



# **Child Protection Officers at Ocean Youth Connexions**



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**Emergency number for social services**

**020 7364 3444**

**Social Services out of Hours Team**

**020 7364 7000**

Updated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016

**Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management Committee recommends the following principles of good practice in child protection for all organised sessions**



Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management Committee believes that all agencies working with vulnerable groups, particularly children should have a child protection policy and statement for all volunteers (including parents and guardians) and staff;

Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management Committee believes that every child, regardless of age, has at all times, in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice which results in the child being physically or psychologically damaged;

Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management will ensure that there is an appointed member of staff for child protection for its various user groups.

Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management will try to provide child protection training in-house or refer workers and volunteers to attend child protection courses to enhance their knowledge around child protection issues.

Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management understands that the welfare of the child is of paramount consideration and we must all work together to ensure the protection of children.

## What is Child Abuse?

### ***The formal definition of Child Abuse is:***

*'Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or \*omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).'*

Reference 'Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility'.

### **Various types of child protection issues:**

- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Physical Neglect**
- **Physical Injury**
- **Emotional Abuse**

*\*NB This means children at risk through either something a person has done to them OR something a person is failing to do for them.*

#### ▪ **Abuse and Neglect**

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

• **Neglect** – where adults fail 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 (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.) It may also include refusal to give children love, affection and attention. Neglect in play activities could include a youth worker not ensuring children and young people are safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.

• **Physical abuse** – where adults and sometimes other young people physically hurt or injure children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, or scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after e.g. factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. Examples of physical abuse in play activities may be when the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body. Where drugs are used or encouraged to enhance performance in physical sports such as weightlifting, football, running, dance etc.

• **Sexual abuse** – where girls and boys are abused by adults (both male and female) or other young people who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could

include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse. In sports and play activities, coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

- **Emotional abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child. Emotional abuse in sport may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

## **Signs and Symptoms in recognising Abuse**

### **1. Physical Abuse**

Indicators of possible abuse:- however these indicators are not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of them is not proof that the young person is being abused.

- Current and or unexplained injuries
- Inappropriate excuses to explain injury
- Untreated injury
- Fear of returning home
- Aggression towards others

### **2. Neglect**

- Constant hunger and tiredness
- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state or inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or absence from sessions
- Low self esteem
- Poor peer relationships

### **3. Emotional Abuse**

- Low self-Esteem
- Decline in concentration levels
- Continual self-depreciation
- Emotional immaturity
- Extremes of behaviour

### **4. Sexual Abuse**

- Unexplained changes in behaviour
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults
- Inappropriate language

Sometimes changes in behaviour can relate to other significant events in a young persons life, such as bereavement, internal family difficulties or bullying. Working in partnership with parents/carers and ensuring positive communication will help to ensure that reasons for changes in behaviour can be identified and action taken to support the young person.

### **Remember!**

It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working at Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) to decide that abuse is occurring, but it **IS** their responsibility to act on any concern by reporting this to the appropriate authority.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It is often the case that the bully is a young person. There are three types of bullying;

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft;
- Verbal, e.g. racist or homophobia remarks;
- Emotional, e.g. persistent negative feedback.

All of these will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim;
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies;
- An outcome, which is always painful and distressing for the individuals.

Bullying behaviour may also include:

- Other forms of violence;
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing;
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive, offensive comments of sexual nature.

It is of paramount importance that the Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) has in place an **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY** which all users, parents and workers adhere to.

## **How to React & Listen**

*Volunteers and staff and Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) Management Committee must, at all times:*

- Acknowledge the age group they work with;
- Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues;
- Allow the child time to speak and not interrupt nor make suggestions to them which could imply making an investigation;
- Reassure the child that they are glad she or he has told what has happened and that it was right to tell;
- Not interrogate or question other than to clarify your understanding. If the matter is to be investigated further it will be so done by trained professionals. No matter how well you know the child, spare them having to repeat themselves over and over. Apart from anything else, the child may begin to think that you don't believe them;
- Be honest, tell the child that you cannot keep it a secret, you have to talk to someone else that can help;
- Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child -

Think of how hard it must be to say it. Some things are very difficult to talk about, you've been chosen because the child feels they can talk to you. If you show anger, disgust, disbelief then the child may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further or feel that your negative feelings are being directed towards them;

- Listen to the child - REALLY LISTEN - take what they say seriously. Tell them that they've done the right thing by telling you;

As soon as practical write down everything the child told you, but remember that this is a confidential matter between you and the child. The only person you should be discussing it with is the committee member for your organisation who has agreed to act as monitor for child protection issues.

