

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland

Safeguarding and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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Introduction

Part 1 – Policy Statement

1.1 Policy statement relating to the care and protection of young people

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all young people and vulnerable adults. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect young people from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

We will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

1.2 Definitions

- Ocean Youth Trust Scotland will be referred to as ‘the Trust’ therein.
- The Trust uses the term ‘young person/people’ to refer to **age 12 to 25** unless otherwise stated. It covers all participants in the Trusts’ activities, crew and staff, in accordance with Scottish Government Definitions and Guidelines (2017).
- Child - the definition of a child in Scotland varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.
- Vulnerable adult - is an adult at risk of harm. Someone aged 16 or over who cannot look after their own well-being, property or rights. In accordance with the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.
- Employees and volunteers of the Trust will be referred to as ‘staff’; unless otherwise stated. Staff is defined as a person who does works for an organisation regardless of remuneration.

1.3 Within the context of their role and responsibilities, all staff will:

- 1) Establish open, positive, supporting relationships across the Trust to ensure that young people will feel that they are listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives
- 2) promote a climate in which young people feel safe and secure
- 3) model behaviour which promotes health and wellbeing and encourage it in others
- 4) be sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each young person

- 5) Take all reasonable steps to protect young people from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by adhering to Safeguarding procedures.
- 6) Where concerned that a child could be at risk of harm/abuse, be guided by the underpinning principle – **the needs of the child are the paramount concern.**
- 7) Maintain open and positive relationships with parents and carers unless advised to the contrary.
- 8) Recognise the limits of their responsibilities within The Trusts’ Safeguarding network.
- 9) Report Safeguarding concerns to the Trusts’ Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- 10) Actively participate in Safeguarding training relevant to the care and protection of young people.
- 11) Adhere to the guidance on information sharing and confidentiality and understand that, in relation to a concern that a child or young person could be at risk from harm/abuse, report their concerns to the Safeguarding Officer.

(www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland/pages/5/)

Part 2 – Key roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the Safeguarding procedures.

2.1 Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer will:

- a) Ensure that Safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed and meet national and local best practice.
- b) Identify resources which will facilitate the development of effective and regular Safeguarding training and staff development; and
- c) Respond appropriately to Safeguarding issues which may be raised.

2.2 Sailing and Development Manager

The Sailing and Development Manager is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of Safeguarding policy and procedure across the Trusts’ Sea Staff. S(he) will:

- a) Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place which support the effective implementation of the policy/procedures by sea staff.
- b) Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place which support the sharing of best practice in relation to the care and protection of young people.
- c) Respond appropriately to any concerns raised about staff who may pose a risk to the care and welfare of young people; and
- d) Ensure that sea staff have adequate knowledge and skills to implement policies and procedures relating to the care and protection of young people.
- e) Ensure general information on Safeguarding is readily available on all vessels.

2.3 Vessel Skipper

2.3.1 The Skipper must:

- a) Be the main contact for Safeguarding referrals from staff on the Trusts' vessels and ensure the procedures in this policy are followed.
- b) Ensure thorough and confidential record keeping of all information, related to child welfare and protection is carefully recorded and forwarded to the Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity.

2.3.2 The Skipper is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate procedures are followed in the event of concerns regarding a young persons' welfare or evidence of the risk of immediate danger to them whilst on a voyage (this includes activities taking place on shore - during the voyage schedule).

