timespan

Appendix 7: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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1. Timespan's Safeguarding Policy Statement

Timespan actively promotes the welfare and wellbeing of its employees and of all children, young people and adults whom Timepsan employees come in contact with during any form of engagement we have.

In particular, as an organisation we are committed to ensuring:

- Children's and young people's rights to care and protection from harm in any form are firmly upheld.
- Protected adults' personal interests, dignity and care, protection from harm are safeguarded.
- We fulfil our legislative duties related to safeguarding, including child protection.

- The interests of all Timespan employees are safeguarded as they carry out their tasks and engage with people of all ages.
- All employees within Timespan are suitably trained in how to respond to safeguarding matters.

This policy applies to all Timespan employees, contractors and anyone representing Timespan who works (paid or unpaid) with children, young people and/or protected adults on Timespan's business.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by a number of key pieces of legislation, these are:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)
- Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (2005)
- Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act (1969)
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

2.1 Why it Matters

All children/young people and protected adults have a right not to be abused and to be protected from abuse and neglect. Timespan is committed to creating an environment in which the safety and well-being of children and protected adults is of paramount importance and in which they are safe from abuse, with any suspicion of abuse responded to promptly and appropriately. It is the clear responsibility of all those involved within Timespan to adopt good practice throughout their work.

An important part of our work within Timespan is encouraging children and protected adults to:

- take an interest in;
- be aware of;
- participate in;
- learn about;
- and enjoy

Timespan and all of its facilities and environment, including community workshops, museum, art gallery and art, creative spaces etc. Timespan would like all children and protected adults to enjoy their involvement with us and recognises that we have responsibilities to the children/young people/protected adults we encounter during our work.

Timespan has a duty to:

- protect and care for children/young people and protected adults who come into contact with Timespan and its employees when they use the facilities we offer;
- ensure by way of guidance to our employees who, through their work with Timespan meet children/young people and protected adults do not place themselves in a position where allegations about improper behaviour might occur.

Recognition of child/young people and protected adult protection issues means understanding the facts and translating them into action. Through this policy we aim to adopt the best standards possible with regards to child and protected adult protection and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of those with whom we come into contact through our work within Timespan.

Timespan have issued these guidelines for working with children/young people and protected adults in order to:

- increase the general awareness of child/young people and protected adult protection – how to recognise abuse and the procedures to follow;
- outline the responsibilities which everyone has to protect children/young people and protected adults;
- identify the importance of good practise for those working with children/young people and protected adults.

Implementation of this policy and adherence to the instructions will enable you to undertake your work with children/young people and protected adults, confident that you have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring, whilst being prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

3. Responsibilities

Timespan will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children/young people and protected adults by providing opportunities for them to take an interest in, be aware of, participate in, learn about and enjoy Timespan's facilities and its environment.
- Respect the rights, wishes and feelings of children/young people and protected adults.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children/young people and protected adults and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise Timespan employees to adopt good practice to safeguard and protect children/young people and protected adults from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.

- Require all those undertaking work on behalf of Timespan (paid or unpaid) to adopt and abide by this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and related Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children/young people and protected adults in line with this policy and related procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary procedures and criminal proceedings.

4. Principles

The welfare of children/young people and protected adults is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children/young people and protected adults is of paramount importance.
- Every child, young person and protected adult should be treated as an individual and has a right to a positive sense of identity.
- All children, young people and protected adults have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- All children, young people and protected adults have the right to express their views on matters affecting them.

To promote these principles we will:

- Treat everyone with respect and encourage children, young people and protected adults to respect others.
- Promote the rights, including privacy and dignity, of children, young people and protected adults.
- Respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- Challenge discrimination, prejudice and institutional racsim, whilst remaining cautious when discussing sensitive issues.
- Encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.
- Respect confidentiality and only share information and concerns about children, young people and protected adults with those who need to know.
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour and emotional abuse, including bullying.

- Treat all concerns and allegations seriously and respond appropriately, operating with our agreed policies, procedures and guidance; staying within the law at all times..
- Refer to our concerns, not investigate.

5. Review

This policy and related procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children/young people and protected adults or any changes within Timespan.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children/young people and protected adults within Timespan.

6. Definitions

This policy provides the framework within which Timespan employees, individually and collectively, can understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding / child protection and promoting the welfare of children (1) and protected adults (2)

1. Differing legal definitions of the age of a 'child' can be confusing. The priority is to ensure that a vulnerable young person who is or maybe at risk of harm is offered support and protection. For Timespan, a **child** is defined as anyone under 16 years of age and a **young person** is defined as a person under 18.

1. A protected adult is defined as an individual aged 16 and over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service. Protected adult is therefore a service based definition and avoids labelling adults on the basis of them having a specific condition or disability.

