

Child and adults at risk Protection Policy

Responsibilities

Fife Arts Co-operative will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children and adults at risk by providing opportunities for them to take part in arts activities safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and adults at risk.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and adults at risk and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
- Require employees, contractors and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child and Adult at Risk Protection Policy and these Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or adults at risk in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Review and evaluate this Policy and these Procedures on a regular basis.

Principles

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children and adults at risk have a lot to gain from involvement in the arts. Their natural sense of fun and spontaneity can blossom in a positive environment. Such an environment provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is the primary concern.
- All children and adults at risk, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse and the responsibility of the Social Work Department and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and adults at risk, or any changes within Fife Arts Co-operative.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children or adults at risk within Fife Arts Co-operative.
- In all other circumstances, at least annually.

Child and adult at risk Protection Procedures

1 Recruitment and employment

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and adults at risk.

For all positions that require regular contact with children or vulnerable adults the following recruitment procedures must be completed.

1.1 Advertising

All forms of advertising used to recruit members for positions involving regular contact with children or adults at risk will include the following:

- The aims of Fife Arts Co-operative and, where appropriate, details of the particular programme or project involved.
- The responsibilities of the role.
- The level of experience or qualifications required (e.g. experience of working with children is an advantage).
- Details of Fife Arts Co-operative's open and positive stance on child and adult at risk protection.

1.2 Pre-application information

Pre-application information for positions involving regular contact with children or adults at risk will be sent to applicants and will include:

- A job description including roles and responsibilities.
- A candidate specification including a statement that appropriate qualifications and/or experience of working with children or adults at risk will be required).
- An application form and self-declaration form.
- Information on Fife Arts Co-operative and related topics.

1.3 Application and self-declaration form

All applicants will be requested to complete an application and self-declaration form. The purpose of the application form is to obtain relevant details from the applicant for the position. The purpose of the self-declaration form is to collect information on criminal behaviour that is relevant to the position, which may include the applicant's criminal record and/or any criminal investigations he or she has been subject to. The self-declaration form is requested in a separate sealed envelope and is not opened until the applicant is selected for an interview. If the applicant is not selected the form is returned unopened to the applicant.

1.4 References

References will be sought as required. Where possible at least one of these references will be from an employer or a voluntary organisation where the position required working with children or adults at risk in any of the following capacities: employee; volunteer; or work experience. If the applicant has no experience of working with children or adults at risk, specific training requirements will be agreed before appointment.

1.5 Checks

Fife Contemporary Art and Craft is registered with Central Registered Body for Scotland. Fife Arts Co-operative is submitting their policy to FCAC for approval. Once it is approved FCAC will carry out Disclosure Scotland checks on FAC's behalf. All prospective position holders who will have contact with children will be required to submit to a Disclosure Scotland check, with the results returning to FCAC, who will then advise FAC's Child and Adults at Risk Protection Officer of the result.

As recommended by Disclosure Scotland (Protecting the Vulnerable by Safer Recruitment, 2002) the following types of checks are to be requested for positions requiring contact with children and vulnerable adults:

Standard Disclosure

Standard disclosures will be requested from those applying for positions listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) (Exceptions) Order 1975. These categories include occupations with duties that involve regular contact with children and young people under the age of 18; and the elderly, sick and handicapped people.

Enhanced Disclosure

Enhanced Disclosures will be requested for positions that involve a greater degree of contact with children or adults at risk. For example, positions that require regular contact with, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children and young people.

1.6 Interview

For positions that require regular contact with children or adults at risk, interviews will be carried out. Interviews will include requests for additional information to support the application.

1.7 Offer of position

Once a decision has been made to appoint an individual, an offer letter will be presented to the applicant including details of the position, any special requirements and a summary of the appointee's obligations, including agreement to the policies and procedures of the organisation, the probation period and the responsibilities of the role. Acceptance of the offer must be formally made in writing by signing and dating the applicant's agreement on the offer letter, and returning it to the organisation.