2.3.3 The Skipper has a key role to play, to share information and plan for cohesive and appropriate intervention.

2.4 All staff must:

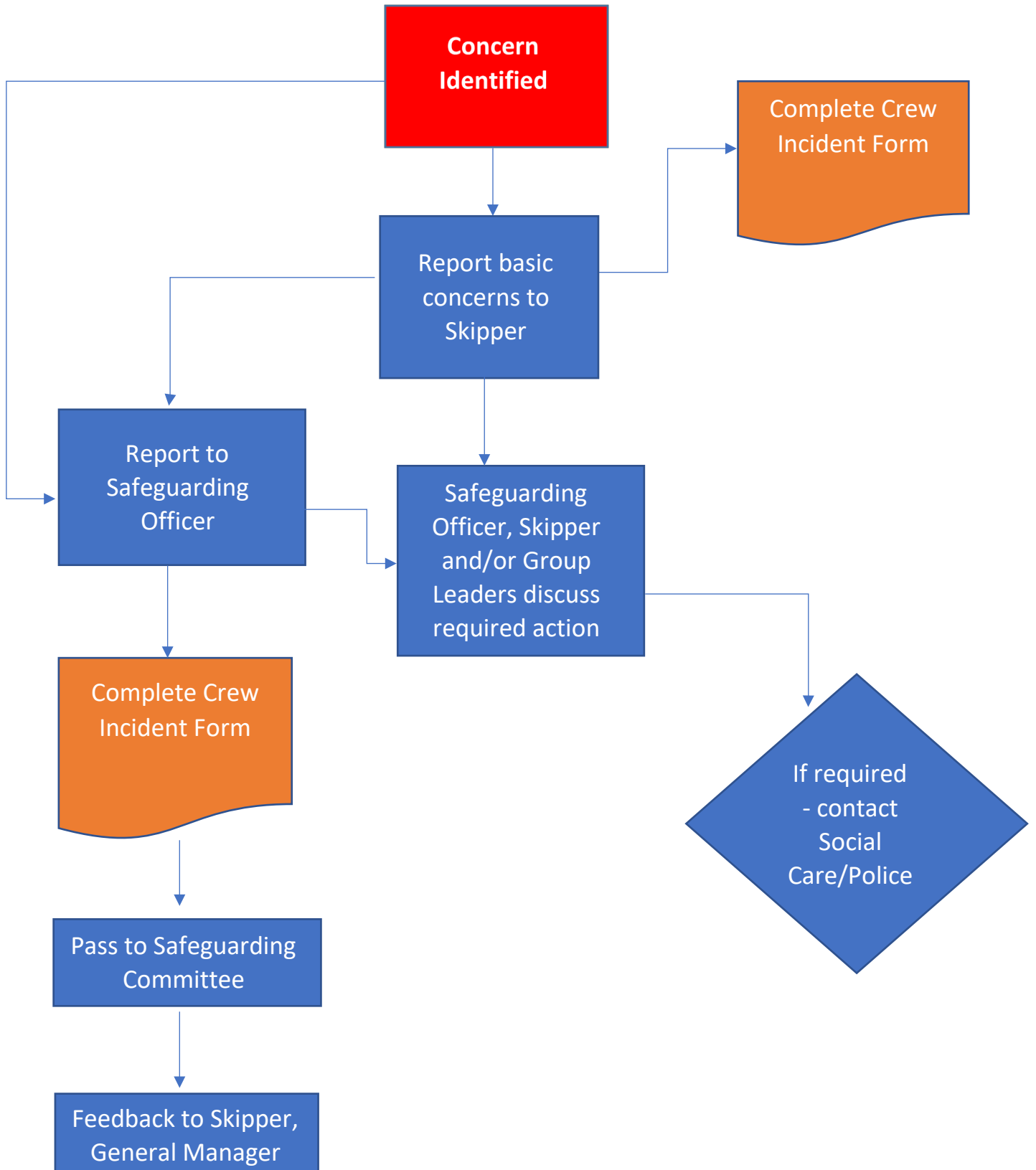
- a) Focus on preventative, early intervention strategies.
- b) Respond effectively and promptly to any concerns, especially of imminent risk to a young person.
- c) Contribute to assessment and recording of all child welfare and Safeguarding concerns, using a chronology of significant events and related documentation.