Child Protection – The processes involved in the consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding – This is a much wider concept than child protection and refers to promoting the welfare of children, young people and protected adults. It encompasses protecting from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring that they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children, young people and protected adults to have the best

outcomes. Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Contact Details:

Nominated Child Protection Lead
Name:
Phone/ Email:

Deputy Child Protection Lead(s)
Name:
Phone/ Email:

Trustee/ Senior Lead for Safeguarding and Child Protection:
Name:
Phone/ Email:

NSPCC Helpline: 08088005000

7. Supporting Documents

7.1 Role Description for Nominated Child Protection Lead

Purpose of the Role

To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are in place at Timespan.

Responsibilities

To take a lead role in developing, reviewing and implementing Timespan's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures. Ensuring that all child protection and safeguarding issues concerning children and young people who take part in Timespan's YASS! & TYCI clubs are responded to appropriately.

To ensure that all working/ volunteering with or for children and young people at Timespan, including the board of trustees understand the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and know what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Ensure that children and young people who participate at Timespan's YASS! & TYCI clubs and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response. Ensuring that relevant child protection statements and contacts of relevant child protection lead(s) are publically available on Timespan's website.

Recording information from any person that has concerns about a child or young person who participates in Timespan's activities.

The Child Protection Lead must ensure that they take the lead when responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern. This may also include a concern that an adult involved with Timespan may present a risk to children or young people. This role includes:
-Assessing and clarifying the information
-Making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate
-Consulting with and informing the relevant members of the Timespan's management & Trustees
-Following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures

When necessary, it is the Child Protection Lead's duty to liaise and pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as:

1. The local authority child protection services-In the context of East Sutherland: The Highland Child Protection Committee
2. The police

Ensure that child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

Ensure regular communications with the board of trustees lead on child protection and ensure that they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.

The child protection officer must attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at Timespan.

Child protection leads must have received relevant safeguarding and child protection training that is specific to their role. Their training should be refreshed regularly and they should be kept up to date with any changes in safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidance.

7.2 Recruitment, Selection and Management of Employees working with Children/Young People and Protected Adults

Recruitment and Selection

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/young people and protected adults. A consistent approach should be taken whether employees are full or part-time, paid or unpaid. This guidance does not carry the intention to cast doubts on the integrity and trustworthiness of new recruits and it cannot be used to discriminate against prospective employees It is a safeguard for both them as employees of Timespan and for the children/young people and protected adults whom they will meet in the course of their work.

For all positions that require regular contact with children/young people and protected adults the following must be added to Timespan's standard recruitment procedures.

Advertising

Job adverts and job descriptions for such posts must specify that the post includes meeting/working with children/young people and protected adults and that the successful candidate will be required to complete a Disclosure Scotland check.

Character Enquiry Forms

All new recruits to Timespan are required as standard to complete a Character Enquiry form as part of their pre-employment checks on which any previous convictions must be declared *unless* deemed 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). For posts which include working with children/young people and protected adults, the form will require details of all convictions no matter how old, including those that would ordinarily be regarded as spent.

PVG Scheme Membership

All applicants who will be undertaking regulated work with children and protected adults will be required to become a PVG scheme member. For those that are already members of the PVG scheme, Timespan will be required to obtain a "PVG Scheme Update" for you, to show whether any conviction information has been added to your record since your full "PVG Scheme Record" was obtained.

References

During the application process we require all applicants to provide at least two referees**.** When writing to referees we will request that, where the applicant is being considered specifically for a post which includes working with children/young people and protected adults, the referee comments specifically on the applicant's suitability for such work (a job description will be included with the request for a reference). Referees will only be contacted at the verbal offer stage.

Disclosure Scotland Checks
It is a requirement of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (2005) that a Disclosure Check be obtained wherever an individual is in sole charge of children or adults at risk.

This check must be completed prior to the individual commencing work and will involve the prospective position holder completing and submitting a Disclosure Scotland form to Timespan. Timespan will send this form to the individual at the point of us making them a written offer of employment.

Disclosure checks shall also be carried out for staff who move from a role where they have not had contact with children/vulnerable adults to one where they will, or where their role evolves to include such contact. Until a satisfactory Disclosure check has been received staff will not be moved or work with these groups. Said employee will be required to become a PVG scheme member/ Timespan will obtain a “PVG Scheme Update” see 2.12 PVG Scheme Membership.

Interview
Interviews for such posts should explore fully the candidate's experience of working or contact with children/young people and protected adults.

Induction, Training, supervision and support

Induction
The induction for the newly appointed employee/volunteer must include clarification, agreement and signing up to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. This will be prompted through the induction checklist. All new recruits that are working with children/young people and protected adults must undertake all relevant child protection learning.

