



Children • Families • Community

2. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Reviewed By:	Heather McFadzean	
Next Review by:	25 th June 2026	

Child Protection Policy Statement

Cheviot Youth is fully committed to promoting children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. Cheviot Youth has a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In order to achieve this, we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore, we will endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

Please note that in the context of this policy, 'child' refers to any young person under the age of 18, even in cases where the legal age of consent may differ from this.

Cheviot Youth will:

1. Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
2. Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of all staff and volunteers
3. Provide opportunities for all newly appointed staff and volunteers through the provision of induction training, which gives an overview of the organisation's purpose, values, structure and services
4. Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in the organisations Code of Conduct and Child Protection procedures
5. Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their obligations to report care or protection concerns about a child/young person, or a staff member or volunteer's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's designated person for child protection. At Cheviot Youth this is the Safeguarding Officer
6. Ensure that all procedures relating to the conduct of staff and volunteers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
7. Ensure that the designated child protection officer understands his/her responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. police and/or social work)
8. Ensure that the organisation meets all its responsibilities in adhering to the requirements of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Act 2007
9. Provide opportunities for all staff and volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of children and young people
10. Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's complaints procedures
11. Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people. The policy will be updated as necessary when a national change comes to light, or at the next annual review

Section 1 - Introduction

- Cheviot Youth is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. This Child Protection Policy and Procedure reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed
- The Safeguarding Officer and Designated Project Worker are responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy statement and other care and protection policies and guidelines. However, all staff and volunteers for Cheviot Youth are required to implement the child protection procedures
- Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that "it shall be the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare". This places on Cheviot Youth a Duty of Care for the children and young people we work with. Cheviot Youth also recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child (see Appendix 3). Cheviot Youth will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people in its care. Cheviot Youth's understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2
- Cheviot Youth has a commitment to children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them

Section 2 - Recruitment

Cheviot Youth recognises that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as staff and volunteers of Cheviot Youth:

- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form
- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self-declaration form
- All successful applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to provide suitable references
- All suitable applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to attend an interview
- A self-declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation
- All successful applicants appointed into a 'regulated work' position, as defined by the PVG Act, will be required to become members of the PVG Scheme or, if already a member, provide their PVG Scheme Record and permit access to a PVG Scheme Record Update
- Any applicant found to be fully listed on the Children's List will not be appointed to a regulated work (staff and volunteer) position.

Section 3 - Training

All newly appointed staff and volunteers at Cheviot Youth will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child Protection. This will include:

- Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation
- Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided
- An assessment of staff and volunteer training and development requirements will be completed
- The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified
- Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided
- All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Section 9)
- Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided
- The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Child Protection Officer will be provided

Section 4 - Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse

Members of staff and volunteers have a duty to report any suspicions, allegations or disclosures to the Safeguarding Officer. However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child or young person and their protection from any potential risk. During the reporting process the young person should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

As a staff member or volunteer your role in child protection is not to investigate or decide if abuse has taken place. Your role is to observe, record and report. The following steps (over page) should be followed in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse:

NB - Where an allegation is made against a Cheviot Youth staff member or volunteer the below process still applies. A referral will be made to Disclosure Scotland if an individual harms a child or puts a child at risk of harm and as a result of this, we take the decision to remove them or they leave of their own accord, come to the end of a contract, retire or have been made redundant. The form for referral to Disclosure Scotland is available on the Government website www.scotland.gov.uk

For example, if:

- A child/young person has alleged that they are being abused
- You see or suspect abuse
- The organisation has received a third party report that a child/young person is being abused/neglected
- There are signs and indicators which could point to abuse/neglect



ACT IMMEDIATELY

Discuss your concerns with the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. If the allegation is about the Safeguarding Officer contact the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. These steps should be taken as soon as possible.

Discussions should focus on:

Nature of concerns; Risks to the child or young person; Action and next steps to be taken



In following the procedures below please bear in mind:

DO NOT INVESTIGATE - Staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation any further or interview the child or young person regarding the situation.

CONFIDENTIALITY - Details of suspicion, allegations or disclosures should only be passed on to the Safeguarding Officer. If responding to an allegation from a young person you must not promise to keep the information they disclose confidential.