2.5 The Trust

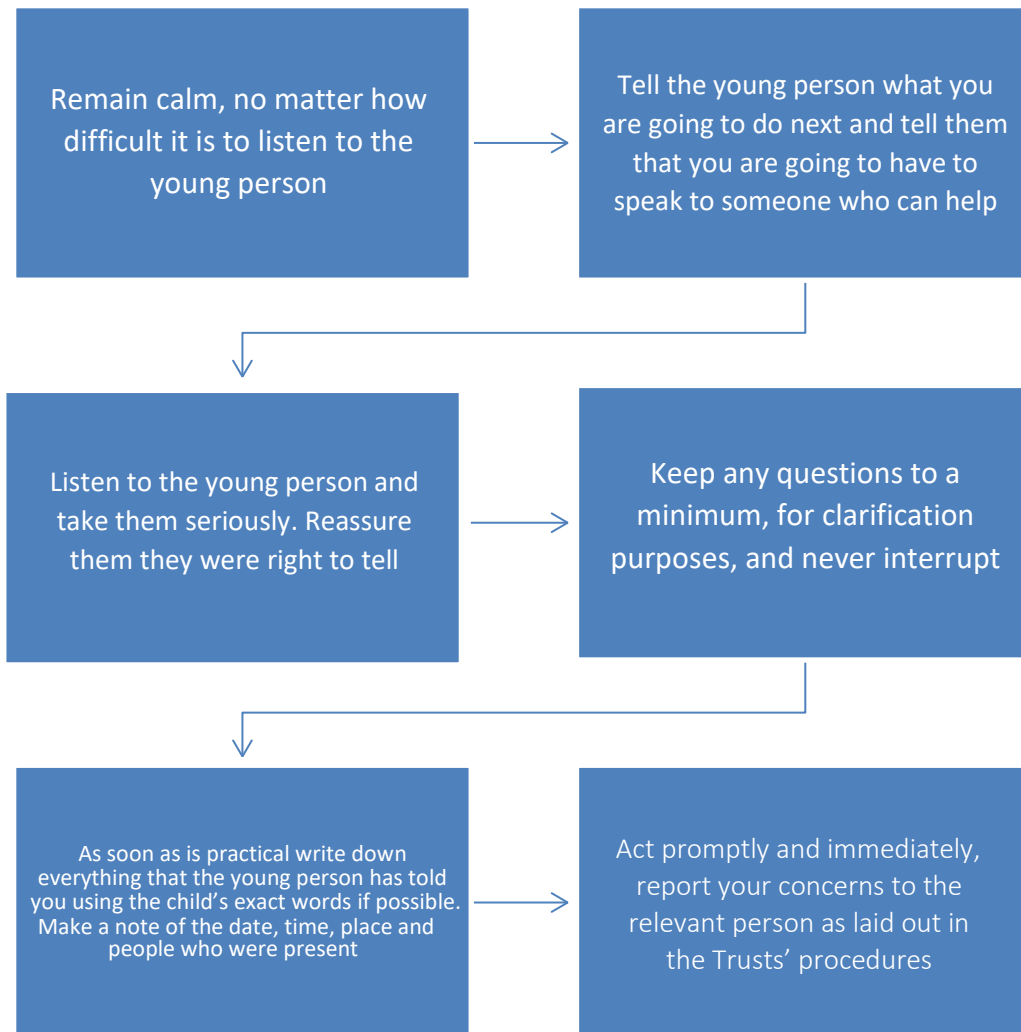
The Trust should review and update their implementation of this policy annually by involving staff in discussion and development. This helps to ensure the relevance of the policy and gives priority to the safety and wellbeing of young people.

Part 3 – Safeguarding Procedures: Response, Referral and Recording

Reporting Procedures



3.1 Guidance for all staff who have been notified of a concern by a young person.



3.2 Confidential Safeguarding Files

3.2.1 Safeguarding evidence must be kept securely and comply with Data Protection and GDPR. The information should be filed under the appropriate headings

- Young persons' Information
- Staff notes – memos, notes of concerns.
- Young Person Report or other documented discussion

3.2.2 The Safeguarding Officer will store Confidential Safeguarding Files in a secure place.

3.2.3 All electronic documentation should be stored in secure folders with restricted access.

3.3.4 It is the responsibility of each individual staff member to ensure that their Safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and followed through. Everyone is accountable for their own role in the Safeguarding process.