Management of Employees
There is no evidence to suggest that an applicant who has been screened and cleared will be any less likely to offend than one who has not. So, although convictions for offences against children/young people and protected adults cannot be ignored, we should not depend on applicants or any other authority disclosing such information as the main or only

means of preventing abuse. The need to be vigilant, therefore, continues through into the management of employees who are assigned to such posts. Thus, there are several strands to management of employees which assume particular importance in the effort to prevent opportunities for children/young people and protected adult abuse.

Monitoring and Performance Appraisal
Timespan's probationary process is designed to allow the employee's standard of performance in regard to work, attendance, timekeeping and conduct to be reviewed on a regular basis so that, if probation is successfully completed, the appointment can be confirmed; if not, remedial action can be taken at the appropriate time to help the employee achieve the required standards.

It is, of course, crucial that, as well as using the probationary period to assess the overall performance of an employee, any concerns that arise in regard to the way in which the employee behaves in the presence of children/young people and protected adults must be tackled as soon as identified. That aspect of the role must be reviewed specifically at each of the review stages.

Once employees are subject to the annual Performance Management system, their performance in this area must be reviewed using this system.

Ensuring Adequate Supervision
Good supervision is a useful and accepted way of ensuring that employees are working effectively and for employees to gain the most from their jobs. The prevention of abuse should be seen as part of that process.

Not all signs of an abusive relationship are detectable so line managers:

- Must be alert to signs that a child/young person or protected adult may be receiving exceptional treatment – either being highly favoured or treated unduly harshly - and explore the relationship further if necessary;
- If not wholly convinced that the child's/young person's or protected adult's welfare is secure, must consider whether it is appropriate to consult with other employees, with the individual and/or a responsible adult associated with the child/young person or protected adults or group;
- Should take or create opportunities to observe the employee whilst they are working with the children/young people or protected adults;
- Must not drop any issue of concern until they are reassured that there is no possibility of abuse.

7.3 Adult to Child Supervision Ratios

It is recommended to have at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. The following adult to child ratios are recommended:

- 0-2 years- one adult to three children
- 2-3 years- one adult to four children
- 4-8 years- one adult to six children
- 9-12 years- one adult to eight children
- 13-18 years- one adult to ten children

Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum. If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating the adult to child ratios.

When working with children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) you may need more supervision than the minimum ratios above. These ratios apply to online working settings such as working on Zoom. In this setting there must be 2 adults present.

Planning Work So As To Minimise Situations Where Child/young person or Protected Adult Abuse May Occur

Full-time supervision is neither possible nor desirable but there are ways in which we can minimise opportunities for abuse.

Always be publicly open when working with children/young people or protected adults*:*

- Premises - consider reducing opportunities for abuse by the way we use the premises. Asking children/young people and protected adults to undertake activities alone with an adult unsupervised is offering an opportunity to a potential abuser. It may be possible to arrange activities which involve a single child/young person or protected adult and one employee to take place in a room which can be observed easily by others in nearby areas, even if this is achieved simply by leaving doors open and ensuring that they remain so;
- Mixed activities - ensure that mixed activities are supervised by staff members of differing gender identities (where possible). Unavoidable situations – in other organisations where a one-to-one situation, unobserved by others, is crucial, e.g. schemes for befriending disadvantaged youngsters, every effort is made to ensure that the employees in such ‘high-risk’ situations have no record of nor potential to abuse. During the YASS! Club activities, there may be times when the youth leaders

are one on one with a child, this is a practice that we will ensure to avoid, but is sometimes necessary (for example in the event of a disclosure).To that end, individual employees should avoid spending excessive amounts of time with children/young people and protected adults away from others, on a one-to-one basis.

Health and Safety and Insurance Issues

In Health and Safety terms, Timespan has a responsibility for all persons while on Timespan's property - whether invited or not, and therefore a duty to ensure that no-one coming onto Timespan's property or premises is put in a position of danger because Timespan employees have failed:

- to carry out an adequate risk assessment;
- to do all that was reasonably practical to eliminate or minimise risk.

In practical terms, this same level of 'cover' is accorded to any person who is on Timespan's property or premises with its permission.

In the context of working with children/young people and protected adults, employees have the same responsibilities under Health & Safety legislation for the safety of children/young people and protected adults as they do for any other member of the public but due to their potential vulnerability we owe them a higher duty of care. Given that they are dealing with children/young people and protected adults who sometimes have no sense of fear, never mind a sense of responsibility, it is imperative that:

- all risks are assessed and minimised by employees who are trained and competent at assessing risk;
- the recommended ratios of adult presence are observed;
- wherever possible employees should avoid being alone with a child/young person or protected adult for any length of time.
- In the event of an accident, employees will fill out the standard reporting forms and keep these securely in a file that is only accessible to relevant employees.
- All children attending youth services such as youth clubs must have parental consent to do so, ensuring that each member of the youth club has had a parent/guardian/carer fill out a registration form detailing a child or young person's needs (medical/allergies/care & support needs)

7.4 Code of Ethics and Conduct

Good Practice

All those representing Timespan should comply with the principles of good ethical practice listed below. Suspicions or allegations of non-compliance of the code by any staff member will be dealt with through Timespan's disciplinary procedure.

