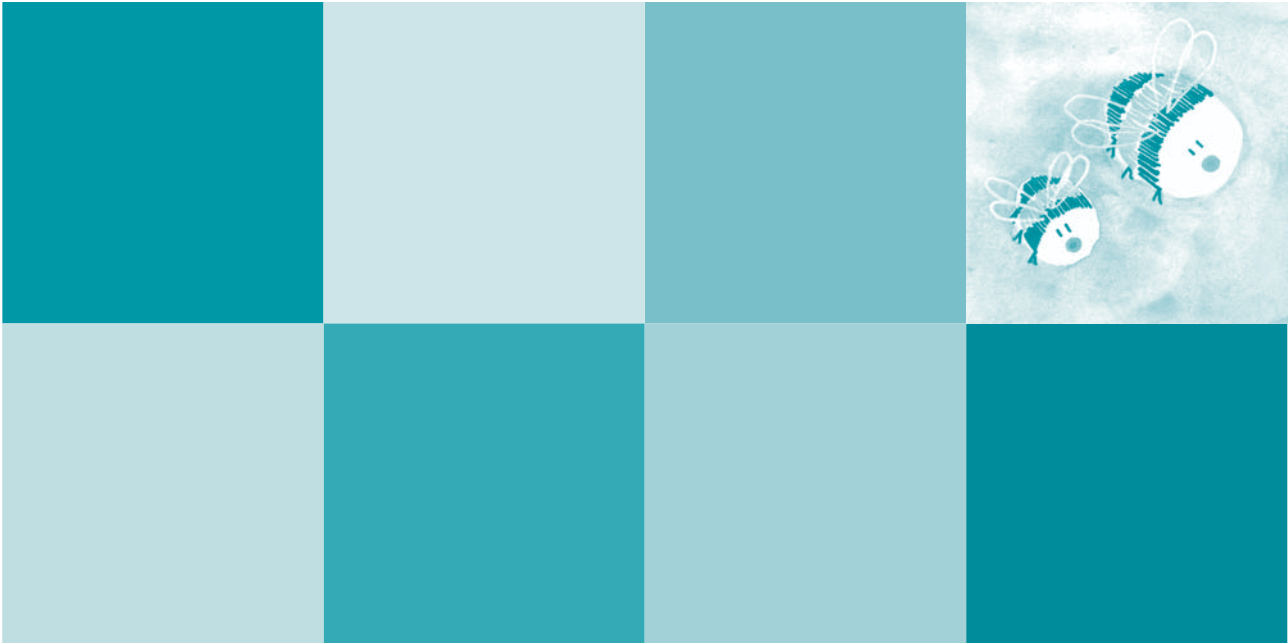
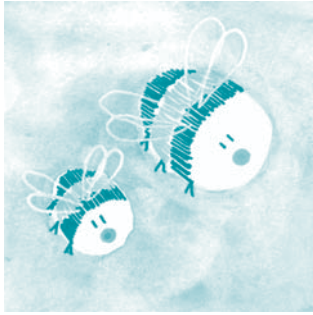


Child Protection
Policies
for your
Community Group





Introduction

Children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations. This booklet has been designed to help your organisation protect these rights. Child Protection is the responsibility of every adult who has involvement with children.

This is the 3rd edition of this booklet. In addition to a Child Protection Policy it now includes advice on Disclosure Scotland vetting procedures and all the policies your group will require to implement.

Highland Child Protection Committee would like to acknowledge the help and guidance of those on the working group that produced this document.

Special thanks go to Highland Pre-school Services whose document inspired much of the content.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian I. Latimer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ian Latimer - Chief Constable of Northern Constabulary

Chair - Highland Child Protection Committee

January 2003 - 3rd edition



What does this document do?