1.8 Induction

The induction process for the newly appointed employee or volunteer will include the following:

- An assessment of training, individual aids and any other needs and aspirations.
- Clarification, agreement and signing up to the Child and Adult at Risk Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Clarification of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the position.

1.9 Training

Newly appointed employees and long term volunteers will complete the following training over an agreed period:

- Protecting children and adults at risk.
- Working effectively with children and adults at risk (including presentation skills, and developing child and adult at risk friendly resources and activities).
- Any other identified training needs.

1.10 Probation

Newly appointed employees will complete an agreed period of probation on commencement of their role.

1.11 Monitoring and performance appraisal

All employees and volunteers who have contact with children or vulnerable adults will be monitored and their performance appraised. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress, set new goals, identify training needs and address any concerns about poor practice.

2 Board members with specific responsibility for the protection of children and adults at risk

2.1 Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) has the main responsibility for managing child and vulnerable adult protection issues within Fife Arts Co-operative. The role and responsibilities of the CPO are detailed below. Specific responsibilities in relation to allegations against members are detailed in the Procedure for Managing Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse of a Child against volunteers or staff (Section 7.5).

2.2 Role and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer

Within Fife Arts Co-operative the CPO will:

- Implement and promote Fife Arts Co-operative's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Regularly report to the Board
- Act as the main contact within Fife Arts Co-operative for the protection of children and adults at risk.
- Provide information and advice on the protection of children and adults at risk.

- Support and raise awareness of the protection of children and adults at risk.
- Communicate with employees and members on issues of child and adult at risk protection.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children and adults at risk.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children and adults at risk.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the Police and Social Work Department.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Organise training for members.
- Regularly monitor and review the Fife Arts Co-operative's Child Protection and Adult at Risk Policy and Procedures.

3 Code of conduct for the protection of children and adults at risk

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of Fife Arts Co-operative when in contact with children or Adults at Risk. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be sanctioned. Suspicions or allegations of non-compliance with the Code by an employee, contractor or volunteer will be dealt with through the Fife Arts Co-operative's Disciplinary Procedure for misconduct, or as detailed in **Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against an Employee, Contractor or Volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.**(Section 7.5 below).

3.1 Good practice

Fife Arts Co-operative supports and requires the following good practice by members when in contact with children and adults at risk.

When working with children or adults at risk:

- Make arts related activities fun and enjoyable, and promote inclusion.
- Always work in an open environment and avoid situations unobserved by at least one other member.
- Treat all children and adults at risk equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child or adult at risk first.
- Be an good role model, including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children or adults at risk.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- If any form of manual or physical support is required for a child or vulnerable adult, ensure that it is provided openly, the child or adult at risk is informed of what is being done, and their consent is obtained.
- Deliver educational instruction first verbally, secondly by role-model, and thirdly, and only if necessary, with hands on, which must be accompanied by telling the child or adult at risk where you are putting your hands and why it is necessary, and obtaining their consent.

- Involve parents, guardians and carers wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children and adults at risk to share in the decision-making process.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capabilities of children and adults at risk and avoid putting undue pressure on them.

First Aid and treatment of injuries:

If a child requires first aid or any form of medical attention while in your care in your capacity as a member of Fife Arts Co-operative, then the following good practice must be followed:

- Where practicable all parents/guardians of children under 16 must complete a Fife Arts Co-operative Medical Consent Form before the child participates in activities.
- Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and any treatment required.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure that access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- •Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child/vulnerable adult, in language that they understand, and their permission should be sought before any action is taken.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- The child or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless after taking professional advice this is clearly not in the best interest of the child or vulnerable adult.
- A Notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to the organisation as soon as possible.

Taking and transporting children or adults at risk away from home:

If it is necessary to provide transport or take children or adults at risk away from home, the following good practice must be followed:

- Where practicable, request written parental/guardian's consent if members are required to transport children or adults at risk.
- Always tell another member that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Ensure that all vehicles are correctly insured.
- Ensure that all reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children should where possible be in the back seat and seatbelts should always be worn.
- Ensure, where possible, that at least one male and one female adult accompany mixed groups of children or adults at risk. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by Fife Arts Co-operative's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure that copies are available for other members and parents/guardians.