When working with children/young people and protected adults, Timespan requires the following good practice by all those representing Timespan:

- Encourage interest, awareness, participation, learning and enjoyment of Timespan's facilities and its environment;
- Always work in an open environment;
- Treat all children/young people and protected adults equally, with respect and dignity;
- Ensure the health, welfare and safety of children/vulnerable adults takes precedence over other considerations.

Unacceptable Practice

Employees who meet or work with children/young people and protected adults in the course of their work with Timespan have a responsibility to behave in a manner which cannot give rise to suspicions of impropriety or abuse. They must:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/vulnerable adults away from others;
- Avoid doing things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves;
- Never meet children/vulnerable adults away from the main base or meeting place without a parent or other adult being present;
- Never take children/vulnerable adults to your home;
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a child/vulnerable adult unless there is a real emergency;
- Never leave a child/vulnerable adult alone or in the care of an unknown adult;
- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- Never verbally abuse children/vulnerable adults - it could lead to verbal or physical retaliation on their part;
- Try as much as possible to avoid physical contact with children.
- Sometimes physical contact is appropriate but it must be agreed by the child and approached sensitively
- Never allow children/vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Never encourage any kind of 'attention-seeking' or inappropriate behaviour;
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun;
- Never let allegations that a child/vulnerable adult makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted or;

- Never ignore signs of distress in a child/vulnerable adult. Be prepared to listen, act and involve accompanying adults;
- Never make exceptions unless there is a real emergency.
- Never let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- Never patronise or belittle children and young people make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people

Reporting Incidents
If you have concerns about an incident involving a child/young person or protected adult that seems untoward or unusual you must report your concerns as soon as possible to your line manager / Director.

Report, record and inform if the following occur:

- If you accidentally hurt a child/young person or protected adult;
- If a child/young person or protected adult seems distressed in any manner;
- If a child/young person or protected adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done;
- If a child/young person or protected adult needs to be restrained.

7.5 What is Abuse?

Abuse of children or vulnerable adults can be a difficult and distressing subject. However, in order for Timespan to do what it can to safeguard children/vulnerable adults in our care, it is vital for all those involved to have a good understanding of the issues.

In other work situations, such as caring for or educating children/vulnerable adults, the frequency of contact is probably much greater than anything that arises in Timespan's working relationships with child/vulnerable adult customers but that does not mean that the subject of abuse will not arise or will be less obvious.

It is also very important that those undertaking work for Timespan understand what is meant by the term ‘abuse’. There are 4 recognised forms of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

- ***Physical Abuse*** may involve the actual or attempted physical injury to a child/vulnerable adult including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise harming them.

- ***Emotional Abuse*** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child/vulnerable adult and includes degrading punishment, sarcasm, threats, placing inappropriate expectations upon them and not giving love and attention.
- ***Sexual Abuse*** occurs when a child/vulnerable adult is involved in sexual behaviour with adults who are using their relationship with the child for their own sexual preferences. Showing children/vulnerable adults pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse.
- ***Neglect*** occurs where a child/vulnerable adult is badly cared for. Their basic physiological and physical needs, such as food, warmth, medical care, clothing and hygiene, are persistently not met. They may also constantly be left alone or unsupervised.

Recognising Signs of Abuse

Whilst we have a duty to protect and care for children/vulnerable adults who come into contact with Timespan and its employees, it is ***not*** the responsibility of any member of Timespan's staff to decide that abuse is actually occurring. However, it is our responsibility to act on any concerns. It is also important that employees should know what to do if they have concerns about the safety and security of children/vulnerable adults they encounter within the course of their work.

Recognising abuse can be very difficult - not all signs of an abusive relationship are detectable and particularly so in situations where there is no pattern to the frequency of seeing any particular child/vulnerable adult, as is the case in Timespan. The following are common signs of abuse but it must be recognised that*:*

- *the list is not exhaustive;*
- *its content may not all be relevant to Timespan's type of involvement with children/vulnerable adults;*
- *the presence of one or more of these indicators is not necessarily proof that abuse is taking place.*

Nevertheless, employees who meet children/vulnerable adults in the course of their work and their line manager should be alert for signs. For instance, the child/vulnerable adult:

- may be seen to be carrying unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts and or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- may have an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- may describe what seems to be an abusive act involving him/her;
- is the subject of concerns about welfare expressed by someone else;

- shows unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. he/she has become very quiet, withdrawn or displays sudden outbursts of temper);
- shows inappropriate sexual awareness or engages in sexually explicit behaviour;
- appears distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- has difficulty making friends;
- is prevented from socialising with others;
- displays variations in eating patterns including over-eating or loss of appetite;
- loses weight for no apparent reason;
- becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt;
- may be perceived to be receiving either highly favoured or unduly harsh treatment from a
  Employee.