This document has been designed to help your group discuss and agree child protection policies. It contains the following help and advice:

- What is child protection? *Page 2*
- Ensuring a safe environment *Page 3*
- What is child abuse? *Page 4*
- How this may affect your group *Page 5*
- How to react & listen *Page 6*
- Why it is necessary to have a policy *Page 7*
- What vetting means *Page 8*
- Disclosure Scotland *Page 9*
- Sample child protection policies *Pages 10 & 11*
- A sample policy statement *Page 12*
- Policy on recruitment of ex offenders *Page 13*
- Policy on information & storage *Page 14*
- Policy on protection of vulnerable people *Page 15*
- Further information *Page 16*
- Forms *Pages 17 & 18*

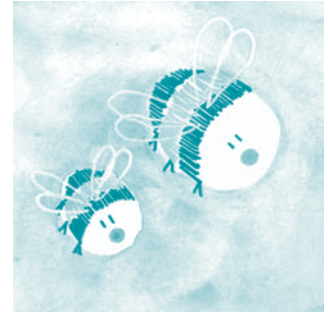
By following the contents, discussing and completing the attached policies your group will have considered how to respond to Child Protection issues.

You may be affiliated to a national or larger organisation that already has a child protection policy in place. However in the Highlands you must have signed up to the Highland Child Protection Policy in order to use Highland Council premises or apply for financial assistance. For any further guidance on this please contact your local office as listed in [on page 16](#).

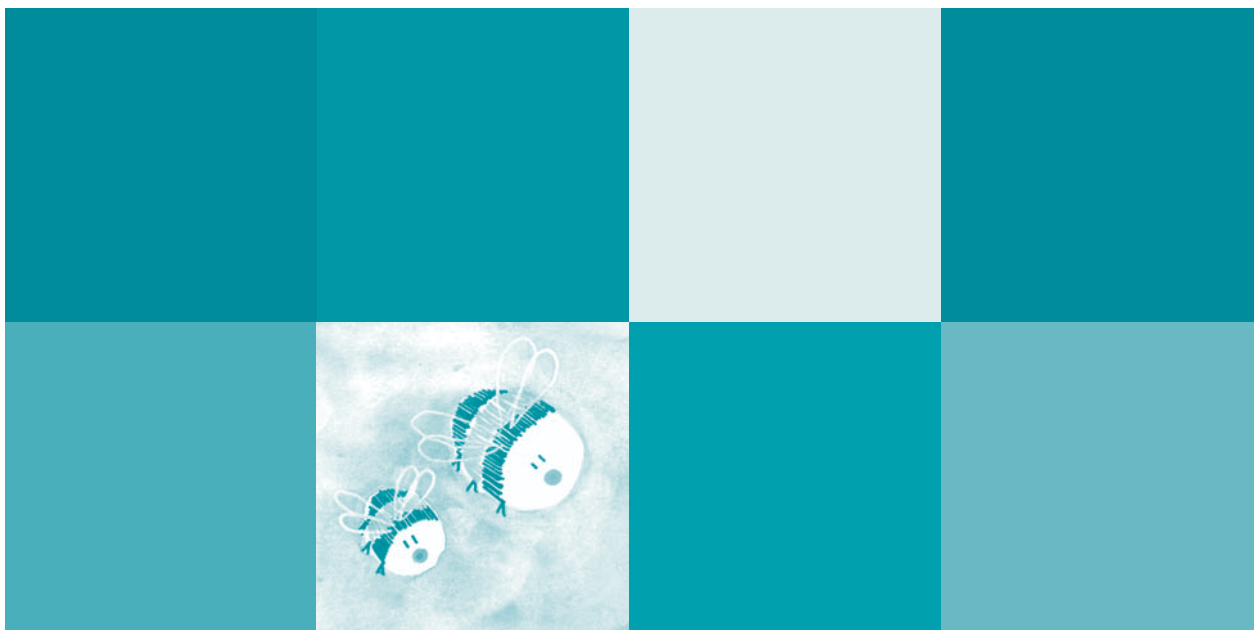
It is good practice to adopt these policies even if your group does not currently involve children in it's activities. To help you with all of this we have included the following:

- [Page 16](#) Further Information
- [Page 17](#) Personal Profile Form
- [Page 18](#) Vetting Checklist

What is Child Protection?



The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation. It also states that children should have the right to express their views on any issues or decisions affecting them.





