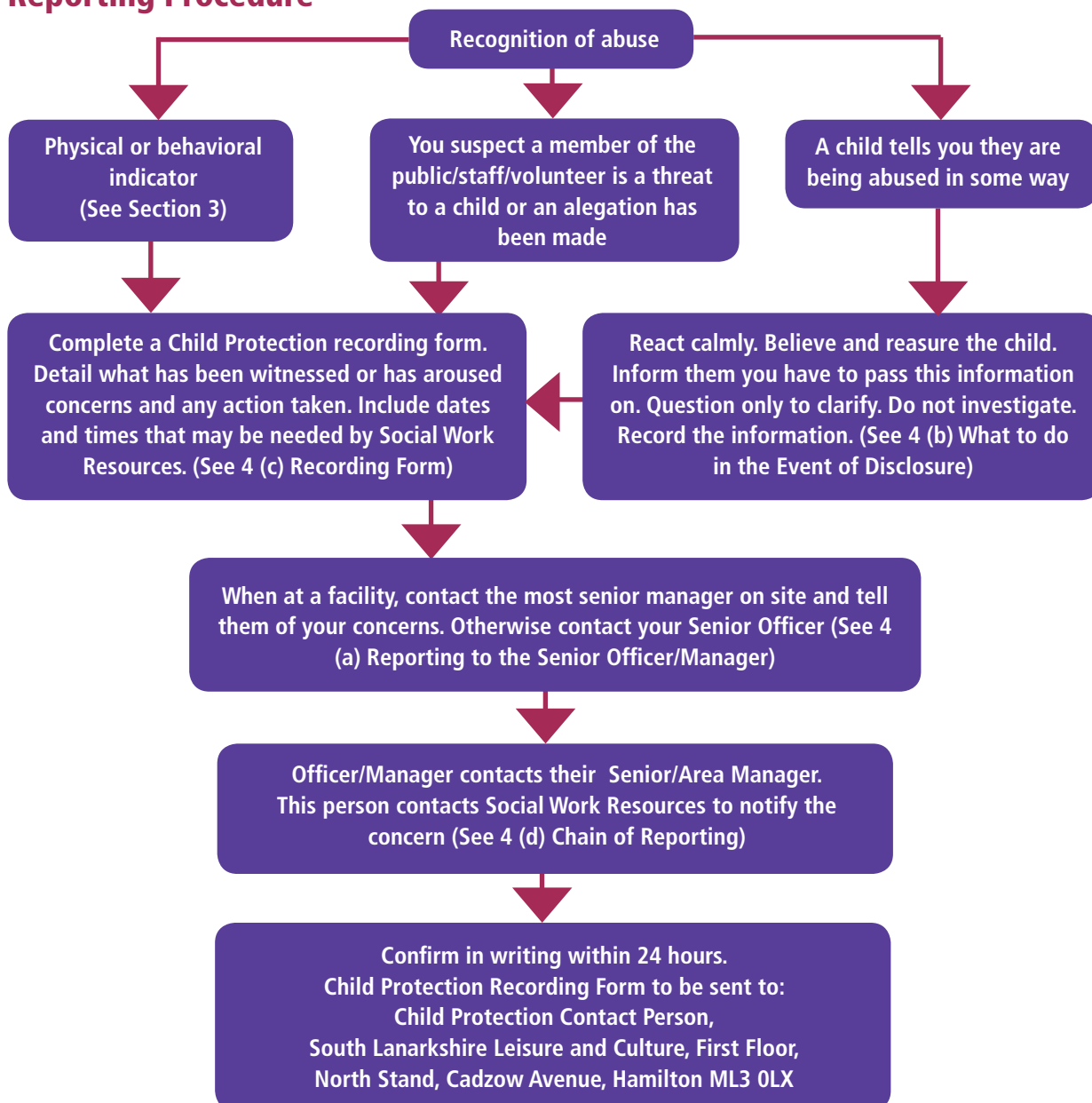
The following list, although not exhaustive highlights indicators of abuse. The presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place, but awareness is important.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes an abusive act involving him/her. Someone else expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained/uncharacteristic changes in behaviour e.g. becoming quiet and withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness and/or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Fear or distrust of particular adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- The child has difficulty making friends and is always alone and/or is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Overeating/loss of appetite, weight loss or gain for no apparent reason.
- The child becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt and/or is inappropriately dressed.
- Signs of discomfort and pain especially recurring abdominal pain.
- Nervousness or flinching when approached or touched.
- Reluctance to return home.

4. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Procedure

All staff who work and/or come into contact with children and their families have a role to play in child protection. As previously highlighted it is not the responsibility of those working within South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns. The decision to react to allegations of, or suspicions about, abuse can be a very difficult one. There is however a responsibility to protect the child in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take the necessary action. Do not be afraid to report your concerns, remember you may not be the only one to have them. You can also be reassured that all referrals are discussed thoroughly by the statutory agencies prior to any action being taken. Your concerns will be genuine and treated as such by them.

Reporting Procedure



4. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Procedure continued.

4 (a) Reporting to the Senior Officer/Manager

- Any concerns that a child has been abused by either a member of the public, or staff or a volunteer should be reported to the most senior person on site. This person shall take steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- When working in another area e.g. school facility/village hall/non-supervised outdoor facility, the first point of contact is the SLLC Officer in charge of the programme.
- If this person is not available the report must be made to this person's Line Manager.
- This officer shall then contact their Senior/Area Manager (listed in section 5 under SLLC contact numbers) who shall report this to Social Work.

For Development teams, report to the Senior Development Officer, for Facility Managers report to the appropriate Senior/Area Manager etc.

Please note that if the most senior person is the subject of the allegation:

- The report must be made to the Child Protection Contact Person in South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture who is the Sport and Physical Activity, Area Manager (Central/South) .
- If the Child Protection Contact Person is unavailable then direct contact must be made with the Local Social Work Office (of where the child lives) or, if out of hours, the Emergency Social Work Team (see section 5 - South Lanarkshire Contact Numbers).

4 (b) What to do in the Event of Disclosure

If a child says or indicates that they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused the person receiving this information should:

- Stay calm and do not rush into any inappropriate action.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that they have done the right thing by telling.
- Listen to what the child has to say and show them that you take them seriously.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum, this could be critical to any legal process that might ensue later on. The child should be allowed to speak freely without any undue interruption or questioning, but a clear account should be ensured.
- Reassure the child of discretion but do not make promises of confidentiality, which might not be feasible in light of subsequent developments.

4. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Procedure continued.

- Make a full written record of what was said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible. This should include:
 - Name, address, age and telephone number of child
 - The nature of the allegation or concern
 - A description of any visible bruising or injuries
 - The child's account, if he/she can give one, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
 - Any times, date or relevant information
 - A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
 - The South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Worker's name and status/title reporting the claim
 - Name and status/title of whom the worker reported the claims to.

4 (c) Recording Form

A full record of what was said, heard and/or seen should be recorded on the Child Protection Recording Form for South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Ltd. These are available on site at Facilities, from the Child Protection Contact Officer or the Coach and Volunteer Development Co-ordinator. Forms are also available on the I drive and Q Pulse.

4 (d) Chain of Reporting

- The Senior/Area Manager shall refer the allegation to the Social Work Resources in the area where the child lives (see section 5 - South Lanarkshire contact numbers).
- Social Work Resources may involve the Police. This will result in a Social Work inquiry and a separate Police inquiry running in parallel to investigate any allegations. Every assistance should be given to the investigating Police Officers.
- The parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from Social Work Resources.

NB. Where the allegation is made against a paid or unpaid coach/instructor or tutor the most senior person must, following advice from Social Work Resources, notify the appropriate National Governing Body Senior Officer.

