



# Child Protection Guidelines

For city farms and community gardens that work - or intend to work - with children and young people

**Federation of City Farms  
and Community Gardens**

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# 1

## Child Protection Guidelines

### Introduction

City farming and community gardening is about people and land. While you and other members of your team may have a clear understanding of how your project operates, it may be useful to consider how your local community views it. The project is probably seen as a safe open space, with people around to keep an eye on things.

Farms and gardens need to look at child protection from several angles. To create a safe environment on your site there are various issues to consider:

- Creating an environment where children and young people are listened to and encouraged to speak openly to workers and their peers
- Enabling all paid and unpaid workers to work safely with children and young people
- Enabling paid and unpaid workers to support children and young people who disclose any form of abuse
- Reducing the risk of children and young people being harmed by members of the public
- Providing information to parents/carers and young people that shows how you work with children and young people

These guidelines are designed to help projects develop their own Child Protection Policy. It is important to think through the issues and develop procedures that will work on your particular project. If you already have a policy it may be useful to work through these guidelines as a checklist.

### What is child protection?

Child protection is about ensuring that a city farm or community garden is a safe environment for children and young people.

Children, young people and adults should understand that a safe environment for children and young people includes:

- Safety with tools
- Safety with animals
- Safety with plants
- Safety with people

Child protection = safety with people

The focus of these guidelines is safe working practice for anyone working with children and young people on a city farm or community garden.

### Who needs child protection?

Any project where children and young people under the age of 16 are involved.

The following guidelines can be used as a basis for developing your own child protection procedures – however we strongly recommend that you check with your local social services. Some existing procedures may be suitable for your project to adopt – others will need to fit the particular needs of city farms and community gardens.



# 1

## Why do city farms and community gardens need a policy?

Children and young people have a right to be safe and protected from harm. In the UK, legislation has been passed to ensure the welfare and safety of children is paramount. Three pieces of legislation cover all areas of the UK; they are based on the same underlying principles.

- England and Wales - The Children Act 1989
- Northern Ireland - Children (NI) Order 1995
- Scotland - Children (Scotland) Act 1995

A policy will enable farms and gardens to look at the safety of children and young people - and ensure practices will also be safe for all staff and volunteers.

- Developing a policy gives your group the opportunity to discuss issues of child safety, child abuse, accidents and any other issues. It can be used to create a forum for staff, volunteers, committee members, parents and young people to discuss effective ways of making your site safe. Child protection is a difficult issue to deal with - in order to protect children you have to consider all the ways in which children can come to harm.
- City farms and community gardens are often open to the public for a large part of the week. Parents, carers and young people probably see the project as a safe open space with people around to keep an eye on things. It can help parents, carers and young people if you are clear about the services and activities you can – and cannot – offer.
- Management committees have a legal duty to ensure:
  - The site is safe for children and young people
  - Support is offered to paid and unpaid workers to implement child protection procedures
  - Working practices promote safety for children, young people and workers
- All paid and unpaid workers must be clear about their responsibility to keep children and young people safe from harm - this includes every worker on your project.
- A policy can help reflect the diverse services offered by your project – think about the range of activities that involve children, young people, volunteers and vulnerable people.
- Local authorities and some funders require a Child Protection Policy to be in place. If you develop your own policy, it should meet the needs and concerns of your project.



# 1

## Checklist for developing a Child Protection Policy

- 1 The management committee and workers understand why the project needs to develop and implement a policy
- 2 Management committee agree who is responsible for developing the policy
- 3 If only one person is responsible it is still important to discuss things with all workers - a policy will effect everyone
- 4 Review FCFCG guidelines and any other useful information/guidelines
- 5 Consult with workers:
  - How will a Child Protection Policy affect their work?
  - Are there any other concerns?
  - Are there training needs?
- 6 Consult with young people
- 7 Produce a Policy Statement
- 8 Produce a first policy draft. The content should be relevant to the needs of your project. Remember to include:
  - Recruitment procedures
  - Planning your work to minimise risk of abuse to children and young people
  - Clear roles and responsibilities for all workers – paid and unpaid
  - Procedures for dealing with abuse
  - General good practice on your project
  - Enabling children and young people to speak out
  - Training and support of workers to implement policy
  - Information to the public - including parents/carers
  - How you will review and monitor the policy.
- 9 Discuss with local social services and any other contacts that can offer local support. You can also send your draft policy to FCFCG for comments
- 10 Discuss the policy with workers and management committee
- 11 Produce final draft
- 12 Produce information for parents/carers, young people, public notices, etc.
- 13 Remember to review how you are implementing your policy



# 1

## Developing a Policy Statement

Each farm or garden should devise a Policy Statement that reflects the areas of work and service delivered by the project. This will act as the focus and aim of your policy.