3.4 Reporting Safeguarding concerns to the Police

3.4.1 The Skipper/Sailing and Development Manager/Safeguarding Officer may decide to contact the Police **immediately** where there are **urgent** circumstances such as:

- where there is indication that a crime either has been committed or may be committed.
- the immediate avoidance of further abuse.
- the immediate pursuit of an alleged abuser.
- the avoidance of the destruction of evidence.

3.4.2 Members of staff who make an urgent referral to the Police must notify the Safeguarding Officer and General Manager as a matter of urgency.

3.5 Quality Assurance

3.5.1 Self-evaluation is the key to the continuous improvement of services to protect children. Organisations should evaluate their own processes and gather evidence on the effectiveness of the Trusts' procedures for Safeguarding and Safeguarding on an annual basis as part of a staff training exercise. Any areas for improvement should be included in the Trusts' planning structures.

3.6 Escalation Policy

3.6.1 Where a member of staff makes a Safeguarding referral but remains unsatisfied with the response from a member of staff or another agency, the Safeguarding Officer should be informed. The case must be kept under review until all parties are satisfied with the outcome. Staff not involved in the initial referral can be brought in to assist if necessary.

In the situation where the dissatisfaction is with the Safeguarding Officer of the Trust, the staff member must inform the Chairperson of the Board, who will take responsibility for the review.

4.1 Staff Support

4.1.1 It is essential to ensure that there are effective structures in place to support staff dealing with Safeguarding issues, which may be highly stressful. For example:

- annual reminders to all staff that they are operating within known and agreed Trust Safeguarding procedures.
- regular opportunities to discuss concerns about a child with the Safeguarding Officer
- appropriate debriefing of staff who have been involved in Safeguarding investigations; and
- the offer of counselling or other support should this be required.

4.2 Staff Training

4.2.1 All staff, who have contact with children, should receive training in the form of:

- Induction training
- RYA Safe and Fun course, and
- Access to specialised training provided by the Trust

It is the Sailing and Development Managers' responsibility to ensure all sea staff have received all relevant training.

4.3 Allegations against Members of Staff

4.3.1 Should a member of staff receive information/allegations of abuse or inappropriate conduct against another member of staff, the Safeguarding Officer must be informed immediately. The Safeguarding Officer must then inform the Chairperson of the Board immediately.

4.3.2 It is vital to staff and young people that any action taken in response to information or allegations is conducted properly and promptly in order to support proper investigation.

4.3.3 After receiving initial information or hearing an allegation and establishing these are of a serious nature, further interviewing of the young person is not appropriate other than by trained police officers or social workers, or during the legal process of prosecution. However, staff should gain sufficient information from the child in order to judge the seriousness of the issue, in order to inform senior managers' decisions.

4.3.4 The Safeguarding Office may remove the member of staff who an allegation had been made against from the boat/environment

4.3.4 Allegations against any Managers should be directed straight to the Chairperson of the Board.

4.4 Minimising Risk of Allegations

4.4.1 All staff should consider the appropriateness of their own and their colleagues' behaviour. Staff and young people alike should feel confident in openly discussing behaviour which they do not like.

4.4.2 Where members of staff feel that their actions have been, or might have been, misinterpreted, they should make a written report to their line manager without delay.

4.5 One to one meetings with Young People

4.5.1 Staff working alone with young people in a one-to-one setting should be aware of the risks involved in these situations and should take appropriate precautions i.e.

- ensure that other members of staff know where they are;
- do not meet out with hours or in quiet areas away from other people; and
- if they feel uncomfortable about a particular situation report it to a more senior member of staff.

4.5.2 When providing personal care for disabled young people or reassurance or comfort when a young person is distressed, physical contact should be minimal and respectful of the young person's wishes.

4.6 Recruitment/Use of Volunteers

4.6.1 Under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 individuals who work or volunteer with /or adults at risk of harm are required to join the PVG Scheme. Anyone with a known history of harmful behaviour is barred from the PVG Scheme and must not work with /or adults at risk of harm. An adult at risk of harm is defined as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with a type or care, health, or welfare service.