RECORD INFORMATION

Detailed written records should be made of all events and what the young person or other individuals have said (where this applies). A form is supplied in Appendix 1 to help structure this. It can also be used to inform Social Work/Police of the events that have occurred. Above and beyond the facts, any opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented can be recorded but it should be clear they are opinions, rather than facts. Records should be signed and stored in a secure place



SEEK ADVICE and REFER TO APPROPRIATE AGENCY

The Safeguarding Officer should contact the Social Work Department and/or the Police and ask to speak to the Duty Officer about a child protection issue. If the report is received during an evening, then the Social Work Department Emergency Duty team and/or the Police should be contacted. Any further action should only be taken in line with the advice given by the Social Work Department. This includes whether the parent or carer of the young person should be informed of the child protection concerns.

Section 5 - Responding when a child or young person discloses abuse

It is likely that a child or young person who has been abused will have given a lot of thought as to whether they should disclose the abuse. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that staff and volunteers follow the steps outlined below:

Stay calm

Remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are trusted, not because you are an expert counsellor. Do not promise to keep the information secret; you may have to inform an appropriate person. You must take any disclosure seriously and reassure the young person that you believe them.

Listen and take the allegation seriously

Listen to what the child or young person is saying. Give them the time and opportunity to tell you as much as they are able and willing to. Do not pressurise them and allow them to disclose information at their own pace. You should not investigate, ask leading questions or ask specific or explicit questions. You should only clarify what they are willing to tell you in their own words. Try to do this in an appropriate place, such as a room where other people can see in through an open door or window. Whilst it's important to respect the young person's privacy it should not be at the expense of other child protection measures.

Reassure

Reassure them that you believe what they are saying and that you know it is not their fault. You should also give them some indication of what you will do next with the information that they have given you.

Confidentiality

Reiterate that you cannot promise to keep the information secret. You must take any disclosure seriously. Details of the disclosure should only be passed on to the Safeguarding Officer, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible you should try not to discuss any concerns that you have about a child or young person in a way that may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.

Record

If you are able to, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to the young person why you are doing it. If it's not possible to do so at the time, record the details as soon as possible after the disclosure with as many facts as possible (dates, times, actual words used).

Look after yourself

Being trusted with a disclosure of abuse directly from a young person can be emotionally draining, worrying and very stressful. Whilst it's essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times, it's important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with the Safeguarding Officer. If appropriate, the Safeguarding Officer will arrange additional support for you.

Section 6 - Protection of Workers who report care and protection concerns

Deciding to report a colleague or volunteer you suspect of abusing or otherwise harming a child can be stressful and difficult and you may be worried about the person concerned taking action against you. The law does give you protection if you raise concerns or report a colleague as long as the report was not malicious.

Section 7 - Data Protection and management of confidential information

Cheviot Youth is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is kept locked and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is kept and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately. Cheviot Youth is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality and this will be respected by all staff and volunteers. However, where a staff member or volunteer feels that the information disclosed by a child or young person should be referred to their line Safeguarding Officer for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that confidentiality cannot be kept.

Section 8 - Review of Child Protection Policy and Procedures

This policy and procedures document will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Officer and the Designated Project Worker, and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

Section 9 – Safeguarding Officer contact details

Ross Irvine

Head of Psychological Services

07394 562 715

rossirvine@cheviotyouth.co.uk

Heather McFadzean

Youth Work Services Manager

07842 416 554

heathermcfadzean@cheviotyouth.co.uk

APPENDIX 1

Child Welfare Report Form

- A report should be made by the person who has had the initial concerns about a child's welfare using this pro forma
- This report form can be filled out digitally. A blank form is stored in the Policies and Procedures folder on the desktop of the staff laptop. DO NOT save the document, as the information enclosed is confidential. Print a copy and hand to the Safeguarding Officer in a sealed envelope, then delete from the laptop
- The report should be handed to the Safeguarding Officer in a sealed envelope
- The Safeguarding Officer should contact the appropriate Social Work Department/Police

Name:

Date:

Who is putting the child/young person at risk? (eg. Staff member, family member...)