### Sample Policy Statement:

"It is the policy of ..... City Farm/Community Garden to safeguard children and young people from physical, sexual and emotional harm while participating in City Farm/Community Garden activities.

We take all reasonable steps to ensure that relevant procedures and training are implemented – thus ensuring that children and young people are in a safe environment."

Your policy and procedures will be based on your statement. Remember: procedures should **be relevant to, and meet the needs of, your project.**

It may seem like a lot of work to develop a Child Protection Policy and you may find some of the suggestions seem impossible in the context of your project. If you would like to discuss any issue please contact FCFCG for further advice.



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# 2

## Child Protection Guidelines

### What is abuse?

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 (you might also consider that this policy applies equally to vulnerable adults) whom has suffered from, or is believed to be at significant risk of, neglect, physical injury, or emotional or sexual abuse.

Child abuse should not be seen as being carried out by 'perverts' or 'monsters'. Abusers can be parents, family members or friends of the family, people in a position of trust or authority. The abuser could also be another child, a stranger or anyone who has contact with children.

Child abuse is defined in four categories within legislation. Childline has produced a sheet explaining the four categories, which shows very clearly what is meant by different terms:

- Physical abuse - children are hurt or injured by parents or other people. Hitting, kicking, beating with objects, throwing and shaking are all physical abuse, and can cause pain, cuts, bruising, burning, broken bones and sometimes even death.
- Sexual abuse - children are forced or persuaded into sexual acts or situations by others. Children might be encouraged to look at pornography, be harassed by sexual suggestions or comments, be touched sexually or forced to have sex.
- Emotional abuse - children are not given love, approval or acceptance. They may be constantly criticised, blamed, sworn at, told that other people are better than they are, or rejected by those they look to for love and affection.
- Neglect - when parents or others looking after children do not provide them with proper food, warmth, shelter, clothing, care or protection.

It is important that workers should understand what child abuse is so they can deal appropriately with disclosures, and not dismiss children's or young peoples' concerns or allegations of abuse.

Child abuse sometimes causes physical injury and often leaves emotional scars. People who have grown up being abused can feel worthless, unlovable, betrayed, powerless, confused, frightened and mistrustful of others. They might feel, wrongly, that the abuse is their fault.

### Recognising abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs that might make you feel concerned:

- Unexplained bruising, injuries or burns
- Changes in behaviour
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- Being left outside the home for long periods without food/drink
- Showing aggressive behaviour
- Showing unexpected fear of an adult
- Refusal to attend school

It is important to remember that changes in behaviour or signs you may have noted do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. There



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may be other reasons such as or problems at home or school; a child may be being bullied, for example. There may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong.

**Your responsibilities do not include investigating suspected abuse or questioning children when they have disclosed abuse. This is the role of Social Services or the NSPCC, who have statutory powers and obligations under the Children Act 1989.**

## Bullying

Of the 102,000 children and young people who were counselled by ChildLine in 1996/97, over 14,000 spoke about bullying.

Bullying is a form of abuse and in some cases has led to serious physical injury, mental torture, death or suicide. Children of all ages can be affected in many different ways. If bullying is happening in your project it is probably affecting many children, whether directly or indirectly. Indirect involvement may include children being scared it might happen to them, or being told not to be friends with certain children. This behaviour must be stopped for the sake of the victims and the bullies. You could include bullying in your Child Protection Policy or have a separate bullying statement/policy.

Talking with children and young people about dealing with bullying can be a useful way to engage them in the process of developing your child protection procedures. Kidscape produce extensive information on bullying and you can also try your local authority.