4.6.2 Once approved, individuals are provided with a certificate to state they are a member. Thereafter, membership records are automatically updated if any new vetting information arises. Vetting information is conviction and non-conviction information held by agencies that is considered relevant.

4.6.3 It is also an offence for any individual on the list to ask to undertake work. Employers must report any incident especially ones which may lead to dismissal or to referral to the relevant bodies.

- 4.6.4 The Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) scheme applies to all staff within the Trust as they are considered to undertake Regulated Work as part of their core duties.
- 4.6.5 Regulated work is the term used by the PVG Act to define the types of work which barred individuals must not do.

Part 5 – Definitions - The range of ways in which young people can be abused

- 5.1 The [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2021\)](#) highlights that young people can be abused in a number of different ways and provides definitions of abuse against the following and non-exhaustive areas of concern (**see Appendix 1**).
- 5.2 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.

5.3 Where does the majority of abuse/neglect occur?

- 5.3.1 Annual Safeguarding statistics produced by the Scottish Government, show that the majority of cases of abuse and neglect occur in the home and are a direct result of parents/carers (and other people who know children) wilfully abusing, or failing to attend to, the needs of their children.
- 5.3.2 Not all abuse is deliberate acts of harm, some are unintentional exposure to harm and while some are motivated by malice such as “ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances” who due to loss, bereavement, changes in lifestyle/circumstances place children in situations of actual/potential risk

5.4 What is meant by a concern?

- 5.4.1 The Scottish Government defines a ‘concern’ as a suspicion or a belief that a child or young person may be in need of help or protection.
- 5.4.2 The guidance also illustrates a range of possible indicators of risk, which can be used in the recording process to categorise the key elements of concern (see Appendix 1).

5.5 How concerns may ‘come to light’

- 5.5.1 Concerns regarding a child’s safety or wellbeing are likely to emerge in one of the following ways:
- The child discloses alleged abuse.

- Another child, child’s parent, friend of the child or member of the public may express concern or make an allegation of child abuse.
- Young people often take time to seek out and test adults to whom they wish to disclose abuse – disclosure is more often a process than an event; and
- Children with complex support needs may find it difficult to communicate concern.

Part 6 - Appendices

Appendix 1: Types of abuse and indicators or risk/abuse/neglect

Definitions of Abuse

The following definitions are taken from the National Guidance for Safeguarding in Scotland 2010.

The lists of indicators have been adapted to show situations relevant to young peoples' interactions with the Trust.

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.

Possible signs and indicators of physical abuse

- Injuries
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to explain and discuss injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of medical help particularly on the part of the parent who may seem reluctant/make excuses for not taking a child to the GP
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Black eyes
- Bruising on the soft parts of the body – thighs, upper arms, buttocks
- Bruising around the neck area
- Physical aggression towards others
- Physical aggression towards self – hitting and telling self-off for doing something wrong

Non-accidental injury (NAI) such as non-accidental bruises are frequently present on soft tissue parts of the body e.g. cheeks, mouth, neck, tissue surrounding elbows and knees, lower back, buttocks, upper legs and genitals and on protected areas such as under the arms.

Non-accidental injuries may also include burns, breaks and bite marks.

Non-accidental Bruises

Caused by	Indications
Hand	Finger and thumb tips may also indicate severe shaking, slap marks
Fist	Black eye, bruised ear
Torn Fraenulum	Fraenulum is mid line tissue in the mouth containing a vein – situated between upper lip and upper gum. A torn fraenulum indicates a blow across the mouth or force-feeding. It is a common accidental injury when a person falls with something in their mouth.
Tying	Circumferential bruising on wrists and ankles
Pinch Marks	Circular areas of deep, tender bruising
Foot	Bruise may appear in the mark of footwear
Implement Bruising	Strap, buckle marks which may follow the contours of the body

Non-accidental Burns

Caused By	Indications
Cigarette Burn	Accidental cigarette burn is usually superficial with a trail where the person has brushed against the cigarette. Non-accidental burn is usually a well-defined round area.
Radiator	A ring or cooker leave distinctive marks by symmetry and depth
Hot Liquid	Splash marks Clear line where a person was immersed and held in water

Non-accidental fractures

Caused by	Indications
Fractures	Direct blow Grabbing and twisting

Non-accidental bite marks

Caused by	Indications
Bite Marks	Bite marks of an adult are large, and bruising may occur around wounds

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 long-term effects such as greater susceptibility 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.