What can my group do to ensure we give the youngsters a safe environment?

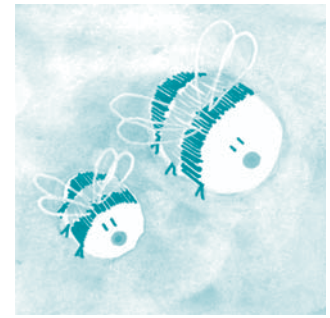
As a community group, you offer a very valuable service to children. Through your group they learn about how to take part in the activities you offer. They also learn to trust and respect the adults involved. This places your volunteers in a unique position in children's lives. There may come a time when a child feels the need to confide in the volunteer or when the volunteer feels that all is not well in the child's life.

Your group has a duty to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the necessary information and knowledge to give that child the support, guidance and help needed at the time. These policies have been produced to help you and your volunteers to think through the issues and develop your own child protection guidelines for your group. It will also help you to consider any training issues that you may have and point you in the right direction for help and advice in the future.

Highland Child Protection Committee recommends the following principles of good practice in child protection for **all** groups:

- Highland Child Protection Committee believes that all agencies working with vulnerable groups, particularly children, should have a child protection policy and statement for all volunteers (including parents and guardians) and staff;
- Highland Child Protection Committee believes that every child, regardless of age, has at all times, in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice which results in the child being physically or psychologically damaged;
- Above all, we should all remember that the welfare of the child is of paramount consideration and we must all work together to ensure the protection of children.

What is Child Abuse?



The formal definition of Child Abuse is:

*'Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or *omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).'*

Reference 'Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility'.

This is a very open definition which encourages us to be open minded and think about what child abuse is. For those working in the field of Child Protection the definition gets broken down further into Categories of Abuse, namely:

- Physical Injury •
- Sexual Abuse •
- Emotional Abuse •
- Physical Neglect •
- Non-organic Failure to Thrive •

More detailed descriptions of these categories are to be found in the publication 'Protecting Children - A Shared Responsibility'.

See page 16 of this booklet for details

**NB This means children at risk through either something a person has done to them OR something a person is failing to do for them.*





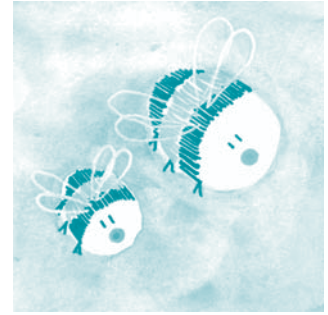
How does this affect us?

There may be a time when a child approaches a person in your group as a trusted adult to discuss their life outside the organisation.

It is vital that individual adults in your group know how to react to this in a sensitive and appropriate manner.



How to React & Listen



Volunteers and staff must, at all times:

- Acknowledge the age group they work with;
- Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues;
- Allow the child time to speak and not interrupt nor make suggestions to them which could imply making an investigation;
- Reassure the child that they are glad she or he has told what has happened and that it was right to tell;
- Not interrogate or question other than to clarify your understanding. If the matter is to be investigated further it will be so done by trained professionals. No matter how well you know the child, spare them having to repeat themselves over and over. Apart from anything else, the child may begin to think that you don't believe them;
- Be honest, tell the child that you cannot keep it a secret, you have to talk to someone else that can help;
- Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child - think of how hard it must be to say it. Some things are very difficult to talk about, you've been chosen because the child feels they can talk to you. If you show anger, disgust, disbelief then the child may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further or feel that your negative feelings are being directed towards them;
- Listen to the child - REALLY LISTEN - take what they say seriously. Tell them that they've done the right thing by telling you;
- As soon as practical write down everything the child told you, but remember that this is a confidential matter between you and the child. The only person you should be discussing it with is the committee member for your organisation who has agreed to act as monitor for child protection issues. [See page 7](#)



Why do we need to monitor for child protection issues?

Everyone within your group has responsibility to be aware of child protection issues, however it is important to have one person on your committee who has agreed to monitor child protection.