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# 3

## Child Protection Guidelines

### Recruitment of staff and volunteers

Careful recruitment and selection of staff is an effective way to protect children and young people and will reduce the risk of potential abusers who may see your project as a way of getting access to children.

- Paid or voluntary workers who have contact with children and/or young people must be vetted in some way before they start, such as through a criminal record check (see below)
- When recruiting paid and volunteer staff use an agreed, consistent process – this should include filling in an application form
- Take up two references from people who can give information on their suitability to work with children and vulnerable people
- Interview all workers – paid and unpaid
- Use a probationary period to ensure that applicants are suitable for the post

### Criminal records, vetting and references

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 it is acceptable to ask for details of any convictions for criminal offences. FCFCG recommends that all workers and volunteers who have contact with children and young people are vetted in some way.

Many projects can access police checks through their local authority, or other voluntary sector organisations.

It is important to remember that police checks alone are not very effective in preventing abuse – police checks should only be **part** of your Child Protection Policy.

Ask for and take up references - get an idea of the background and experience of the person you are allowing to work with children and young people on your site. Do not accept references attached to an application form - take them up in person.

In March 2002 the Criminal Records Bureau came into operation, replacing any previous arrangements between the police and organisations such as local authorities. The CRB, an executive agency of the Home Office, was set up to help organisations make safer recruitment decisions through its Disclosure Service, which provides wider access to criminal record information. This service helps employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors identify candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially work involving contact with children or other vulnerable members of society.

Access to the Disclosure Service is only available to organisations registered with the CRB. Some of these Registered Bodies are known as Umbrella Bodies, because they can apply for criminal records checks on behalf of other organisations. For example, a large organisation that has registered with the CRB to check out its own staff and/or volunteers may decide to offer access to CRB checks to smaller organisations.

Umbrella Bodies have the same responsibilities as Registered Bodies and must take reasonable steps to ensure that any organisation they use the Disclosure service on behalf of also complies with the relevant responsibilities and obligations.



# 3

It is vitally important for community managed farms and gardens who work with children to have a system in place for police checks. If you don't currently have the facility to process police checks, you can contact the CRB for a list of those registered as Umbrella Bodies. The CRB's website at [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk) contains much useful information and a searchable database of Umbrella Bodies, or you can phone the CRB helpline on 0870 90 90 811.

## Job descriptions

It is important to include your expectation that **all** workers are responsible for the welfare of children in their care and have a commitment to protect and prevent the abuse of children and young people. If volunteers do not have a job description, make sure they have a clear role and understand they too have responsibilities for child protection.

## Interviews

All workers, paid and unpaid, should be interviewed to find out if new workers understand their responsibility for the safety and welfare of children and young people.

## Induction

It is good practice to have an induction for all workers - paid and unpaid. An induction gives workers the chance to have an overview of the organisation and time to understand their role in implementing your Child Protection Policy. At this point it is important to identify any support or training needs the new worker may have.

## Probation periods

It is useful to have a probationary period for volunteers as well as paid workers, this allows time for the volunteer and the project to see if working with young people is going well. During this time the volunteer should not work unsupervised.

## Short term workers

Playschemes and student placements are common on city farms and community gardens. Student placements should always be supervised when working with children and young people. Some student placements may come from youth, community or teaching courses - in this case they may have had a recent police check - but it is the responsibility of the project to check this out. You may still decide that unsupervised short-term work is not appropriate.

Playscheme workers should be interviewed in time to allow for checks to be made - police checks can take up to 14 weeks to be returned. It is important to consider if you have enough appropriate supervision for activities such as playschemes, especially if you rely on students and volunteers.



# 3

## Roles of paid and unpaid workers

Everybody should be clear about his or her responsibilities. All workers need to understand how they are expected to work. Clear roles will help to provide a safe environment for young people and adults.

If you are worried, **it is not** your responsibility to decide if it is abuse. **It is** your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

## Young volunteers

Management committees are responsible for all paid staff and volunteers - this includes young volunteers. All workers and volunteers are entitled to have a job description that clearly sets out roles and responsibilities. If they do not have a job description it is important to have clear guidelines about the role.

