



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to specify Pro Youth's policy and procedures on the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The document applies to all Pro Youth staff and volunteers. The policy and procedures apply to all of Pro Youth activities – i.e. the provision of all of its services and activities, staff management, volunteers and dealing with members of the public, including suppliers, customers and the local authority.

It is a criminal offence for an employer not to check an employee working with children or vulnerable adults and/or knowingly to give a job to someone who is inappropriate to work with children or vulnerable adults. In law, a child is defined as up to the age of 18. The Education Act 1996 distinguishes between a "child" (someone of compulsory school age) and a "young person" (over compulsory school age but under 18),

To this end the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and merges the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

The primary role of the DBS is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups including children. Regulated Activity describes the kind of work to which barring applies and is fully set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012).

DBS Statutory Responsibilities

- processing requests for criminal records checks for applications made in England and Wales
- deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list
- maintaining the DBS children's barred list and the DBS adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Accountability

The DBS is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Home Office. The DBS has certain statutory responsibilities and is accountable to Parliament. This means that the DBS operates within defined areas of autonomy and operational discretion, however effectiveness and efficiencies are closely scrutinised by ministers, officials and stakeholders.



Policy

It is the policy of Pro Youth to safeguard the welfare of children and all others involved in our work by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

It is therefore Pro Youth policy to:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers (legally responsible adults) working with children, young people or vulnerable adults: are carefully selected, are checked by the DBS and understand and accept their responsibility for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers (legally responsible adults) working with children, young people or vulnerable adults enter into appropriate, professional working relationships, with clear professional boundaries and a clear understanding of our responsibilities and Duty of Care.
- Raise awareness of child protection issues amongst partners and organisations within our network.
- Ensure that the child's welfare is of paramount importance, regardless of age, gender, ability or race, when planning, organising, advising on and delivering children's activities.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate external agencies.
- Raise the awareness of relevant staff, partner organisations and volunteers of child protection issues through the provision of training.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. As a minimum, it should be reviewed annually.
- Ensure that the principles of this policy are adopted by all organisations or individuals with whom Pro Youth works and by members of the Pro Youth network, through the adoption of a policy, which meets the same level of determination with regard to child safety. Working alongside the local authority.

Procedures

Recruitment of Employees & Volunteers

The aim of the recruitment and selection processes for employees and volunteers is to ensure that the best person for a particular role is appointed. To this end every reasonable step is taken to ensure that when decisions are made, the only personal characteristics taken into account are those that are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. However, with regard to criminal convictions, Pro Youth needs to balance the need to protect the interests of young people with its desire not to discriminate unfairly against ex-offenders. This will be looked at on a one to one basis during the recruitment process.

Work with Children and Young People – Creating a safe environment

Pro Youth requires all those working with children and young people in any situation to help to create a safe environment in which to work with them.



Basic Rules

The word “session” is used below to cover all situations e.g. activity programmes, taster sessions, fundraising and promotional events, conferences etc. The word “staff” includes volunteers:

- Staff working with children should be appropriately trained to ensure the safe provision of services, mentoring and use of equipment.
- Staff working with children should carefully plan sessions with the care and safety of children as their primary concern including the use of appropriate equipment and activities.
- Pro Youth operate a maximum staffing ratio of 1:3, meaning 1 staff member will supervise a maximum of 3 young people. When specific activities involve larger groups of young people, our staffing ratio's will reflect the risk assessments and need required. Sometimes young people may require one to one support.
- Staff delivering support sessions must ensure that they have the emergency contact numbers of the nearest Social Services Department with them at the location along with contact details of their Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff will be expected to keep an attendance register for all organised sessions.
- Parental consent and medical information about the child must be obtained in advance when Pro Youth is working directly with and has responsibility for each child/ren. Staff should have access to Information and Parental Consent Forms for all children taking part in sessions and this information should be treated as confidential. Pro Youth will follow the latest GDPR guidelines.
- Children and parents should be given a 'named person' to whom they may report any worries or concerns.
- Staff should ensure that sessions start and end on time.
- Staff are expected to promote equality & diversity and demonstrate and incorporate the values of fairness, trust and ethics throughout the session.
- Staff must give due regard to issues of safety at all times. This includes carrying out appropriate risk assessments before all sessions.
- All accidents/incidents involving staff or participants should be recorded in accordance with the organisation's incident & accident reporting procedures immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Staff and volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment.
- Staff are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate people.



Good Practice to protect against allegations of abuse

Staff should be aware that any worker is potentially at risk of being accused of inappropriate behaviour in relation to children and young people.