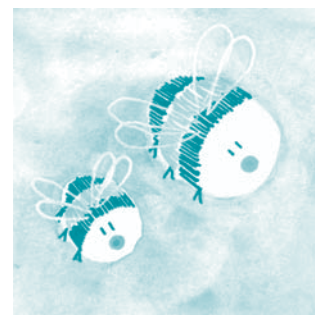
That person is responsible for ensuring:

- That your policies are up to date
- That it is clearly displayed (if possible)
- That the volunteers and staff are aware of the policy and have read and understood it
- That you know who the Social Work contact is
- That you have to hand the telephone numbers of both social work and police

Please do not be afraid to make contact with these people for advice and guidance - remember - you may not be the only one to have concerns. You must also remember that all referrals are discussed thoroughly by the statutory agencies prior to any action being taken. Your concerns will be genuine and treated as such by them.



What does 'substantial access to children' and vetting mean?



When considering the question of **substantial access** consider the following questions:

- Will the person have one-to-one contact with children? If 'yes' the access must be considered substantial.
- Will the person be supervised? If the person is under close supervision at all times, the access may not be considered substantial, however it will allow close relationships to be formed and this could be exploited.
- Will the person be in an isolated situation with a child? The risks are greater where a child is with an adult in an isolated situation away from peers and family.
- Will there be regularity of contact? The more regular the contact, the stronger the relationship that may be formed which could be exploited.
- Is overnight care involved? If 'yes' then the adult must be fully vetted.

Appropriate **vetting** may mean different things for different groups:

For all new volunteers and staff it is your committee's responsibility to discuss and decide upon the checks required. These will include taking up two written references and follow up telephone calls and may include a Disclosure Scotland check.

You will need to discuss whether your volunteers and staff have substantial access to children as defined above. If you decide they do then your committee **will** require a Disclosure check in addition to the references already requested.



Disclosure Scotland

Introduction

Before applying for Disclosure Checks from the registered body, Central Registered Body for Scotland (CRBS), you will need to have the following policies in place, in addition to your Child Protection Policy. (Before registering with CRBS check with your parent body that this is necessary, it may be that they have already registered and are able to carry out checks on your behalf.)

- Policy on recruitment of ex offenders
- Policy on information & storage
- Policy on vulnerable adults

We have included examples of such policies, which your organisation should feel free to adapt or amend as required. Throughout the policies please fill in your organisations name as appropriate.

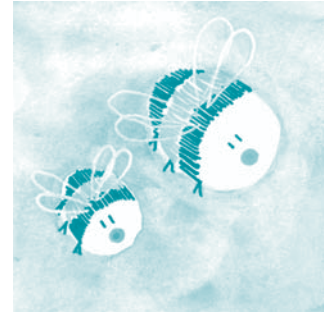
The policy on protecting vulnerable people does not cover types of abuse or how your organisation should handle suspected abuse or allegations of abuse. The information found in the Child Protection Policy will help with these issues.

The implementation of such policies will require support and training for your staff and volunteers. There are a number of places you may be able to access such training. Useful contact numbers are included at the back of this document. [See page 16.](#)

Once you have these policies in place and are registered with CRBS you will be supplied with all the forms necessary to access Disclosure checks.

Your organisation will not be able to obtain the background checks necessary if you do not have these policies in place.

Child Protection Policy for



We recognise that child protection should not be treated in isolation - we will take on board guidance given by Highland Child Protection Committee and will address recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees by doing the following:

- 1) We accept that it is our responsibility as a group to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted; *See page 8*
- 2) We will ensure the every new volunteer or member of staff will complete a Personal Profile Form. *Please photocopy page 17 of this document.*
- 3) We will make a request for previous addresses on volunteer/ job application forms;
- 4) We will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference;
- 5) We will follow up each reference with a telephone call or personal contact during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children. A record of this discussion will be kept in the applicant's file; *See page 18 - No8*
- 6) We will interview prospective volunteers and staff;
- 7) We will note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and staff in working with children;
- 8) We will carry out a probationary period for all volunteers and staff of at least months.



We believe that every child regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our group, if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well being, we will take action.