7.6 Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person

There may be a time when a child/vulnerable adult approaches a member of Timespan as a trusted adult in their life, which may result in a disclosure of abuse. This can be a difficult situation for all parties and it is important to **listen** carefully to the information the child/vulnerable adult discloses. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is advised:

- Ensure that you listen carefully to what the child/vulnerable adult has to say and allow them time to speak;
- Consider and acknowledge the age group of the individual you are working with;
- React calmly so as not to frighten them;
- Tell the child/vulnerable adult that he/she is not to blame and reassure them that he/she was right to tell;
- Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/vulnerable adult says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language;
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said and use open-ended, non-leading questions. If the matter is to be investigated further it will be done so by trained professionals;
- Be honest, tell them that you cannot keep it a secret, you have to talk to someone else that can help;
- Report the matter to the appropriate person – see below;
- As soon as practical write everything down that they told you (see guidance below) ensuring you record **facts** not opinions;
- Remember that **this is a confidential matter** between you and them. The only person you should be discussing it with is the person you refer the matter on to.

When listening to a disclosure the following actions should be avoided:

- panic;
- showing shock or distaste;
- showing disbelief;
- probing for more information than is offered;
- interrupting or making suggestions to them which could imply making an investigation;
- introducing personal information from either your own experiences or those of others;
- projecting your own reactions onto the child/vulnerable adult;
- speculating or making assumptions;
- making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made;
- approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made;
- making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.

Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse

Abuse of children/vulnerable adults is a criminal offence and all allegations must be taken seriously. All staff working for Timespan have an ethical duty to report any reasonable concern that someone may be being abused. It is not sufficient to do nothing and hope that the problem will go away. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are less than usual. Abusers are frequently repeat offenders and so others are at risk. Social Services (and the Police) have duties to protect children and vulnerable adults and if you are advised to make contact with them, or if contact is made for you, then specific procedures follow which ensure that the child/vulnerable adult is protected.

If you have observed any of the above possible symptoms of abuse, a child/vulnerable adult discloses to you that they have been abused, or information is obtained which raises a concern that a child/vulnerable adult is being abused, you must react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

These procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse are taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

Where allegations relate to an employee of Timespan, Timespan's Disciplinary Procedure must also be followed.

Reporting the Incident/Allegation/Concern:

- In the case of an accompanied group report the matter to the senior group leader (for example a teacher) and notify your designated child protection officer of the action you have taken.
- In the case of an accompanied group where the allegation is regarding one of the accompanying group leaders, or an unaccompanied group you should report the matter to your child protection officer/Director. The Child protection Officer/Director should then notify the Board member with responsibility for HR for guidance and possible referral to the police.
- In the case of an allegation being made **against an Timespan employee or volunteer**, you should report the matter to the child protection officer/Director. The Director should then notify the Board member with responsibility for HR.

The role of the employee is to inform **the designated person** (as described above) of any instance that suggests that abuse is taking place. It is not the role of the employee to wait for proof, investigate or gather evidence of abuse.

Actions for the Individual:

- Listen to the child/vulnerable adult as detailed above in 'How to React and Listen to a Disclosure of Abuse';
- Pass your concerns to the child protection officer who must then pass them to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately (these are available 24 hours a day). Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/vulnerable adult's own words.Using Timespan's Child Protection Reporting Forms, the information should, where known, include the following:
    - Name of child/vulnerable adult;
    - Age and date of birth of child/vulnerable adult;
    - Home address and telephone number of the child/vulnerable adult;
    - Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person;
    - The child/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred;
    - The nature of the allegation (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location of alleged incident);
    - A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not examine them);
    - Details of any witnesses to the incident;
    - Whether the child/vulnerable adult's parents/guardians/carers have been contacted (if they are not present this should only be done after seeking advice from the Social Work Department or the Police);

- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them;
- If it is not the child/vulnerable adult making the report, whether the child/vulnerable adult has been spoken to, if so what was said;
- Record, sign and date on the day what you have seen, heard or been told;
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disc. Print off the record, sign and date, then delete the electronic copy that day;
- Pass the record to the Social Work Department or the Police.

Actions for the Designated Person

Before taking any action the designated person must always seek advice from the Police or Social Work Department. Thereafter they must:

Establish the Basic Facts – the designated person must initially clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that an individual may have abused a child and/or vulnerable adult.

Please note:

- This may necessitate the child(ren) or vulnerable adult(s) involved being asked some basic, open-ended, non-leading questions solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other children or individuals. After seeking advice from the Police and/or Social Work Department, the parents/guardians may be approached to provide consent to speak to the child/vulnerable adult.
- Advice must be sought from the Police and/or Social Work Department as to whether the individual about whom the allegation has been made may be approached as part of the initial enquiry.
- This process will not form part of any disciplinary investigation.