3.2 Practice to be avoided

In the context of your role within Fife Arts Co-operative, the following practice should be avoided:

- Avoid having 'favourites' - this could lead to resentment and jealousy on the part of other children or vulnerable adults, and could result in false allegations.
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others.
- Ensure that when children or vulnerable adults are taken away from home, adults avoid entering their rooms unless in an emergency situation or in the interests of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter a room, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Avoid taking children or vulnerable adults to your home.
- Avoid, where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children and vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.

Important note:

It may sometimes be necessary for members to do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk, if they are very young or particularly vulnerable. These tasks should be carried out only with the full understanding and consent of the child or adult at risk, and where possible their parents/guardians. It is important to respect their views. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible, particularly if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child or vulnerable adult to carry out particular activities. Do not take on responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

3.3 Practice never to be sanctioned

In the context of your role within Fife Arts Co-operative, the following practices should never be sanctioned:

- Never engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never engage in rough or physical contact.
- Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children or adults at risk.
- Never allow or engage in physical contact of a sexually suggestive nature with a child or adult at risk.
- Never allow children or adults at risk to swear or to use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child or adult at risk, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child or adult at risk to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child or adult at risk to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never share sleeping accommodation with a child or adult at risk.
- Never invite or allow children or adults at risk to stay with you at your home.

Important note:

In special cases sharing accommodation may be required for health and safety reasons, or if the person concerned is very young or particularly vulnerable. If so, explain to the child or vulnerable adult and their parent or guardian why this is necessary, and seek their consent. Where possible ensure that at least two adults, preferably at least one male and at least one female, are in the room.

3.4 Reporting

If members have concerns about any incident involving a child or adult at risk, they must report these concerns as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer. Parents/Carers should also be informed of the incident at the earliest opportunity, unless it is not in the child or adult at risk's interests to tell them (refer to **Section 8, Sharing Concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers**).

Report, record and inform if the any of the following occurs:

- You accidentally hurt a child or adult at risk.
- A child or adult at risk seems distressed in any manner.
- A child or adult at risk misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.
- A child or adult at risk appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- A child or adult at risk needs to be restrained.

4 Identifying and managing bullying

The lives of many people are made miserable by bullying. Victims of bullying can feel lonely, isolated and deeply unhappy. It can have a devastating effect on a child or adult at risk's self-esteem, and destroy their self-confidence and concentration. They may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious and less willing to take any sort of risk. They may feel it is somehow their fault, or that there is something wrong with them, and at worst experience depression and/or feelings of worthlessness that lead to suicide.

To ensure that Fife Arts Co-operative creates an atmosphere where bullying, particularly of children and vulnerable adults, is unacceptable, and to help employees, contractors and volunteers manage bullying issues, guidelines for identifying and managing bullying have been developed.

Any suspicions or allegations of bullying of a child or adult at risk against an employee, contractor or volunteer will be dealt with through the Fife Arts Co-operative Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, and/or the Fife Council Social Work Named Contact Officer, and/or **Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against an Employee, Contractor, or Volunteer of the Club (Section 7.5)**.

5 Photographing, videoing and filming of children and vulnerable adults

The following procedures have been developed to protect children and vulnerable adults participating in activities or events run by Fife Arts Co-operative:

- Where appropriate, all materials promoting Fife Arts Co-operative events or activities shall state that participants at the event or activity may be filmed and photographed by accredited persons.
- Where possible, consent from the parent/guardian for photographing, videoing and/or filming a child or adult at risk must be obtained prior to the event or activity.

