

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Note:-

This Child Protection Policy defines the general approach, objectives and arrangements that G&L Consultancy Ltd will utilise in order to effectively ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults. For ease of use in this document the term "Children" will refer to those under the age of 18 as defined by the Children's Act 1989, and will include vulnerable adults.

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Part One – Child Protection Policy Statement

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 G&L Consultancy is committed to implementing policies so that all of our employees accept their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults and reporting any concerns about their welfare to the appropriate authorities.
- 1.2 The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, with appropriate safety / protection whilst in the presence of our employees.
- 1.3 A child / young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children’s Act 1989)
- 2.0 Policy Statement
- 2.1 G&L Consultancy is committed to the following:
 - 2.1.1 the welfare of the child is paramount.
 - 2.1.2 taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
 - 2.1.3 all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- 3.0 Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy and Procedures
- 3.1 The implementation of this policy should be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- 3.2 The policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a major change in relevant legislation.

Part Two – Promoting Good Practice

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in 'Part Four – Responding to Suspicions and Allegations'.
- 1.2 This section will help to identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.
- 2.0 Good Practice
- 2.1 All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions:
 - 2.1.1 always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets);
 - 2.1.2 treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- 3.0 Poor Practice
- 3.1 The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:
 - 3.1.1 unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
 - 3.1.2 taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short;
 - 3.1.3 engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
 - 3.1.4 allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
 - 3.1.5 allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
 - 3.1.6 making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in jest;
 - 3.1.7 allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.

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- 4.0 Code of Behaviour
- 4.1 Employees must avoid situations that result in them being alone with children except in unavoidable circumstances. For example, an employee must not enter a home where there is/are unsupervised child/children. Employees should avoid situations where a child is left unsupervised in their presence during a home visit.
- 4.2 Where a prior arrangement is being made it should be made clear it is mandatory that if a child/children will be present that an adult must also be present.
- 4.3 Employees who breach the above standards of behaviour may face disciplinary procedures.

Part Three – Defining Child Abuse

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.
- 1.2 There are four main types of abuse:
- **Physical abuse;**
 - **Sexual abuse;**
 - **Emotional abuse;**
 - **Neglect.**
- 1.3 The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person from harming the young person.
- 1.4 Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.
- 1.5 Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.
- 2.0 Types of Abuse
- 2.1 Physical Abuse:
- 2.1.1 Where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning.
- 2.1.2 Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

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- 2.2 Emotional Abuse:
 - 2.2.1 The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a young person, is likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
 - 2.2.2 It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person.
 - 2.2.3 It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development.
 - 2.2.4 It may cause a young person to be frightened or by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.
- 2.3 Neglect:
 - 2.3.1 Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.
 - 2.3.2 For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- 2.4 Sexual Abuse:
 - 2.4.1 Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling.
 - 2.4.2 Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

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- 3.0 Indicators of Abuse
- 3.1 Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:
- 3.1.1 Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
 - 3.1.2 An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent;
 - 3.1.3 The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them;
 - 3.1.4 another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person;
 - 3.1.5 unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
 - 3.1.6 inappropriate sexual awareness;
 - 3.1.7 engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
 - 3.1.8 distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
 - 3.1.9 difficulty in making friends;
 - 3.1.10 being prevented from socialising with others.
- 3.2 It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place.
- 3.3 It is not the responsibility of any employee of G&L Consultancy to decide that child abuse is occurring. It is their responsibility to act on any genuine concerns.

Part Four – Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 It is not the responsibility of anyone working for G&L Consultancy in any capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any genuine concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person.
- 1.2 This section explains how to respond to allegations / suspicions.
- 2.0 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse
- 2.1 We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. It may be seen happening, or it may be suspected because of signs such as those listed in Part 3 of this document. It may be reported by someone else or directly by the young person affected.
- 2.2 In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:
 - 2.2.1 Stay calm so as not to frighten the young person;
 - 2.2.2 Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell;
 - 2.2.3 Listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously;
 - 2.2.4 Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify;
 - 2.2.5 Inform the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse from continuing;
 - 2.2.6 Safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue;
 - 2.2.7 Record all information;
 - 2.2.8 Report the incident to the appropriate authorities (having first discussed it with the Directors at G&L Consultancy – or the Northern Ireland Director initially in the case of the Northern Ireland office).