Making a Referral in Cases of Suspected and/or Alleged Abuse – if the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- The Designated person will refer the suspicion and/or allegation to the relevant Social Work Department and the Police, as soon as possible that day;
- Appropriate steps may be required to ensure the safety of the child(ren)/vulnerable adult(s) who may be at risk and advice should be sought on this from the Police/Social Work Department;
- A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Work Department member of staff or the Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.

Please note that **reporting of the matter to the Police or Social Work Department must not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information.**

Possible Outcomes Following Police Advice
Where the allegation involves an individual unconnected with Timespan our involvement will end at the point where our concerns are passed to the appropriate authority.

Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

However, where the initial enquiry reveals that there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that an individual connected to Timespan has abused a child/vulnerable adult there will be an investigation. There are three types of investigation that could result:

- A disciplinary investigation;
- A child protection investigation;
- A criminal investigation.

Following advice from the Police, disciplinary action may be taken in cases where a criminal investigation is ongoing provided sufficient information is available to enable a decision to be made and doing so does not jeopardise the criminal investigation.

Under The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act (2003), Scottish Ministers maintain a list of persons deemed unsuitable to work in a childcare position. This List is known as the 'Disqualified from Working with Children List'. Should the outcome of any disciplinary action following a Timespan employee harming a child or putting a child at risk of harm, be that the accused individual is dismissed or moved away from access to children, Timespan have a duty to make Ministers aware of this so that the individual is included on this list. This applies even if the person has left the organisation prior to the outcome of the allegation or incident being decided. Should we fail to notify Ministers of such an occurrence, Timespan would be committing an offence.

The referral form can be found on the Scottish Government's website: www.scotland.gov.uk/childprotection.

Currently, no similar list exists for those dismissed/moved to an alternative post following disciplinary action regarding the harm, or risk of harm to, a vulnerable adult. However, proposals for such a list were sent out for consultation by the Scottish Government and therefore legislation is anticipated in this area in the future.

Managing The Individual Against Whom The Allegation Has Been Made

Following advice from the Police, if the decision is made that the individual against whom the allegation has been made is to be informed, the individual should be told an allegation has been made which suggests abuse. It is essential to preserve evidence for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the individual.

Suspension

- Suspension is a neutral act and is not a form of disciplinary sanction. The individual may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out.
- It is for the Board member with responsibility for HR to decide whether suspension from duty is appropriate.
- At the suspension interview the individual will be informed of the reason suspension is taking place and given the opportunity to give a statement should he/she wish. Notification of the suspension and the reasons will be conveyed in writing to the individual in accordance with Timespan's Disciplinary Policy.

Managing False or Malicious Allegations

Where after investigation, the allegation is found to be false or malicious the individual will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. The individual involved may wish to seek legal advice.

Should a member of Timespan be found to have made a malicious allegation this will be dealt with under Timespan's Disciplinary Policy.

Sharing concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers

There are circumstances in which a child/vulnerable adult might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared e.g. where a parent/guardian/carer may be responsible for the abuse or are not able to respond to the situation appropriately. In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the local Social Work Department or the Police as to who contacts the parents/guardians/carers.

Allegations of Abuse against another child

In the event allegations of abuse are made against a young person that is accessing Timespan's services. There are many ways that a child may be abusive towards others. A child who is displaying abusive behaviour may not realise they are doing so. When a child abuses another child, it is sometimes called 'peer on peer abuse' or 'peer abuse' (Department for Education 2020; Department of Health 2017)

Allegations may involve:

- bullying or cyberbullying

- emotional abuse
- online abuse
- physical abuse
- sexting
- harmful sexual behaviour
- sexual abuse.

There are a range of ways that concerns might be raised:

- A child or adult might make a direct allegation of abuse by a child or young person.
- A child or adult might tell you they're uncomfortable with a child or young person's behaviour. They may not realise the behaviour is abusive.
- A member of staff or volunteer might observe behaviour that gives cause for concern and make a report following Timespan's safeguarding principles.
- Timespan may be informed that a child or young person is the subject of an investigation.
- A child or young person might tell you they have harmed someone else or are at risk of doing so.

Talking to a child who tells you they have behaved abusively

Sometimes a child may tell you directly that they have behaved abusively towards someone else. If this happens:

- reassure the child that they've done the right thing by telling you about it
- listen carefully to the child and let them tell their whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure you understand what they're saying
- use non-judgmental language
- remember that a child who is telling you they've abused someone else is a child in need of support
- tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them and the other children involved safe
- explain what you are going to do next and that you will need to speak to other people who can help
- reassure the child that they can get help to change their behaviour and move forward with their life
- you may want to suggest the child contacts Childline for support.