Possible signs and indicators of neglect

- Constant hunger
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Emaciation
- Constant tiredness
- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of clothing and/or child inappropriately clothed for the weather
- Untreated medical problems

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.

Sexual abuse may include activities such as incest, rape, sodomy, or intercourse with children, lewd or libidinous practices or behaviour towards children, indecent assault of children, taking indecent photographs of children, or encouraging children to become prostitutes or to witness intercourse or pornographic materials.

Sexual exploitation may be indicated by the presence of one or more of the following characteristics:

- Lack of consent.
- Inequalities in terms of chronological age, developmental stage of stature; and
- Actual or threatened coercion.

Sexual activity involving informed consent of children under sixteen or involving informed consent of a child under sixteen with an adult who is not a relative is not in itself “child abuse”. However, this may still be a criminal offence. However, there could be other factors which could be indicative of abuse, or which could indicate that the welfare of the children involved requires input from agencies.

Possible signs and indicators of sexual abuse

Children from the age of twelve onwards may:

- Be fearful about certain people like relatives of friends
- Find excuses not to go home or to a particular place
- Run away
- Have unexplained sums of money
- Have recurring nightmares/be afraid of the dark
- Be fearful of undressing
- Become withdrawn, isolated, or excessively worried
- Have outbursts of anger or irritability
- Be chronically depressed
- Be suicidal
- Use drugs or drink to excess
- Self-harm
- Develop eating disorders
- Exhibit inappropriate sexual/seductive behaviour
- Have chronic ailments such as stomach pains and headaches
- Have a friend who has a problem and then talk about the abuse of the friend

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.

Emotional abuse may include situations where as a result of persistent behaviour by the parent(s) or caregiver(s), children are:

- rejected, denigrated, or scapegoated.
- denied opportunities for exploration, play or socialisation appropriate to their stages of development.
- encouraged to engage in anti-social behaviour.
- put in a state of terror or extreme anxiety using threats or practices designed to intimidate them; and
- isolated from normal social experiences preventing the child from forming friendships.

Possible signs and indicators of emotional abuse

- Fear of parents being contacted
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Physical, intellectual, and emotional development lags
- Significant decline in concentration
- Sudden speech disorders
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour
- Self-harm
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging
- Indiscriminate friendliness
- Socio-emotional immaturity

Parental Substance Misuse

Possible effects on children can include:

- Impaired patterns of parental care with a higher risk of emotional and physical neglect and abuse.
- Chaotic lifestyles, which disrupt children's routines and relationships, leading to early behavioural and emotional problems.
- Isolation of inability to confide in others for fear of the consequences
- Children's early exposure to, and socialisation into, illegal substance misuse and other criminal activity.

(Source: *Getting Our Priorities Right, Scottish Executive, 2013*).

Young People with Additional Support Needs

Young people with additional support needs and particularly those with multiple disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse. National Guidance for Safeguarding in Scotland 2014. Additional notes for practitioners: protecting disabled children from abuse and neglect is available. Staff have a particular need to be alert to possible indicators of abuse in relation to children with additional support needs.

Where children have a communication difficulty, it is particularly important that they have access to a means of being understood.

Appendix 2 – Key Reference Documents and Links

[National Guidance for Safeguarding in Scotland](#)

[National Guidance for Safeguarding in Scotland 2014. Additional notes for practitioners: protecting disabled children from abuse and neglect](#)

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-priorities-right/>

[Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014,](#)

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/scotland#heading-top>