

VOLUNTARY ACTION SHETLAND - SHETLAND BEFRIENDING SCHEME

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

In line with Voluntary Action Shetland's Protection of Vulnerable People Policy, in the event that a young person is perceived to be at harm, or at risk of harm due to the following:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Self-harm
- The young person may present a risk to another person

This may involve the young person disclosing that they are being harmed or at risk of harm, the procedure below will be followed:

The volunteer will consult the scheme staff (in the event that staff is unavailable or it is out-of-hours and it is an emergency situation the Duty Social worker should be contacted) before any further action is taken. Volunteers will be provided with relevant contact numbers for out-of-hours support at their Keeping Children and Adults Safe initial training session.

The project co-ordinator will normally be responsible for contacting relevant agencies in these circumstances.

The young person will be kept informed of the action that is being taken.

The volunteer or staff from the scheme must not investigate the situation and must only listen and record what the young person says to them. This information must be passed to the Duty social worker.

The volunteer cannot promise the young person to keep the information secret, as it is a requirement that child protection issues are dealt with.

It is the Shetland Islands Council Social Work Department who has the responsibility to investigate concerns in accordance with Shetland Islands Council Inter-agency procedures.

All volunteers will receive training about Child Protection issues.

16+ Adults

In the case of 16+ adults, any disclosure by them that they have been abused or are being abused should be discussed further with them to determine what support they require. It should also be determined if they are considered to be an adult who is at risk of harm, as per the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. Advice and support in doing this must be sought from the scheme staff should this type of incident occur.

Volunteers must also immediately seek advice from scheme staff where the 16+ adult discloses that they are abusing or have abused children, or if they are raising concerns regarding others who are at risk.

Situations that will also warrant action by the volunteer is where the 16+ adult discloses that they are raising concerns regarding siblings who are under 16 (or 18 in the case of children subject to supervision requirements or children with special needs) and are at risk. In these circumstances, the procedures outlined in this procedure must be followed.

For any child or young person up to the age of 18 (regardless of whether they are attending school or not) a child protection referral should be made to Childrens Duty Social Work

For young people who are over the age of 18, but who are still attending school a child protection referral to Childrens Duty Social Work should be made .For some young people who have additional support needs this may mean that they could be 19 and still attending school, but it would be appropriate to make a child protection referral

Young people receiving continuing care or through care and after care(i.e. young people up to 26 who have been looked after) Children Duty Social Work in the first instance

For any other young person over the age of 18 for whom there are concerns that they may be at risk then a referral to Adult Duty Social Work under Adult Protection Procedures is appropriate

In any situation where staff are concerned about the safety of a young person it is always appropriate to seek advice from a Line Manger or Duty Social Work – remember its everyone’s job to keep young people safe

It is also important to note that Protocol 11 Vulnerable Young People in the Shetland Interagency Child Protection Procedures can be used to refer the young person if they meet the criteria contained in the protocol. Web link to Protocol 11

<https://www.safershetland.com/assets/files/cp-procedures-final-march-2019v2.pdf>

Following a referral to Duty Social Work an Interagency Referral Discussion may be held involving Social Work, Police Scotland, NHS Shetland and Schools Service (if appropriate) In some cases there may be a joint investigation (police and social work) and in others social work may make a single agency response to the risks and needs of the young person. In all situations, a referral to Duty Social Work is the starting point if a young person is at risk either as a result of their own behaviour or the actions of others.

Childrens Duty Social Work 01595 744420

Adult Duty Social Work 01595 744468

Out of Hours 01595 695611