Never promise to keep what a child tells you a secret. Explain that you need to talk to other people who can help keep them and the other children involved safe.

Talking to a child who may be behaving abusively

If allegations have been made against a child you should speak to your child protection lead, who can advise you on the best way to proceed. If you confront the child about the allegations before taking advice, it may make the situation worse.

Be aware that a child who displays challenging behaviour may be doing so because they have experienced abuse or neglect. If you think this may be the case, follow your organisation's child protection procedures.

Making notes

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share this record with your nominated child protection lead. Include:

- the child's details (name, age, address)
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- the details of any other children involved or impacted.

7.7 Protecting children from bullying and cyberbullying

Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time.
Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions we have set out below.
Verbal abuse:

- name-calling
- saying nasty things to or about a child or their family.

Physical abuse:

- hitting a child
- pushing a child
- physical assault.

Emotional abuse:

- making threats
- undermining a child
- excluding a child from a friendship group or activities.

Cyberbullying/online bullying:

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child

- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child's disability, race, class, religion or belief, gender identity, langauge, immigration status or sexuality.
Indicators that a child could be experiencing bullying include:

- being reluctant to go to school
- being distressed or anxious
- losing confidence and becoming withdrawn
- having problems eating and/or sleeping
- having unexplained injuries
- changes in appearance
- changes in performance and/or behaviour at school.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:
• bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm
• all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
• Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:
• developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
• holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families who use our organisation about bullying and how to prevent it.
• providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, classist, xenophobic and sexual bullying
• putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place
• making sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account: - the needs of the person being bullied - the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour - needs of any bystanders - our organisation as a whole.

7.8 Recording & Storing Information

Keeping essential information* about children and young people's care needs and contact details of parents and carers is vital as part of keeping children and young people safe and promoting their welfare.

In order to store information we must follow data protection legislation, thus records containing personal information should be:
• adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held
• accurate and up to date
• Stored only when consent is given to do so
• only kept for as long as is necessary (Information Commissioner's Office, 2020).

As an organisation Timespan must:
• assess how long you need to keep the records for
• have a plan for how and when the records will be destroyed, ensuring that records are destroyed securely.

In order to keep personal information secure, members of Timespan staff should:
• compile and label files carefully
• keep files containing sensitive or confidential data secure and allow access on a 'need to know' basis
• keep a log so you can see who has accessed the confidential files, when, and the titles of the files they have used.
• Store hard copies of personal records and portable electronic equipment securely.

In the event of keeping records for child protection reasons, we don't necessarily need to get consent from the adults and/or children concerned.

* Essential Information refers to 'personal data' or 'personal information' to mean information from which a living person can be identified. We refer to 'sensitive information' as personal data about matters like someone's ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal record.

7.9 Storing Child Protection Records

Information about child protection concerns and referrals should be kept in a separate child protection file for each child. The child protection file should be started as soon as you become aware of any concerns.

- Child protection files should be kept separate from a child's general records. A Child's general record should be marked to indicate that there is a separate child protection file.

• If you need to share records (within your own organisation or externally), make sure they are kept confidential. Use passwords and encryption when sharing electronic files.
• If your staff and volunteers use their personal computers to make and store records, you need a clear agreement to ensure the records are being stored securely.
• In the event of the person responsible for managing your child protection records leaving your organisation, make sure you appoint somebody to take over their role and arrange a proper handover.

Retention periods: child protection records
The file should be kept until the child is 25 (this is seven years after they reach the school leaving age) (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2016). In Northern Ireland the government recommends that child protection files should be kept until the child's 30th birthday (Department of Education, 2016).

All staff members working with children need to be made aware of the Timespan's expectations on the recording and storage of information.

7.10 Sharing Information & working with other agencies

People who work with children, whether in a paid or voluntary role, may need to share information about the children and families they are involved with for a number of reasons. These include:

- you are making a referral to arrange additional support for someone in the family
- someone from another agency has asked for information about a child or family
- someone in the family has asked to be referred for further help
- a statutory duty or court order requires information to be shared
- you are concerned that a child or a member of their family may be at risk of significant harm
- you think a serious crime may have been committed or is about to be committed which involves someone in the family.

You must always have a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing a child's personal information. Keep a record of the reasons why you are sharing or requesting information about a child or their family. You should also make sure you are not putting a child's safety and welfare at risk by sharing information about them.
Always seek consent to share information about a child and their family. However if consent isn't given, you can still share information with relevant professionals under certain circumstances, for example if you are protecting a child from significant harm.

What information to share

You need to decide what specific information is appropriate to share and who to share it with.