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3.0 Recording Information

3.1 To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should be made at the time of the disclosure / concern. Information should be confined to facts. Do not include your own opinions.

3.2 Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth;
- the child's home address and telephone number;
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's;
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information;
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes;
- details of witnesses to the incidents;
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising / injuries occurred;
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?;
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details;
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

4.0 Reporting the Concern

4.1 All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is important to not allow personal feelings to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

4.2 G&L Consultancy expects its employees to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with Directors at G&L Consultancy and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

4.3 Where there is a complaint against an employee, there may be three types of investigation.

4.3.1 Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved;

4.3.2 Child protection in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved;

4.3.3 Disciplinary or misconduct in which case the employee will be involved.

4.4 As mentioned previously in this document G&L Consultancy employees are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies which are responsible for child protection.

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- 4.5 Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.
- 4.6 If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.
- 4.7 Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee should be reported to the Directors of G&L Consultancy (or initially the Northern Ireland Branch Manager in the case of the Northern Ireland office) who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:
- 4.7.1 G&L Consultancy will refer the matter to social services department;
- 4.7.2 the parent / carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- 4.8 Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such an allegation is made, the same procedures should be followed. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.
- 5.0 Confidentiality
- 5.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:
- The Directors at G&L Consultancy Ltd;
 - The parents of the child;
 - The person making the allegation;
 - Social Services / Police;
 - The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).
- 5.2 Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.
- 5.3 All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to the designated people, in line with data protection laws.

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- 6.0 Internal Inquiries and Suspension
- 6.1 The Directors of G&L Consultancy will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- 6.2 Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Directors of G&L Consultancy will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff can be reinstated. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police.
- 6.3 In such cases the Directors must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true.
- 6.4 The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Part Five – Recruiting and Selecting Personnel

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.
 - 1.1.1 All staff / potential staff will have completed an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
 - 1.1.2 Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
 - 1.2.3 Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work should be obtained.
 - 1.2.4 Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo) should be provided and retained.
- 2.0 Interview and Induction
- 2.1 All employees who will have significant access to children will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees should receive formal or informal induction during which:
 - 2.1.1 A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures;
 - 2.1.2 Their qualifications should be substantiated;
 - 2.1.3 The job requirements and responsibilities should be fully clarified;
 - 2.1.4 Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness.

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3.0 Training

3.1 In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

3.1.1 Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations;

3.1.2 Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and / or abuse;

3.1.3 Respond to concerns expressed by a child;

3.1.4 Work safely and effectively with children.

This statement will be displayed in the main office and reviewed annually or earlier if significant business changes warrant it, any revisions will be brought to the attention of staff. Copies of this policy will be held in all offices and available to all staff.

This policy has been endorsed by Julie Lewis and has the full support of the management team.

The policy was reviewed and approved on 15th January 2024 following consultation with senior managers and workers.

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Overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the policy lies with Julie Lewis, Quality Director. For more information, please contact this person: 01823 443 898

Director	Name	Signature	Date
Quality Director	Julie Lewis	<i>Julie Lewis</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Technical Director	Paul Lewis	<i>Paul Lewis</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Somerset Office	Name	Signature	Date
Health, Safety and Quality Manager	Mark Skinner	<i>Mark Skinner</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Operations Manager	Darren Alway	<i>Darren Alway</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Client Liaison Manager	James Ooyman	<i>James Ooyman</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Finance and HR Manager	Sally Monger	<i>Sally Monger</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Asbestos Removal & Air Test Manager	Jason Monger	<i>Jason Monger</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Training Manager	Jack Leese	<i>Jack Leese</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Survey Manager	Jo Haigh	<i>Jo Haigh</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Northern Ireland Office	Name	Signature	Date
Northern Ireland Director	Alan Lewis	<i>Alan Lewis</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Business Development & Personnel Manager	Karen Lewis	<i>Karen Lewis</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Lab Manager	Colin Webb	<i>Colin Webb</i>	15 th Jan 2024
Deputy NI Branch Manager	John McAleenan	<i>John McAleenan</i>	15 th Jan 2024