5. South Lanarkshire Contact Numbers

The first point of contact for all staff is the most Senior Officer in the facility they are working or the Development Officer in charge of the programme. However, if you require further information or advice, help is available from a number of agencies including Social Work and the local Police. The telephone numbers are as follows:

South Lanarkshire Council, Social Work Resources/Police Contact Numbers

Local Social Work Offices	0303 123 1008
Emergency Social Work Service (out of hours only)	0800 678 3282
Strathclyde Police (Family Protection Unit)	01698 202538

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Senior/Area Manager Contact Numbers

Sport and Physical Activity

Area Manager (Central/South) (Child Protection Contact)	01698 456365
Area Manager (South)	01555 666800
Area Manager (North)	01355 245309
Development Services Manager	01698 476193
Coach and Volunteer Development Coordinator	01698 476123

Country Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation Manager	01698 424101
Outdoor Learning and Development Manager	01698 307095
Countryside and Heritage Manager	01698 426213

Cultural Services

Venue Manager (Cambuslang and Rutherglen)	0141 613 5700
Venue Manager (Clydesdale)	01555 770308
Venue Manager (East Kilbride)	01355 261000
Venue Manager (Hamilton)	01698 452130

Libraries and Museums

Libraries Co-ordinator	01698 452149
Information Services Co-ordinator	01698 452220
Service Development Co-ordinator	01355 248581
Museums Manager	01698 328405

6. Good Practice for South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Staff

To ensure that all forms of abuse are prevented within the sports and culture context and to also help protect the staff who work with the children in this context, situations where abuse may occur can be minimised by:

- Always being publicly open when working with children. Avoid situations where you and a child are completely unobserved.
- Where possible, parents should take responsibility for their own children in changing rooms. If groups are to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure that adults work in pairs.
- Male and female staff should supervise mixed activities, where possible.

Those working with children should never:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, even if it is considered horseplay.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow a child to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Allow allegations by a child to go unreported, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.

If a member of Leisure and Culture staff accidentally hurts or distresses a child in any way or a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done it should be reported as soon as possible to the most senior person available and a brief note made. Parents or carers should also be informed of the incident as soon as possible.

7. Employment of Casual Coaches/Instructors, Tutors, Self-Employed and Voluntary Staff

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults. It is essential that the appropriate procedures are used consistently whether staff are paid, unpaid, in part time or full-time employment, permanent, casual or self-employed. For a copy of the recruitment procedures for staff, please contact the Human Resources section of South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Ltd, tel: 01698 476185.

Disclosure Scotland Check

Staff working within SLLC programmes and facilities that have regular contact with children less than 18 years of age may be subject to checks through the Disclosure Scotland PVG scheme. Candidates considered for appointment will be required to consent and pay for a criminal records check provided through Disclosure Scotland.

Induction Procedure

Each new member of staff, coach/volunteer, instructor or tutor shall receive an induction session prior to commencing their role within South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture's programmes and facilities. The following information shall be included in the induction meeting - health & safety, Child Protection Policy, administration, payment details and HR Induction.



8. Where can I get more information?

- Children 1st is one of Scotland's leading child welfare charities whose vision is a happy, healthy, safe and secure childhood for children in Scotland.
www.children1st.org.uk
Tel: 0141 418 5670
- **sportscotland** is the national agency for sport in Scotland who work closely with Children 1st to promote good practice in safeguarding children in sport.
www.sportscotland.org.uk
Tel: 0141 534 6500
- Creative Scotland in a joint venture with Children in Scotland promote Creating Safety (2011) which is a child protection guide for the creative community in Scotland.
www.childreninscotland.org.uk/creatingsafety
Tel: 03303 332000
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications





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For more information or if you would like this information in a different format or language, please telephone 01698 476202, text phone 18001 01698 476202 or e-mail maggi.archibald@southlanarkshireleisure.co.uk



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