

Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policy

Designated child and vulnerable adult protection worker:
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Deveron Projects endeavors to involve children and vulnerable adults in creative activity as a means of inspiring people and increasing their confidence towards a stronger sense of self by adhering to the following:

The best interests of children and vulnerable adults will always be a primary consideration

- Those working with children and vulnerable adults will use appropriate behaviour at all times.

All children and vulnerable adults will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect

- Each child and vulnerable adult will be treated as an individual, their own particular experiences will be respected and their access requirements met wherever possible.
- Children and vulnerable adults will be helped to feel safe, comfortable and respected.
- Certain standards of behaviour will be expected from all adults involved in activities.

All children and vulnerable adults will be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation

- Adequate adult supervision will be provided.
- Deveron Projects will endeavour to ensure that any work targeted at children and protected adults is supervised in the form of a regulated individual or responsible adult, such as a teacher/carer or parent/guardian or supervisor chosen by the parent/guardian.
- All adults will be made aware of Health & Safety legislation, their first aider and first aid facilities.
- Health & Safety checks will be applied to the premises and activities.
- Children and vulnerable adults will be made aware of any Health & Safety risks.
- Artistic material deemed in any way unsuitable will be discussed within the team and all relevant parties.
- Care will be taken in the recruitment and supervision of all staff.
- Individuals will be assessed against Disclosure Scotland's regulated work guidelines. All individuals involved in regulated work with children and vulnerable adults will be Disclosure Scotland checked.
- A procedure for dealing with suspicions of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult is outlined below.

All children and vulnerable adults will have the right to express their views on matters that affect them

- Children and vulnerable adults will be informed of the procedures to follow if they wish to make a complaint.

Everyone will be made aware of procedures for discipline

- Physical punishments will never be used.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Child and vulnerable adult abuse recognition and guidance

Child and vulnerable adult abuse occurs when a person in a position of trust and/or authority misuses their power over a child or vulnerable adult and causes him or her emotional and/or physical harm. Deveron Projects' programme encourages children and vulnerable adults to express thoughts, feelings and emotions. It is possible that these types of activities will also allow for children and vulnerable adults to express personal things about themselves. This could be related to fears or concerns that they may have as well as including disclosures of abuse. This makes it even more important for adults working with children and vulnerable adults in the arts to be aware of abuse and how to respond to individuals who may be suffering from some harm.

Physical injury

Any deliberate act of physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult by the person having care or charge over them. This could also include a deliberate failure to protect an individual from physical danger.

Emotional abuse

Persistent and/or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child or vulnerable adult. This may include: degrading name-calling, intimidation by threats, complete absence of affection towards an individual or unrealistic demands for over achievement being placed on a child.

Neglect

Failure to provide care, or exposure of a child or vulnerable adult to danger that seriously affects his or her health and/or development. This could include starvation and prolonged exposure to cold.

Sexual abuse

Where children or vulnerable adults are forced or persuaded to participate in any form of sexual activity by another person. This may include activities that children or vulnerable adults do not fully understand and cannot give their consent to; and/or they have been coerced into participating against their will.

Non-organic failure to thrive

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight gain, intellectual development) and there is no reasonable medical or organic explanation for this.

Symptoms of child or vulnerable adult abuse

- Sudden withdrawal from others
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Fear of strangers
- Aggressive behaviour
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Lack of self-esteem
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age

- Self-injury
- Depression

Bear in mind that these do not conclusively mean that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, however they may indicate a reason for concern. If you are unsure, but suspect that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering harm, discuss it with your designated child protection and vulnerable adult worker, don't keep suspicions to yourself.

Remember it is not your role to determine whether abuse has taken place and you should always be cautious. The (Scotland) Children Act of 1995 (section 5) states that an adult (over 16 years of age) who has care or control of a child under the age of 16 has the responsibility to: "do what is reasonable in all circumstances to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare."

How you might learn of a child or vulnerable adult suffering from harm or being at risk of suffering from harm

- You may observe something about the individual that causes you concern, e.g. a suspicious bruise, inappropriate dress, concerns about personal hygiene.
- A child or vulnerable adult may tell you that someone has mistreated or is mistreating them in some way. This is known as a disclosure.
- Someone may tell you about another child or vulnerable adult that they are concerned about.

How to respond to a child or vulnerable adult who has told you they have been harmed or are being harmed

- Never promise a child or vulnerable adult that you will not tell anyone what he or she has told you. In concern for his or her well-being, you must pass this information on, but to as few people as possible.
- Your reaction should be neutral and non-judgmental. If a child or vulnerable adult is telling you about abuse they may have suffered, it is important that any reactions you may have are kept to a minimum and that you are calm, neutral and supportive.
- Do not press the child or vulnerable adult for further information or ask any leading questions. Allow the child or vulnerable adult to tell their story so you can establish how immediate any reaction should be.
- Keep in mind that the child or vulnerable adult may have been told not to tell anyone about this. Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you and that you and others are going to help them.
- As soon as possible after a child or vulnerable adult has told you their story you should write it down as they told it to you.
- Report the information to your designated child and vulnerable adult protection worker. It is this person's responsibility to pass the information on to the relevant authorities. In most cases, the report should be made to your local social work department.

If any member of staff is unsure of something relating to the wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult, they should consult the Deveron Projects designated child and vulnerable adult protection worker in the first instance to determine the most appropriate course of action. There may be a perfectly good reason why they may be acting out of the ordinary (e.g. a relative has passed away).

If a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation against a staff member or volunteer

Good practice in both recruitment and supervision of staff and volunteers should be designed in such a way to minimize the risk of child or vulnerable adult abuse, but in the event of an allegation being made against a staff member, it should be treated in the

same way as any other disclosure. These procedures are in place first and foremost to protect and promote the well being of children or vulnerable adults, but they also provide staff and volunteers with the assurance that there is a consistent and predictable response to allegations of child and vulnerable adult abuse.

Beyond Deveron Projects

Staff should also be aware that they can report concerns to institutions outside the organisation. Useful contacts in Huntly include:

-The Gordon Schools: 01466 405990

-Adult Protection Network (Aberdeenshire Council): 01467 533100

-Children & Families (Aberdeenshire Council): 01467 537111