- Where possible, anyone wishing to use photographic/film/video equipment at an FAC event or activity must obtain the approval of Fife Arts Co-operative.
- No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions are to be permitted unless this has been approved in advance by the child or adult at risk, parent/guardian and the organisation, and appropriate vetting has occurred, e.g. a Disclosure Scotland check of the individual wishing to photograph, film or video.
- Fife Arts Co-operative reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated.
- The above requirements are publicly promoted to ensure that all people present at the event or activity understand the procedures, and are aware of whom to contact if they have any concerns.

5.1 Concerns about photographers and video or film operators

Any concerns about photographers or video or film operators are to be reported to the Fife Arts Co-operative Child and Adults at Risk Officer, and, where relevant, the Police.

6 Children or vulnerable adults in publications and on the Internet

Websites and publications provide excellent opportunities to showcase the activities of young people and vulnerable adults. In some cases, however, displaying certain information about them could place them at risk. The following procedure must be followed to ensure that Fife Arts Co-operative publications and information on the Internet do not place children and vulnerable adults at risk.

Fife Arts Co-operative publications and information on the Internet must adhere to the following:

- No personal information must ever be included that could identify a child or adult at risk. This could be for example a home address, email address or telephone number. Point of contact must be either Fife Arts Co-operative or another relevant organisation.
- Before publishing any information about a child or adult at risk, written consent must be obtained from the child or adult at risk's parent/guardian. If the material is changed after initial consent, parents/guardians must be informed and consent given for the changes.
- Photographs or videos must not depict a child or adult at risk in a provocative pose or in a state of partial undress. Children and adults at risk must never be portrayed in a demeaning or tasteless manner.
- In the case of photographs or videos of groups or classes of children or adults at risk ensure that only the class or school is referred to, not individuals. Credit for achievements by a child or adult at risk should be restricted to first names, e.g. **Monoprint by Jack**.
- All published events involving children or vulnerable adults must be reviewed to ensure that the information will not put any of them at risk.
- Particular care must be taken in publishing photographs, film or videos of children or vulnerable adults who are considered particularly at risk, e.g. the subject of a child or vulnerable adult protection issue or a custody dispute.
- Particular care must be taken in publishing photographs, films or videos of children or adults at risk with physical, learning and/or communication or language disabilities, as they could be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Important note: Any concerns or enquiries about publications or Internet information should be directed to Fife Arts Co-operative's Child and Adult at Risk Officer.

7 Responding to disclosures

Information you receive about or from a child or adult at risk may fall into one of the following categories:

- 1 Suspicion or allegation of misconduct regarding an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.
- 2 Suspicion or allegation of abuse regarding an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.
- 3 Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour regarding someone who is not an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.
- 4 Suspicion or allegation of abuse regarding someone who is not an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.

If you are unclear about the nature of the information (and therefore which category the disclosure falls into) advice must be sought from the Child and Adult at Risk Officer or the Police or Social Work Department.

It is not the responsibility of anyone associated with Fife Arts Co-operative to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

It is important that Fife Arts Co-operative employees, contractors and volunteers understand what is meant by the term 'abuse'. The different types of abuse are:

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Negative Discrimination (including racism)
- Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family members; physical bullying; verbal bullying; teasing; and harassment)

7.1 How to listen to a disclosure

It is important to listen carefully to the information a child or adult at risk discloses. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is required:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/adult at risk.
- Listen to the child/adult at risk.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and was right to tell.
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/adult at risk says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not presuppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child or adult at risk.

- If you need to clarify, keep questions to an absolute minimum and make sure they are open-ended and non-leading.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children or adults at risk.
- Reassure the child or adult at risk.

Actions to avoid

When receiving a disclosure:

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid making promises, agreeing to keep secrets or guaranteeing confidentiality.

7.2 Responding to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against someone who is not an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.

During performance of your role within Fife Arts Co-operative a child or adult at risk may disclose information to you about a person who is not a member of FAC that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.

