

## Child protection policy

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics has a duty through members, management, staff and volunteers to protect from abuse, children and young people with whom they come into contact.

1. The 1989 Children Act identifies four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

### Physical Abuse

Actual or likely physical injury to a child or young person under age 16, or failure to prevent physical injury.

### Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person. The child may be dependent or mentally immature.

### Emotional Abuse

Severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.

### Neglect

The persistent, or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including non organic failure to thrive.

2. Historical Abuse

There may be occasions when an adult will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical) which occurred in the past, during their childhood. This information needs to be treated in the same way as a disclosure or suspicion of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

3. Awareness

As a member, trustee, paid staff or a volunteer etc., you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse. However, you have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child or young person. Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and their circumstances.



Nacoa's "multi agency procedures for working with children in need (including those in need of protection) and their families" are the guidelines that the Social Services, the Police, Education, Health and other agencies work to.

#### 4. What to do

Discuss your concerns with the Helpline supervisor and/or another member of the Nacoa team

If the child needs urgent medical attention, obtain medical help first as a matter of urgency

If you are still concerned for the child or young person's welfare complete a referral form

Speak to Chief executive (07506 744 771).

Together you will decide the next step

- a. to continue to support and monitor caller
- b. to advise caller that a referral will be made.
- c. Advise caller to call NSPCC 0800 800 500 to call themselves prior to our call
- d. Agree a time limit when Nacoa will also make referral
- e. to immediately call NSPCC

When making a referral call NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 500.

Be prepared to provide the following details:

- Your name, Nacoa's name, address, telephone number and your role
- As many details of the child as you can, including name, address and the name of the school which she/he attends
- What you have been told by the child or young person, providing details where possible and details of the child's emotional state at the time
- What the child or young person has said in response to any concerns you have
- The action you have taken so far

The NSPCC will advise on what to do next. Social Services will then take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate further enquiries are made.

Keep an accurate record of what you have heard and done on the referral form.

#### 5. What happens next?

Once we have reported our concerns to the NSPCC, the responsibility for gathering information and deciding what happens next rests primarily with Social Services.

In some cases, a brief assessment might reveal one or more unmet needs, which can be solved by providing specific forms of support. If there is evidence to suggest that child abuse or neglect is taking place, a child protection conference will be held. The purpose of the conference is to build up a picture of the child's life and to identify whether abuse has taken place. Decisions will also be taken at the conference about further action.



Having made our vital contribution, we leave matters to those with a statutory responsibility to act. If however, the authorities appear to have done nothing and you still believe the child is at risk, speak to the Chief executive, who will decide with you whether to call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline.

Social Services departments do not usually report back to people who refer cases to them.

The South west Social Services District Duty Team telephone numbers are:

East 0117 955 8231

Central 0117 903 6500

South 0117 903 1414/ 964 2593

North 0117 903 1700/ 903 8786

## 6. Support for staff and volunteers

As a result of reporting concerns; you may find the person who disclosed the information is upset or angry. The helpline supervisor and Chief executive will support you. If Social Services or the Police need further information or involvement from you, the Chief executive will talk with them and you about how this will happen.

Staff may also be subject to allegations of abusing children. While support will be offered, Nacoa will ensure that Social Services or the Police are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. Suspension and/or the disciplinary procedure may be implemented.

## 7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships – and the welfare of the child is paramount. The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to child abuse to themselves.

Confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of the information will prejudice the welfare of the child.

## 8. Recruitment of staff and volunteers/appointment of trustees, etc.

Paedophiles are attracted to organisations, which provide services for children.

Nacoa will ensure that criminal records statements are obtained and acted upon, prior to their engagement, from paid/unpaid trustees/staff/volunteers new to the organisation; and with these statements, make "disclosure applications" to the Criminal Records Bureau (the Government's "Disclosure Service").

Those people on whom we will make such applications are those in any position giving regular contact with/access to children and young people up to age 18, including those in "positions of trust" and supervisors as well as people in frontline roles. (See the Home Office's guide to definitions of "regulated positions" when working with children and young people).

Two references will be sought for new staff and volunteers and followed up as necessary. A medical reference may also be required.



A rigorous and probing approach to the application process (e.g. using application forms designed to elicit the full, relevant history of applicants), interviews and selection for positions with Nacoa will be adhered to. Proof of identity may be sought.

#### 9. Other Measures

The work of Nacoa is planned in ways, which minimise risks to children, e.g. clear roles for everyone and supervision for people involved with Nacoa. Concerns about children's welfare will always be taken seriously.

Cases of misconduct towards children involving staff, volunteers, trustees, etc are reportable to the Protection of Children Act Service at the Department of Health for possible inclusion on the list of unsuitable people to work with children. (See the Government's Practical Guide to the Children's Act).

*"Children's safety and well being is a core value of this organisation."*