- Prioritise the safety and welfare of the child and anyone else who may be affected by the situation.
- Make sure you share the information quickly and securely. The sooner you report your concerns the better. This means the details will be fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.
- Identify how much information should be shared. This will depend on the reasons for sharing it.
- Use language that is clear and precise. Different agencies may use and understand terminology differently.
- Make sure the information you are sharing is accurate. Make it clear what information is factual and what is based on opinion (yours or other people's).

Facts and opinions

When working with children and families you will gather information from a variety of sources. How you interpret this information can depend on:

- any previous information received
- your knowledge of research and theory
- your own frame of reference.

When recording information you should be as factual as possible. If you need to give your own or somebody else's opinion make sure it is clearly differentiated from fact. You should identify whose opinion is being given and record their exact words.

Consent

Children should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared. If a child doesn't have the capacity to make their own decisions, ask their parent or carer (unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm).You should always seek consent to share information about an adult.
Tips for getting consent:

- be open and honest
- make sure the person you're asking for consent understands what information will be shared and why
- explain who will see the information and what it will be used for
- make sure the person you're asking for consent understands the consequences of their information not being shared
- get the consent in writing, in case there are any disputes in the future. If it's only given verbally, make a written record of this
- make sure the person knows they can withdraw consent at any time.

Sharing information without consent

If consent is refused or if you're unable to seek consent, you can still share information with relevant professionals if this is in the public interest.This includes protecting children from significant harm and promoting the welfare of children. When deciding whether to share information without consent, you should consider each case individually.

- Decide if the need to share information is in the public interest and whether it outweighs the need to maintain confidentiality.
- Consider all the implications of sharing the information, for example if you are sharing sensitive details about a person's life.

If you're not sure what to do, contact the NSPCC helpline for advice.
If you're sharing information without consent keep a written record explaining:

- what steps you took to get consent
- the person's reasons for not giving consent (if known)
- why you felt it was necessary to share information without consent.

Pass a copy of this record on to the agency/agencies you're sharing the information with.

Confidentiality

Never promise a child that you will keep the things they're telling you a secret. Explain that you need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help.
If a child or young person needs confidential help and advice direct them to Childline. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and children can also contact Childline online.

7.11 Photography and filming policy statement

As an organisation it is our role to protect children and young people who take part in Timespan's services, events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken. Our approach to photographs/videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities ensures that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people

Sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people that we work with. The welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount. Therefore children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation . Consent to take images of children is only meaningful when children, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images. There are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image, always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children.
- We will make it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information) reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
- avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.
- We will also develop a procedure for reporting the abuse or misuse of images of children as part of our child protection procedures.
- We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe.

Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes

This includes: reminding parents, carers and children that they need to obtain consent form from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include them, recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share.

Storing Images

Storing images We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our safeguarding policy and data protection law. We will keep hard copies of images in

a locked drawer and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access. Images will be stored for a period of _____ (number of months/years).

7.12 Whistleblowing

In the event of safeguarding procedures not being followed, updated and staff made aware of adjustments, the following may result:
-Concerns not being dealt with properly or being covered up
-A concern that was raised that hasn't been acted upon
-Members of staff become worried that repercussions are likely to arise if you raise a concern, thus the concern is not raised.

In the event of a worker reporting wrongdoings in the instance that child protection concerns are not being followed through, as a whistleblower they are protected by law and should not be treated unfairly or lose their job. The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest.
For further advice on whistleblowing the NSPCC has a free Whistleblowing advice line:

- 0800 028 0285
- help@nspcc.org.uk

7.13 Online working

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many youth work practices have had to move online. In order to work safely online and following current outlying policies, to ensure the safety of all young people and Timespan staff. This applies only to our 12-17 year old youth groups.

Staff to young person ratios:

- 9-12 years- one adult to eight children
- 13-18 years- one adult to ten children

Whilst ensuring that two members of staff are present on any online platform used.

Online Platform

The platforms being used to conduct online workshops need to have online security functions that ensure that only those with access links can access online workshops. To enhance the security function of this, meetings have virtual waiting rooms where staff can approve who enters the online workshop.

Staff must ensure that prior parental consent is gained before any child attends an online workshop. Ensuring that the platform selected is suitable for the age of the participants.

Safeguarding online

To ensure the safety of all participants, we need to ensure that we know where the children are connecting to the online platform from. This ensures that in the case of an emergency, we can direct emergency services to the location provided.

In the event of a child protection concern occurring during an online workshop, the procedure of informing the child protection officer still stands, and the procedure detailed above in appendix 6.7 is to be followed.

7.14 Useful Contacts

In an emergency child/vulnerable adult protection situation the Police should be contacted. For advice or guidance you should contact either the Police or your local authority social work department.

The list of Sutherland based contacts are as follows:

Emergency 24 Hour Contact Numbers: 08456014813

Social Work Department: 01408 635360

Child Protection Health Advisor (Susan Bell): 07795 238902

For Further links to contacts across Highlands and Islands:
https://hcpc.scot/professionals/