

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Procedures

Introduction

These procedures are based on guidance provided by the NSPCC and have been designed to ensure that the welfare and protection of any child, young person or vulnerable adult who attend Furness Music Centre or any event organised by it. The procedures recognise that the protection of children, young persons or vulnerable adults can be a very difficult subject for trustees, tutors and volunteers to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with.

Furness Music Centre believes that protecting children, young persons or vulnerable adults is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all trustees, tutors and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

We believe passionately that music can make a difference. In an orchestra or choir your age and physical capabilities make no difference – all that matters is the sound you all make together. Whether you are 'of independent means' or rely on state benefits makes absolutely no difference to the sound you can make on an orchestral instrument. Furness Music Centre welcomes all ages, all abilities and all backgrounds, regardless of their ability to pay.

Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Furness Music Centre will ensure that all trustees, tutors and volunteers have a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. A basic level of definition and guidance is provided in Appendix 1 and 2.

Action shall be taken in accordance with this procedure if:

- a child or young person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe;
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received;
- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
- a child or young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;
- a report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a person towards a child or young person

Named Persons for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

Furness Music Centre has appointed 'Named Persons' who are responsible for dealing with any concerns relating to the protection of children, young persons and vulnerable adults. These are:

Fiona Roberts (Lead Practitioner)

Contact telephone numbers: Home: 01229 889282, Mobile: 07739 754315

Alan Threlfall

Contact telephone numbers: Home 01229 889562

A specific email address – ChildProtection@FurnessMusicCentre.com can also be used to report concerns. Emails to this address will be routed to Fiona Roberts

The trustees of Furness Music Centre will ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect.

The role and responsibilities of the named persons are to ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed. These records will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

Stages to Follow if you are Worried about a Child

Furness Music Centre recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of child abuse is never easy. However Furness Music Centre believes that the safety of the child should override any doubts or hesitations. When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance staff will:

Stage 1:

- Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay? But never use leading questions
- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously;
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure;
- Always explain to children, young people or vulnerable adults that any information they have given will have to be shared with others;
- Notify the organisation's Named Person for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection.
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure. The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the record and ensure it is signed and dated;
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely;

Stage 2:

- The Named person will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Named Person will contact the police and/or Cumbria County Council's Children's Services triage team on 01229 407894. If this office is closed, the Responsible Person will contact the Social Care Out of Hours team on 01228 526690.
- The named person can also seek advice and clarity about a situation that is beginning to raise concern through the NSPCC 24 hour National Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff or Volunteer

Furness Music Centre will ensure that any allegations made against members or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The individual receiving the allegation must ensure that that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made;
- The named person for child protection should be informed immediately.
- In the case of an allegation involving a named person, the person receiving the allegation should seek advice from the alternative named person or a trustee;
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social services.
- Regardless of whether a police and/or social services investigation follows, Furness Music Centre will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependant on the nature of the incident.

Review of this Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed and amended if necessary if primary legislation is amended or as a result of a change in guidance from NSPCC

Appendix 1 - Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

What is abuse?

The government guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, categorises abuse as:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect

These categories are expanded upon in the definitions below, which are largely taken from the NSPCC document, firstcheck, pp 33-34. Remember that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse and that it is possible to be subjected to abuse in more than one way at a time.

These four categorisations and the definitions below do not minimise other forms of maltreatment. The NSPCC notes that there are other sources of stress for children and families such as domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug or alcohol misuse. All these may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organisation caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is being damaged by any of these areas, the same procedures as for abuse should be followed.

Vulnerable adults may also be subject to other types of abuse as well as to the four types of abuse listed above. They may be manipulated financially or discriminated against because of a disability or other factor that makes them vulnerable. Further information is in the Department of Health and Home Office guidance on protecting vulnerable adults, No Secrets.

What is Physical Abuse?

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

What is Emotional Abuse?

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that person's emotional development. It may involve making the individual feel or believe that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may also involve causing the person to feel often frightened or in danger. It may involve exploitation or corruption.

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the

production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse of vulnerable adults can be rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person does not consent or cannot consent or is pressured into consenting. Sexual abuse may be same sex or opposite sex, may be by other children, young people or adults. People from all walks of life may be sexual abusers.

What is Neglect?

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the severe impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child, young person or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Some Useful Definitions

What is a 'child'?

In law a child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18. (Extensions of this exist for children who are disabled and for those in local authority care settings.)

What is a 'young person'?

There is no legal definition for this term. In this document, 'young person' refers to the upper age ranges of the official definition of a child. The term acknowledges that individuals, for instance, those who are 16 or 17 years old, may not think of themselves as 'children' and are often called 'young people' by youth workers.

What is a 'vulnerable adult'?