All volunteers or staff are encouraged to share concerns with the group's committee member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have very serious doubts about the child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately. If our concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then we will discuss these with our group's child protection monitor, who would then make a referral to Social Work who will make the necessary arrangements. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately. To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below;

- 1) Upon the receipt of any information from a child or suspicions, it is necessary to record what they have seen, heard or know accurately at the time the event occurs;
- 2) Share their concerns with the monitor for the group and agree action to take;
- 3) Always REFER **never** INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse.

**If we have concerns we must act
- it may be the final piece of the jigsaw
that is needed to protect that child -
or we may prevent
further children from being hurt.**

Both the local Area Social Work Office and Police Office telephone numbers are to be found in the telephone directory. For ease of reference note them below -

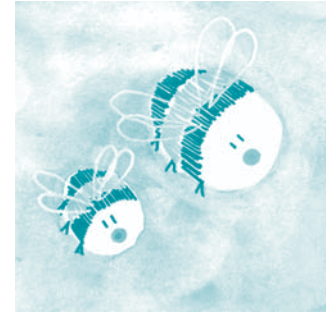
Area Social Work Office

Police Station

**Out of hours Social Work
Emergency Service**

08457 697284

Policy Statement for



We Will:

- Hold a register of every child involved with the group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies;
- Treat everyone with respect;
- Remember that some issues are confidential;
- Provide an example we would wish others to follow;
- Where possible consider activities which involve more than one adult being present or at least within sight and hearing of others;
- Be aware that, someone else might misinterpret our actions even if they are well-intentioned;
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy;
- Provide time for children to talk to us;
- Encourage children to respect and care for others;
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- Have a group policy for the collection of children after meetings have finished;
- Remember to REFER **not** INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse;
- Only share concerns and seek support from those identified in the group's child protection policy;
- Complete the vetting checklist. *Please photocopy page 18 of this document.*



Policy on the Recruitment of Ex Offenders Policy Statement for:

We will treat any applicant for any position (paid or voluntary) within our organisation fairly and not discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We will request a Standard or Enhanced disclosure only where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought.

Where a position requires a disclosure we will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.

At interview we will ensure that open and measured discussions can take place on the subject of offences.

Failure to reveal information at interview, that is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

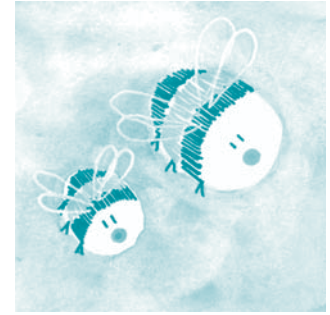
At interview or when receiving a disclosure which shows a conviction, we will take into consideration –

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered.
- The seriousness of the offence revealed.
- The length of time since the offence took place.
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place.

We will ensure that all our members (staff or volunteers) involved in the recruitment process are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

Any applicant for any post that requires a disclosure may receive a copy of this policy and the Code of Practice.

Policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information Policy Statement for:



In accordance with the Scottish Executive Code of Practice, for registered persons and other recipients of Disclosure Information, we will ensure the following practice.

- Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular post and the information provided on a disclosure certificate will only be used for recruitment purposes.
- We will ensure that an individual's consent is given before seeking a disclosure, and will seek their consent before using disclosure information for any purpose other than recruitment.
- Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.
- Where additional disclosure information is provided to our designated signatory and not to the disclosure applicant, our designated signatory will not disclose this information to the applicant, but will inform them of the fact that additional information has been provided, should this information affect the recruitment decision.
- Disclosure information will be stored in a locked non-portable container, for a maximum of 6 months. Only those authorised to see this information in the course of their duties will have access to this container.
- Disclosure information will be destroyed by shredding.
- No image or photocopy of the disclosure information will be made, however the following details may be retained:-
 - Date of issue of disclosure
 - Name of subject
 - Disclosure type
 - Position for which disclosure was requested
 - Unique reference number of disclosure
 - Recruitment decision taken
- We will ensure that all staff with access to disclosure information are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.
- We will make a copy of this policy available to any applicant for a post (paid or voluntary) with us that requires a disclosure.