If the disclosure is about an incident that occurred during a Fife Arts Co-operative event or activity:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass the information to both the manager of the event or activity and the Child and Adult at Risk Officer, and if appropriate to the parents/guardians/carers of the child or adult at risk (refer to **Section 8 Sharing concerns with parents, guardians or carers**).
- Make a full written record of the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass it to the Child and Adult at Risk Officer.

7.3 Responding to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.

If you receive a disclosure that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against a member:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Make a full written record of the disclosure.

- Sign and date the record then pass it to the Child and Adult at Risk Officer.
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Establishing the basic facts

The Child and Adult at Risk Officer must clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that misconduct has occurred. If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of misconduct by an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Co-operative's Disciplinary Procedures.

7.4 Responding to a suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is not an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are very uncommon. If a child or adult at risk says or indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child or adult at risk is being abused, you must react as soon as possible in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, the Child and Adult at Risk Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If the Child and Adult at Risk Officer is unavailable, external agencies such as the Police and/or Social Work Department must be consulted for advice. This is important because these agencies have an overview of child protection issues, and they may well have other information that may offer a more complete picture of the issue.

On receiving information about a non-employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult as detailed in **Section 7.1 How to listen to disclosures**.
- Pass on your concerns as a matter of urgency to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred, and act on any advice given. At the earliest opportunity tell the Child and Adult at Risk Officer about any action you have taken.
- As soon as possible make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told to you by the child/adult at risk (in which case you should use as far as possible his/her own words). The information should, where possible, include the following:
 - Name of child/adult at risk.
 - Age and date of birth of child/adult at risk.
 - Home address and telephone number of the child/adult at risk.
 - The nature of the allegation.
 - Any times, dates or other relevant information.
 - Whether the individual making the report is expressing personal concerns or the concerns of another person.
 - The child/adult at risk's account of what has happened, and how any injuries occurred.
 - A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, and of any behavioural signs that something untoward may have occurred. Do not however examine the child/adult at risk.
 - Details of any witnesses to the incident.
 - Whether the child/adult at risk's parents/guardians/carers have been contacted.

- o Details of anyone else who has been consulted and any information obtained from them.
- o If the information about the alleged incident or incidents did not come from the child/adult at risk making the report, whether the child/adult at risk has been spoken to, and if so what was said.
- o Record, sign and date what you have seen, heard or been told.
- o If using electronic means to record your report, do not save a permanent copy. Print it off, sign and date it, then delete the electronic copy.
- o Pass the report to the Social Work Department or the Police.

Remember: Listen; Respond; Report and Record

7.5 Responding to a suspicion or allegation of abuse against an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative.

The possibility that there has been abuse by an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative may give rise to a range of reactions, including disbelief that anyone in this position would act in this way. It is not the responsibility of an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is however your responsibility to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concerns about the behaviour of an employee, contractor or volunteer towards a child or adult at risk must be passed on at the earliest available opportunity in accordance with the following procedures. No employee, contractor or volunteer in receipt of such information should attempt to act on it solely on his or her own initiative.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse against an employee, contractor or volunteer are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

7.5.1 On receiving information about an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child or adult at risk as detailed in **Section 7.1 How to listen to disclosures.**
- Pass on your concerns as a matter of urgency to the Child and Adult at Risk Officer, or if not available, the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. Act on any advice given.
- As soon as possible make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told to you by the child/adult at risk (in which case you should use as far as possible his/her own words).
- Record, sign and date what you have seen, heard or been told.
- If using electronic means to record your report, do not save a permanent copy. Print it off, sign and date it, then delete the electronic copy.
- Pass the report to the Child and Adult at Risk Officer or the Social Work Department or the Police.

Important note: Where there are concerns about the Child and Adult at Risk Officer this must be reported to the **Chair.**

7.5.2 Actions for the Child and Adult at Risk Officer when concerns are reported

Before taking any action the Child and Adult at Risk Officer must always seek advice from the Police or Fife Council Social Work Department. Thereafter:

Establishing the basic facts

The Child and Adult at Risk Officer must initially clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that an employee, contractor or volunteer may have abused a child and/or adult at risk.