In law there is no standard definition of 'vulnerable adult'. Furness Music Centre has adopted the definition used by Arts Council England (taken from the 1997 consultation paper Who Decides? issued by the Lord Chancellor's department) - Vulnerable adults are people who are or may be in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

What is meant by 'sole charge'?

Sole charge means having unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. This might be for only a few minutes (for example, while the primary responsible person leaves a room to take a telephone call) or for more extended periods.

What does 'in loco parentis' mean?

In loco parentis (the Latin means 'in place of a parent') refers to a person who has been given explicit permission to assume parental responsibility for a child by his or her parents or legal guardian.

Acting in loco parentis should not be confused with having a duty of care. You have a duty of care towards the children, young people or vulnerable adults that you are working with, which means that you should ensure that they are kept safe whilst they are in your care, as you would for any visitor. Acting in loco parentis is about assuming parental responsibility, for example, agreeing to medical treatment in cases of emergency.

Why might disabled children be more vulnerable to abuse?

Some children, because of their mental or physical disability, find it more difficult to recognise and report abuse. Their disability may mean that:

- their life experiences are limited, creating difficulty recognising inappropriate behaviour
- they are afraid of challenging people, concerned that they will anger an authority figure or get into trouble
- communication difficulties make it hard to report abuse
- they may not be able physically to leave an abuse situation
- they are routinely examined or touched and therefore the abuse seems 'normal'
- their self-esteem and self-image are poor
- there might be no one to whom they can report abuse
- authority figures are unwilling to believe that anyone would abuse a disabled child

What is a 'carer'?

A carer is anyone with parental or other legal responsibility or who undertakes day-to-day care for a child up to the age of 18, a child over the age of 18 who is in a care setting, or a vulnerable adult.

What is a 'position of trust'?

Positions of trust are roles that involve working with children and other vulnerable groups. This would include situations where trustees, tutors or volunteers are working closely with children, young people or vulnerable adults. An adult member of staff or volunteer can have an enormous amount of power and influence over a child, young person or vulnerable adult involved in an activity or event. This is particularly the case when the adult is in some way responsible for the child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's success or failure. It is critical that trustees, tutors or volunteers recognise any such power and influence and ensure that they do not abuse their positions of trust (Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000).

Appendix 2 - Recognising abuse

What do I need to do if I am working with vulnerable adults?

Attending Furness Music Centre or an event organised by it may be a new experience for a vulnerable adult, placing them in unfamiliar surroundings. Trustees, tutors and volunteers should make every attempt to create an environment in which a vulnerable person feels comfortable and effective, physically, emotionally and intellectual

Trustees should ensure that the tutors and volunteers have been appropriately recruited and have enough training and experience to provide a safe and positive experience.

How far is it my responsibility to recognise abuse?

If you see something that concerns you, you have a responsibility to report your concerns to one of the named Persons (Named Persons for Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection, above). After that it is up to others to decide what is to be done.

What might be physical signs of abuse?

NSPCC notes that there are often bruises and small cuts on children or young people – typically on elbows, knees and shins – areas where accidents often occur. Bruises and cuts on areas such as cheeks or thighs may be cause for concern, as would bruises that are caused by hand marks or fingertips as the possible result of slapping or pinching. Other signs to be concerned about are cigarette burns, bite marks, broken bones, and scalds.

A child, young person or vulnerable adult who is being sexually abused may show physical signs such as stomach pains, discomfort in the genital or anal area as well as medical conditions that would probably be hard to spot in comparatively casual contact.

A child, young person or vulnerable adult suffering neglect might show signs of constant hunger, always being unclean, loss of weight or constant underweight or inappropriate dress for the weather.

Signs of emotional abuse might be a failure to thrive or grow, sudden speech disorders, or developmental delay either physically or emotionally.

If a child or young person is being abused, will they behave differently?

NSPCC notes the following changes in behaviour that can indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being asked for an explanation of an injury or behaviour;
- aggressive behaviour/temper tantrums;
- flinching when being approached or touched;
- reluctance to get changed or wearing long sleeves in hot weather;
- depression
- being withdrawn;
- running away from home.



Sexual abuse is most often spotted as a result of the individual's behaviour as opposed to physical symptoms. Behaviour that may indicate sexual abuse includes sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour (such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn), fear of being left with a specific person or group, nightmares, running away from home, sexual knowledge inappropriate to age or development level, sexual drawings or language, bedwetting, eating disorders, self-harm, talking of 'secrets', substance or drug abuse, having sudden and unexplained sources of money, not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence) or acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

Emotional abuse might show in neurotic behaviour (for instance, hair-twisting or rocking), inability to play, being frightened of making mistakes, self-harm or fear of the parent or carer being approached about their behaviour.

Behavioural signs of neglect may include complaining of being tired all the time, not requesting or making use of medical assistance, having few friends, mentioning that they have been left alone or unsupervised.