

4. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Purpose: As Aberdeen FC Community Trust run several programmes involving children and young people it is imperative that the staff can recognise and respond to any abuse, neglect or harm of a young person. Even if the child does not verbally tell you they have been abused (if they do please see [Dealing with disclosure Procedure](#)) there may be other indicators to look out for. This will provide guidance on how to identify any abuse and how to report it.

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1. How Disclosure Happens

1.1 There are 4 different ways that a young person could disclose abuse, neglect or harm to you:

- **Directly** - by verbally communicating to you statements of what has happened – Please see [Dealing with disclosure Procedure](#)
- **Indirectly** – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong.
- **Behaviourally** – Displaying behaviour that signals something might be wrong (sometimes not deliberate)
- **Non-verbally** – Writing letters, drawing pictures, or trying to communicate in other ways.

2. Spotting the Signs of Abuse

2.1 Please read the following guidance from NSPCC on the [Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse](#).

3. How to Respond to Concerns

3.1 When you have a concern regarding a child or young person it is our commitment to work with the primary carers who are responsible for that child or young person such as parents/carers/school.

3.2 Where concerns are raised about a child or young person, this will be considered in line with the wellbeing indicators and may be discussed with parents/carers. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce, or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations and the best interests of the child will be considered as to what is the best support for each individual child.



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3.4 Depending on the nature of the concern, for example more than one of their wellbeing indicators (SAFE, HEALTHY, ACTIVE, NURTURED, ACHIEVING, RESPECTED, RESPONSIBLE, INCLUDED) has been affected or a more serious concern, then a [Concern Recording Form](#) **must be completed – Section A**

Or Where there is information or details in relation to the conduct an adult affecting a child's wellbeing, this should be recorded in Part B of the [Concern Recording Form](#).

All Concern Recording Forms should be sent to your Line Manger, Operations Manager and AFCCT Safeguarding Officer, Richard Taylor (07764261313) as soon as possible.

4. What if the allegation is against an AFCCT member of staff or volunteer.

4.1 If a concern or allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a volunteer or employee, or if any member of AFCCT personnel has a suspicion of inappropriate conduct with young people, the Safeguarding Officer & Operations Manager should be contacted. If the allegation is about the Safeguarding Officer or Operations Manager, then the person to be contacted is the CEO. The over-riding priority is always the safety of the child or young person.

Where there are grounds for suspicion of abuse, the member of personnel will be informed of the allegation and given the opportunity to respond. That person will then normally be removed from duties that have direct contact with children and young people or be suspended with full pay without prejudice. This action will be taken by the CEO or another officer of AFCCT prior to prompt referral of the allegation to the appropriate authorities. In all such cases AFCCT will fully comply with all aspects of an external investigation and will seek to review policy and procedures on conclusion of same.

In all allegations of abuse involving a member of personnel, external support for that person will be considered.

Lack of Police or other investigatory authority action will not preclude the possibility of disciplinary action being taken with staff/volunteers if deemed appropriate in response to poor practice. Procedures will take place as per the Managing Grievances, Allegations and Discipline policy.

5. The Child's Right to be Protected.

5.1 When information is being recorded about a young person, it is important that the young person understands why we are recording their details and gain consent where possible. If the young person recognises that people can help, and this is the purpose of the details being shared, they are more included and informed of the processes, however there may be situations where you can do it without consent.

5.2 Where the concern about a young person's wellbeing suggests they need protection; the information must be passed on with or without their consent for their purposes of their protection. **No member of AFCCT staff should investigate allegations of abuse or if the young person has been abused.** If the young person indicates or information is obtained gives concern that a young person is being abused, the information must be responded within the same day. Therefore, this needs to be addressed as an urgent matter.

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5.3 If the safeguarding Officer is not available and an immediate response is required, the police and social work services must be contacted along with your Line Manager and Operations Manager. They have a statutory responsibility to the young person and may also hold other concerning information about the individual. Record any advice given, actions taken and the response by other agencies using the [Incident Form](#). At the earliest opportunity thereafter, the Safeguarding Officer & Operations Manager should be informed, and incident form sent.

* If the Safeguarding Officer & Operations Manager is not available, please contact your line manager or Head of HR.

6. Responding to Concern Flowchart

See [Flowchart](#)