Policy on Protecting Vulnerable People Policy Statement for:

We aim to ensure that any vulnerable people, whether children, young people or vulnerable adults, are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff or volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

Selection

- All applicants, for paid and unpaid positions, will complete an application form.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to attend interview.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to provide references and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of appointment. We will follow up each reference with a telephone call or personal contact during which we will discuss the applicants suitability to work with vulnerable adults.

Screening

- Where relevant to the post, the successful applicant will be asked to agree to an appropriate disclosure. Disclosures will be requested prior to the applicant taking up post.

Training

- The successful applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure.
- Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis, and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for the work.
- Training on specific areas such as health & safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers, and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision

- All staff and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support.
- Every member of staff and volunteer will attend an annual review, where their performance, skills, motivation and expectations will be discussed. Annual reviews will be minuted and copies made available to the member of staff/volunteer.

We will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

Further Information

Useful Publications

- 1) Scottish Office (1998) *Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility* Edinburgh: HMSO
- 2) Volunteer Development Scotland (1995) *Protecting Children: A Code of Good Practice for Voluntary Organisations in Scotland working with children and young people* Stirling: Volunteer Development Scotland
- 3) Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- 4) Working Together to Protect Children in the Highlands, Inter-agency Guidelines, Highland Child Protection Committee.

Useful Addresses

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS)

Phone: 01786 849777

Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS)

Phone: 01786 479593

Both at

Stirling Enterprise Park . Stirling . FK7 7RP

Volunteering Highland

The Gateway . 1a Millburn Road

Inverness . IV2 3PX

Phone: 01463 711393

Useful Websites

www.disclosurescotland.co.uk

www.vds.org.uk

www.scotland.gov.uk

www.highland.gov.uk

www.crbs.org.uk

For further information contact:

Development Officer (Child Protection)

Highland Child Protection Committee

Kinmylies Building . Leachkin Road

INVERNESS . IV3 8NN

Phone: 01463 703483

Education, Culture & Sport

The Highland Council

Glenurquhart Road

INVERNESS . IV3 5NX

Phone: 01463 702811

Local contacts for Education, Culture & Sport:

BADENOCH & STRATHSPEY

The Highland Council

Council Offices

Ruthven Road

KINGUSSIE

PH21 1EJ

Phone: 01540 664530

CAITHNESS

The Highland Council

Council Offices

Market Square

WICK

KW1 4AB

Phone: 01955 607771

INVERNESS

The Highland Council

Town House

High Street

INVERNESS

IV1 1JJ

Phone: 01463 724217

LOCHABER

The Highland Council

Mamore House

The Parade

FORT WILLIAM

PH33 6BD

Phone: 01397 702102

NAIRN

The Highland Council

Library Building

High Street

NAIRN

IV12 4AU

Phone: 01667 458513

ROSS & CROMARTY

The Highland Council

Ross House

High Street

DINGWALL

IV15 9RY

Phone: 01349 868477

SKYE & LOCHALSH

The Highland Council

Tigh na Sgìre

Park Lane

PORTREE

IV51 9GP

Phone: 01478 613858

SUTHERLAND

The Highland Council

Council Offices

Main Street

GOLSPIE

KW10 8RB

Phone: 01408 635211

Personal Profile Form

To be completed by all new volunteers/employees.

1. Organisation's Name: _____

2. Personal Details

Title: _____ Forename: _____ Surname: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Telephone No (incl STD code): _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Occupation: _____ Currently Employed: YES / NO

3. **Qualifications/Training** - Please enter details of any qualifications or training courses you have attended which are relevant to caring for young children.