In all cases of reported poor practise/abuse, the following principles must always be adopted:

### **DO:**

- Stay calm
- Reassure the child
- Listen sympathetically
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Ensure you clearly understand what the child has said
- Consult with the club or Child protection Welfare Officer
- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure the safety of the young person

### **DO NOT:**

- Panic
- Make promises
- Ask leading questions
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Delay
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do, you can gain further help from the NSPCC 24 hour freephone helpline (0800 800 500) or the RFU Child Protection Line (020 831 6655).

### **Procedure in Recording the information**

Remember all information must be recorded to assist external agencies. A detailed report will be needed at the time of disclosure. Below is a list of details, which the report must contain:

- The young persons name, address, date of birth, race, ethnic origin, and any disability they may have;
- Nature of the allegation;
- A description of any injuries/brushings;
- Any observations about the behaviour/emotional state of the young person;
- Times, locations, dates;
- The young persons account in their own words what has happened;
- Actions that have taken as a result of your concerns;
- Whether the person writing the report is expressing their own concerns or those of a third party;
- Sign and date;
- Keep a copy;
- Keep a record of the name and designation of Social Service member of staff or police officer to whom concerns were passed.
- Volunteers when recording information must do so in the presence of the designated Child Protection Officer who is currently **Kamal Ahmed** In the absence of the designated Child Protection Officer the Chairperson **Abdul Munim** will be responsible. In the absence of both the Child Protection Officer and the Deputy Child Protection Officer the Secretary will take responsibility in recording the information with the volunteer.

## **Child Protection Policy for Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC)**

We recognise that child protection should not be treated in isolation - we will take on board guidance given by Tower Hamlets Child Protection Committee and will address recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees by doing the following:

We accept that it is our responsibility as a group to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted;

We will ensure that every new volunteer or member of staff will complete a Personal Profile Form

We will make a request for previous addresses on volunteer/ job application forms;

We will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference;

We will follow up each reference with a telephone call, personal contact or via email during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children. A record of this will be kept in the applicant's file;

We will interview prospective volunteers and staff;

We will note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and staff in working with children;

We will carry out a probationary period for all volunteers and staff of at least three months.

We believe that every child regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our group, if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well-being, we will take action.

All volunteers or staff are encouraged to share concerns with the group's committee member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have very serious doubts about the child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately.

If our concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then we will discuss these with our group's child protection monitor, who would then make a referral to Social Services who will make the necessary arrangements. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately.

### **To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below;**

- 1) Upon the receipt of any information from a child or suspicions, it is necessary to record what they have seen, heard or know accurately at the time the event occurs;
  - 2) Share their concerns with the monitor for the group and agree action to take;
  - 3) Always **REFER** never **INVESTIGATE** any suspicions or allegations about abuse.
- If we have concerns we must act - it may be the final piece of the jigsaw that is needed to protect that child - or we may prevent further children from being hurt.

Area Social Work Office  
Police Station  
Out of hours Social Work  
Emergency Service

Both the local Area Social Work Office and Police Office telephone numbers are to be found in the telephone directory. For ease of reference note them below

### **Policy Statement for Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC)**

We Will:

- Hold a register of every child involved with the group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies;
- Treat everyone with respect;
- Remember that some issues are confidential;
- Provide an example we would wish others to follow;
- Where possible consider activities which involve more than one adult being present or at least within sight and hearing of others;
- Be aware that, someone else might misinterpret our actions even if they are well-intentioned;
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy;
- Provide time for children to talk to us;
- Encourage children to respect and care for others;
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- Have a group policy for the collection of children after meetings have finished;
- Remember to REFER not INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse;
- Only share concerns and seek support from those identified in the group's child protection policy;

#### **For further information contact:**

Centre Child Protection Officers:

Local contacts:

Designated Child Protection Officer  
Mohammed Kamal Ahmed  
Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC)  
Stepney City Farm  
London E1 3DG  
Phone:07956 907 37

*Early Years Service Manger*  
Mulberry Place  
London E14 2BG  
Phone: 020 7364 4692

Deputy Child Protection Officer  
Mohammed Adnan Miah  
Phone:07960 259 259

Tower Hamlets Education Social services  
Phone: 020 7364 3444  
9:00am – 5.00pm

Tower Hamlets out of Hours Bethnal Green, Stepney Green and Wapping Child Protection Team  
020 7364 2904 / 2972  
Social Services out of Hours Team  
020 7364 7000  
Police Child Protection Team  
020 8217 4941

## **Supervision of workers and volunteers**

Supervision is an important part of effective delivery and is an invaluable tool for professional development. At Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) we recommend that supervision takes place regularly, one every three months by management, team leaders, in-charges, etc. It is up to the workers/volunteers to request supervision from their superiors, team leaders and peers if they feel the need to be supervised more regularly than the recommended time.