Important note: This may necessitate the use of open-ended non-leading questions to children and adults at risk, whether directly or indirectly involved, and/or other appropriate individuals like workshop leaders. After seeking advice from the Police and/or Social Work Department, you may approach parents/guardians for consent to speak to a child/adult at risk. Advice must also be sought from the Police and/or Social Work Department as to whether the employee, contractor or volunteer about whom the allegation has been made may be approached as part of the initial enquiry. This process will not form part of the disciplinary investigation.

Making a referral in cases of suspected and/or alleged abuse

If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- The Child and Adult at Risk Officer will refer the suspicion and/or allegation to Fife Council Social Work Department and the Police at the earliest opportunity.
- Appropriate steps may be required to ensure the safety of any children or vulnerable adults who may be at risk.
- A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Work Department staff member or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date when this was done, in case any follow up is required.
- After advice has been taken from the Social Work Department and/or Police, the parent/guardian of the child or adult at risk should be contacted as soon as possible.

Important note:

Reporting of the matter to the Police or Social Work Department must not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. A Referral for Reporting Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse Against an employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative Form must be completed at the earliest opportunity. Where possible, a copy of this form must be sent to the Police and Social Work Department within 24 hours.

Possible Outcomes following advice from the Police

Where the initial enquiry reveals that there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that an employee, contractor or volunteer has abused a child and/or adult at risk, there will be an investigation of one of three types:

- A disciplinary investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A criminal investigation

After advice has been taken from the Police, disciplinary action may follow in cases where a criminal investigation is ongoing, provided that sufficient information is available to enable a decision to be made and that the action does not jeopardise the criminal investigation.

Procedures 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 are summarised in the Flowchart that follows.

7.5.3 Managing the employee, contractor or volunteer of Fife Arts Co-operative against whom the allegation has been made

After advice has been taken from the Police, the employee, contractor or volunteer may be told that an allegation has been made which suggests abuse. While it is important to safeguard the rights of the subject of the allegation, it is also essential at this stage to preserve evidence for any criminal proceedings which may follow.

7.5.4 Suspension

The subject of the allegation may be suspended while an investigation is carried out. This will be dealt with in accordance with Fife Arts Co-operative's Disciplinary Procedures, but it should be noted that suspension is not classified as a form of disciplinary action. At the suspension interview the subject of the allegation will be informed of the reason for the suspension, and given the opportunity to make a statement. Notification of the suspension and the reasons for it will be conveyed in writing to the subject of the allegation in accordance with Fife Arts Co-operative's Disciplinary Procedures.

7.5.5 Managing false or malicious allegations

Where after investigation an allegation is found to be false or malicious, the subject of the allegation will receive an account of the circumstances and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. He or she may at that stage wish to seek legal advice. All records pertaining to the investigation will be destroyed and the subject of the allegation will be advised of the appropriate counselling services available.

7.5.6 Managing allegations of historical abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event, e.g. by an adult who was allegedly abused as a child by an employee, contractor or volunteer who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made, the procedures for managing allegations of abuse detailed in Sections 7.4 and 7.5 must be followed.

8 Sharing concerns with parents, guardians or carers

8.1 Where it is not abuse

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers where there are concerns about a child or adult at risk, even when these concerns do not involve abuse. In such cases it is advisable to talk to parents/guardians/carers to help clarify the situation. For example, if a child or adult at risk seems withdrawn, he or she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense should be applied in such circumstances, but advice should be sought from the Child and Adult at Risk Officer where there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action.

8.2 Abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a parent/guardian/carer

There are circumstances in which a child or adult at risk might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared, e.g. where a parent/guardian/carer may be suspected of abuse or inappropriate behaviour. **In such cases guidance as to who is to broach the matter with the parent/guardian/carer must be sought from the local Social Work Department or the Police.**

Procedure for Responding to Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse of a Child or Adult at Risk against an Employee, Contractor or Volunteer