Date(s)	Title of Qualification/Training	Subjects Studied	Length of Course	Name of Organisation

4. **Experience** - Please give details of experience of working with under 16's or vulnerable people

Where previously have you worked with young people under the age of 16?	In what capacity?	Between which dates?
Other comments:		

5. **Referees** - Please provide the names and addresses of TWO responsible persons for reference purposes. Referees should not be related to you and, where possible, should have a knowledge of your ability to care for or be in the proximity of children. All references will be taken up. *You should secure prior agreement of referees before providing their names.*

Referee 1 Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ Postcode: _____
--

Referee 2 Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ Postcode: _____
--

6. **Declaration** - I have read and understood the organisation's Child Protection Policy and agree to CONFIDENTIAL vetting procedures. I agree to inform the organisation of any change in circumstances.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Vetting Checklist

■ Name of Organisation: _____

■ Name of Volunteer/Employee: _____

This Checklist and a Child Protection Personal Profile Form must be completed for all new volunteers/employees in your organisation who have substantial access to children.

	YES	NO
1. Have you explained the need for vetting to the potential volunteer/employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you given the volunteer/employee an opportunity to read your Child Protection Policy and discussed any issues arising out of this with him/her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have you set up a personnel file for the potential volunteer/employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Has the volunteer/employee completed a Child Protection Personal Profile Form? <i>(Please attach the completed form to this check list)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you carried out appropriate vetting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Were the results satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you taken up two written references? <i>(Please attach the references to this check list)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Have you followed up these references with either a telephone call or conversation? <i>(Please attach a written record with full details including the date of the call or conversation to this checklist)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Has the above individual been approved as a volunteer/employee with your organisation? <i>(You must be able to answer YES to questions 1-8 above before you sign this form)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

■ Signed: _____

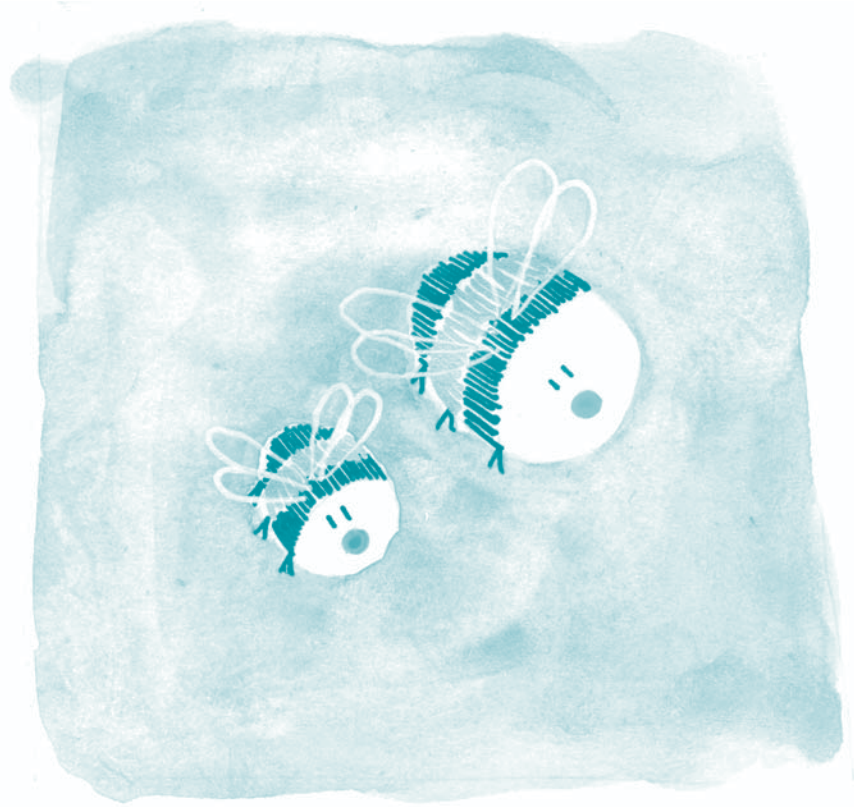
■ Date: _____

■ Name (in block capitals): _____

■ Position held in Organisation: _____



Notes



We believe that every child,
regardless of age, has at all times
and in all situations,
a right to feel safe and protected
from any situation or practice
that results in a child being
physically or psychologically damaged.



The Highland Child Protection Committee includes representatives from Highland Council, Highland Health Board and Northern Constabulary