Name and contact details of child/young person/s you concern relates to:

Outline your reasons for concern:

Brief outline of any action you have already taken to protect the child/young person:

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Signature:

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Designation:

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Date:

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Follow up action taken by the Safeguarding Officer:

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Signature:

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Designation:

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Date:

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APPENDIX 2

Cheviot Youth - Understanding of Abuse

Abuse to children or vulnerable young people is described under the following headings:

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or young person, whether wilful or unintentional, which results in serious impairment to physical health and development. For example:

- exposing a child to extreme weather conditions e.g. heat and cold.
- failing to seek medical attention for injuries.
- exposing a child to risk of injury through the use of unsafe equipment.
- exposing a child to a hazardous environment without a proper risk assessment of the activity.
- failing to provide adequate nutrition and water.

Signs which **may** raise concerns about physical neglect include:

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene and/or poor state of clothing
- constant tiredness
- frequent lateness or unexplained non-attendance (particularly at school)
- untreated medical problems
- low self-esteem
- poor peer relationships
- stealing

Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child or young person where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. For example:

- Deliberately hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise harming a child.

Signs which **may** raise concerns about physical abuse include:

- refusal to discuss injuries
- aggression towards others
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- running away
- untreated injuries
- excessive physical punishment
- avoiding activities due to injuries or possibility of injuries being discovered

- unexplained injuries, particularly if recurrent

Emotional Abuse

The adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person, caused by failure to provide for their basic emotional needs. For example:

- Persistent failure to show any respect to a child (e.g. continually ignoring a child)
- Constantly humiliating a child by telling them they are useless.
- Continually being aggressive towards a child, making them feel frightened.
- Acting in a way which is detrimental to the child's self-esteem (e.g name calling, sarcasm, constant criticism)

Signs which **may** raise concerns about emotional abuse include:

- low self-esteem
- significant decline in concentration
- running away
- indiscriminate friendliness and neediness
- extremes of passivity or aggression
- self-harm or mutilation

Sexual Abuse

Any child or young person below the age of 18 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person, by design or neglect, exploits the child or young person directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person including organised networks. This includes forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, and non-contact acts such as forcing children to look at or be involved in the production of pornographic material, to watch sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. For example:

- exposure to sexually explicit inappropriate language or jokes.
- showing a child pornographic material or using a child to produce such material.
- inappropriate touching.

The following signs **may** raise concerns about sexual abuse:

- lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults, fear of a particular adult
- social isolation - being withdrawn or introverted, poor peer relationship
- sleep disturbance (nightmares, bedwetting, fear of sleeping alone)
- running away from home
- drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse
- display of sexual knowledge beyond the child's age

Other abusive behaviour towards children and young people

Staff, volunteers and committee members should also be aware of other, perhaps less obvious, forms of abuse. These may be dismissed by perpetrators as 'just fun' or 'having a laugh' with young people but can have a serious impact and cannot be allowed or go unchallenged:

- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism of any form
- Homophobia or anti-LGBTQIA* rhetoric of any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

*LGBTQIA = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual.

More information can be found about what constitutes anti-LGBTQIA bullying in the Cheviot Youth anti-bullying policy.

Alternatively LGBT Youth Scotland can be contacted by going to:

<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/contact/>

Appendix 3

United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 1 (definition of the child) Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

Article 2 (non-discrimination) The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 3 (best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 4 (implementation of the Convention) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

Article 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities) Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

Article 6 (life, survival and development) Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 7 (birth registration, name, nationality, care) Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

Article 8 (protection and preservation of identity) Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

Article 9 (separation from parents) Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

Article 10 (family reunification) Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

Article 11 (abduction and non-return of children) Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 13 (freedom of expression) Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion) Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

Article 15 (freedom of association) Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16 (right to privacy) Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

Article 17 (access to information from the media) Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance) Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect) Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20 (children unable to live with their family) If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

Article 21 (adoption) Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

Article 22 (refugee children) If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

Article 23 (children with a disability) A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

Article 24 (health and health services) Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25 (review of treatment in care) If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

Article 26 (social security) Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

Article 27 (adequate standard of living) Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups) Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32 (child labour) Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

Article 33 (drug abuse) Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

Article 34 (sexual exploitation) Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Article 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking) Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

Article 36 (other forms of exploitation) Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

Article 37 (inhumane treatment and detention) Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

Article 38 (war and armed conflicts) Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration) Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

Article 40 (juvenile justice) A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

Article 41 (respect for higher national standards) If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.

Article 42 (knowledge of rights) Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

NB - The Convention has 54 articles in total. Articles 43–54 are about how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. A full description of all 54 articles can be found at <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>