### **Supervision allows individuals to:**

- Express ideas
- Explain thinking
- Test out ideas ahead of time
- Check out an understanding of a situation
- Explore options
- Evaluate decisions
- Give and receive feedback
- Receive confirmation of thinking and ideas
- Shift perspective and adjust approach as a result of feedback

### **Supervision might be provided by:**

- A line manger/team leader, who may be able to draw on wider experience or see the task in a different context.
- A specialist who may offer supervision on a particular issue or area of expertise
- Or a peer, who may offer a fresh perspective on the work from the same position in the organisation, without any concerns about power differences in the supervisory relationship.

Whichever approach is chosen the task need to be undertaken in a spirit of mutual learning in an atmosphere of mutual respect and strict regard for confidentiality. All supervisors must ensure that records are kept in a safe place away from general access.

Supervision needs to be seen separate and distinct from other activities such as appraisal, management and performance review.

Both supervisors and participants need to prepare a time, date and place for discussion away from noise and constant distractions from users and guests. A session is likely to be more rewarding and beneficial where the supervisee has prepared items for discussion so that the issues that matter most to him/her are properly covered.

## **Principles of Supervision**

1. All workers have a right to supervision in order to:
  - Enhance youthwork practice
  - Ensure continuous professional development
  - Receive (and give when appropriate) feedback
  - Monitor curriculum delivery
2. All supervision is closed and confidential to supervisee and supervisor
3. The focus of each session is the individual's work and practice
4. Each party will prepare for the supervisory session
5. Each person will have an agenda prepared and agreed ahead of time
6. Sessions will examine success as well as explore difficulties
7. The purpose of the supervision is to develop a dialogue around the supervisee's work, the outcome from which is the joint learning of both parties
8. On occasions, both parties may agree that it is appropriate to share an issue with the wider team to enhance the learning of all team members.

## Implementation and Monitoring Procedures

A sub-group of the Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) will meet once a year to draw up an annual implementation plan and review progress. The plan will highlight the action that needs to be taken, by whom, how and when in order to implement OYC's Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Reviewing and evaluating the implementation of this plan is a crucial part of the process and we may choose to evaluate levels of awareness and knowledge, perceptions and attitudes, behaviour and skills as well as incidents and processes. The sub group will take decisions on the appropriate methods for reviewing implementation. The purpose for the implementation plan is to:

- Disseminate OYC's Child Protection message so that it reaches and influences all related youth organisations to safeguard the welfare of young people and disabled adults in play activities
- Operate sound recruitment procedures for paid and voluntary staff in Youth work
- Identify and enable the appropriate child protection training for staff
- Remain updated with legislation related to child protection
- Monitor and update the implementation plan annually to keep child protection high on the Youth work agenda
- Measure the impact of the policy and procedures on an annual basis.

This Child Protection policy will be reviewed at least every two years. Where there are legislation changes, or a significant incident occurs then the policy will be reviewed more often. The above group created by the Management Committee will carry out the review. The policy will then be taken to the Management Committee for approval. All staff Ocean Youth Connexions (OYC) will be given a briefing and a copy of the updated policy. A copy will always remain in the Centres Policy and Procedures Folder found in the Office cabinet.

Chairperson:

Child Protection Officer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ocean Youth Connexions Youth

## Child Protection - Incident Record Form

|                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Your Name:</b>                                                                                                             |
| <b>Your Position:</b>                                                                                                         |
| <b>Name of Child:</b>                                                                                                         |
| <b>Child's Address;</b>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Date of Birth of Child:</b>                                                                                                |
| <b>Name and Address of Parents:</b>                                                                                           |
| <b>Date, time and place of any incident:</b>                                                                                  |
| <b>Your Observation:</b>                                                                                                      |
| <b>What did the child say? Please quote and do not ask any leading questions (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):</b> |

# Action Taken

## External Agencies contacted;

|               |     |                          |    |                          |
|---------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| <b>Police</b> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

If yes – Name of Person Contacted:

Telephone Number :

Details of advice given:

|                        |     |                          |    |                          |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| <b>Social Services</b> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

If yes – Name of Person Contacted:

Telephone Number :

Details of advice given:

|              |     |  |    |  |
|--------------|-----|--|----|--|
| <b>NSPCC</b> | Yes |  | No |  |
|--------------|-----|--|----|--|

If yes – Name of Person Contacted:

Telephone Number :

Details of advice given:

Any other comments you wish to make:

**Remember to maintain confidentiality on a *need to know basis* – only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss the incident with anyone other than those who need to know.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NB A copy of the form needs to be sent to the local authority after the telephone report.**