The following guidance is offered;

- Do not rely on reputation to protect you, nor believe that such an accusation could never happen to you.
- If you suspect a young person is developing a 'crush' on you talk to your line manager or other colleagues about it and avoid situations which can be misconstrued.
- If you think a colleague is making themselves appear open to accusation of abuse, draw it to their attention.

If you begin to feel affection for a young person, which is not appropriate to your professional work, withdraw from the situation and raise the matter with your senior colleague.

Where your professional integrity is concerned do not take risks.

You should not:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children to **your** home.

Where occasions arise where it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation and/or the children's parents.

Never:

- Engage in rough physical activities including horseplay.
- Engage in sexually proactive activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Touch a young person in a way that could be misinterpreted, nor make sexually suggestive or salacious comments about or to a child even in fun.
- Let an allegation a child makes during a group session go unchallenged.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.

Photography and Interviews

Formal permission should be obtained for the use of any images or quotes, whether of a child, young person or adult; apart from child protection issues, photographs and quotes/interviews that identify the person, are classed as personal information and, as such, are governed by the provisions of GDPR guidelines. Permission is obtained from Parents / Guardians / Carers when they sign our personal information and consent form.

Off-site and Residential Events

Pro Youth requires all relevant risk assessments to be completed and parental consent obtained before any off-site or residential event takes place. Pro Youth will ensure appropriate experienced staff and or partners will be present during the activity.



Suspicious / Reports of Abuse

It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to deal with suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns in line with guidance on reporting child abuse. You may find that these suspicions back up other recorded incidents.

Remember, **do not investigate – do report.**

The child's / young person's welfare is paramount and Pro Youth staff and volunteers must listen to and work in partnership with children, young people, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Social Services Department (if they initiate an investigation)

If a child's behaviour/appearance gives reason for concern or a child has an unusual physical injury or a child confides about abuse, the procedure that **MUST** be followed is:

- Immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and / or a member of the Senior Management Team.
- Make a record of your actions, include anything the child said, anything you asked the child, and your observations. This may be used as evidence later. Record only the facts as you know them.
- Ensure the child has access to an independent adult, ask if they want to contact somebody.

The following are some key Do's and Don'ts if a child reports abuse:

Always:

- Stay calm – ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- Allow the child to speak without interruption, accepting what you have been told. This should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told.
- Reassure the child and stress that they are not to blame, tell them that they are right to tell you and that you will try to offer support – but do **not** promise to keep it a secret and tell the child it is your responsibility to inform others.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, without passing any judgement.
- Tell the child that you will try to offer support but you will have to pass the information on – i.e. inform the young person of the limits of confidentiality and the requirement to report the matter to someone in the Safeguarding or Management Team.

Make a note as soon as possible after the event, detailing what you and the child discussed.

Never:

- Rush into details that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else so that you can protect the child and gain support for yourself.

If you receive an allegation from an adult about another adult or yourself, the procedure that **MUST** be followed is:

- Immediately inform the directors of Pro Youth.



- Record the facts as you know them and give a copy of the record to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Pro Youth.
- If abuse is suspected, they will then report concerns directly to the nearest Local Authority Social Services Department, giving them a copy your report. It is then their responsibility to investigate.

If a staff member at Pro Youth receive a request for advice from anyone about suspected / reported abuse of a child (rather than general advice about child protection), the procedure that **MUST** be followed is:

- Advise him/her to make a note as soon as possible detailing the facts as s/he knows them and, if s/he spoke with the child, what s/he and the child discussed.
- Advise him/her to contact the nearest Local Authority Social Services department with details of the concerns/report, including a copy of any written notes.
- Immediately inform the Pro Youth Designated Safeguarding Lead that a request for advice has been made, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will record the request for our records.

Pro Youth working together to promote Early Help

Early Help is a way of thinking and working together as services with families that have additional or more complex needs.

Early Help can prevent problems from getting worse by providing support to families when a need is identified or as soon as a problem emerges. This can be at any point in a child's life, from conception, through childhood and into adolescence. It can also prevent further problems arising by building resilience with families to find their own solutions in the future.

Pro Youth practitioners are experienced in the Early Help process. We encourage parents and carers to access services on their own, making use of the Families Information Service and also by speaking with us about any potential issues they may have that they require additional support with.

Pro Youth use the Continuum of Need model (below) to ensure our support is focussed at the right level. Pro Youth will contact the 'one front door' to report a concern about a child or to gain further advice from professionals if we have any concerns. Consent will be gained from parents/carers (where appropriate) before an Early Help referral is made.

PRO YOUTH EARLY HELP CONTINUUM OF NEED