Young volunteers can find their role difficult - they are often half way between responsible adult and participant. They will need help and support with their role/job and need to know how the Child Protection Policy affects them. Who should they talk with if they are concerned about something? How will the project support young volunteers and helpers if a child or young person discloses abuse to them?

## Supervision

Regular support and supervision with management or senior workers is a really important channel of communication and can be beneficial in protecting children and young people. It's a way of highlighting concerns, recording information, identifying training needs and improving working practice.

If there is only one worker responsible for working with young people on your project, consider how other staff can communicate concerns about young people - perhaps a regular slot at the staff meeting or volunteers meeting.

Any worker who has not had a police check should not work alone with young people. Make sure that such adults are always supervised - this will protect young people and adults.

## Training

All workers should have access to training that enables them to put a Child Protection Policy into practice. Training could include:

- Understanding child protection procedures
- Enabling workers to recognise abuse and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to deal with their concerns
- How to deal with disclosure of abuse

Local training should be available through Social Services' Child Protection Teams or other local agencies.



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# 4

## Child Protection Guidelines

# How to deal with abuse or suspicion of abuse

## Suspicion of abuse

One of the most effective ways of protecting children and young people from abuse is for staff and volunteers to deal with any concerns in a positive, non-judgmental way. Having a good relationship with children and young people who use the farm or garden, knowing the make-up of your local community, having an understanding of different child-care practices and cultural differences is extremely important. Farms or gardens should aim to be fair and consistent in their approach to child protection.

If you have concerns they should be recorded in an agreed place. You should share your concern with the Appointed Person (see *Disclosure* section below), but your concerns should not become 'common knowledge' or gossip - this could have a very bad effect on the child or young person, their family and your project.

If you have concerns it may be useful to seek advice from Social Services or NSPCC. Remember: it is not your duty to investigate abuse - that is the legal duty of Social Services.

## Disclosure

A key aim of a Child Protection Policy is to create an environment where children and young people are aware of their rights. Giving knowledge about children's and young people's rights increases the power they have to stop abusive situations. Informing children and young people of a route they can use to make a complaint, disclose abuse or discuss concerns is very important.

Children and young people will talk to adults they trust and this could include disclosing to an adult on your farm or garden. The situation can be very traumatic for the young person and the adult to whom the disclosure is made. It is therefore important to have a system in place that all paid and unpaid workers are aware of.

You will need to appoint one experienced person/manager who will be responsible for dealing with disclosure or suspicion of abuse. This Appointed Person will be responsible for recording information and liaising with the NSPCC, Social Services and/or police as appropriate. The Appointed Person needs clear guidelines on what action to take to prevent further abuse and what support they can offer the child.

It's also worth considering involving an independent person from the local community - someone who children and young people feel comfortable talking to. This person could be named in your policy as someone young people can talk to if they feel unable to talk to anyone at your project about something happening there.



# 4

## What to do if a child or young person discloses abuse:

### Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Take notes

### Reassure

- Reassure the child or young person, but be honest
- Do not make promises you may not be able to keep. Don't say things like: "I'll stay with you," or "Everything will be all right now"
- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to refer
- Do reassure the child that they were right to tell you, and recognise how difficult it might have been to tell
- Remember the child may feel guilty but only refer to this if they mention it; if they don't you could be putting the idea in their head. You could say things like: "you're not to blame, it's not your fault," "you're not alone," or "you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to"
- What you say should be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child or young person

### React

- Do not interrogate the child or young person for full details. All you need to do is find out whether or not you need to refer this further
- Do not ask leading questions, for example "What did he do next?" (this assumes something else did happen), or "did she touch your private parts?" Questions like this can invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later court case
- Do ask open questions, like "Anything else to tell me?"
- Do not criticise the person the child is talking about; the child or young person may love him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the child to repeat it for another worker or management member
- Explain to the child or young person what you have to do next and who you will have to talk to

### Record

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are needed by Social Services
- Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words



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- Draw a diagram to show the position of bruises or marks the child or young person shows you; include the size, shape and colour
- Record, as accurately as possible, things that are really said, rather than your interpretations or assumptions

## Remember

- Follow your Child Protection Policy. Consult with the appropriate person as soon as possible. If necessary refer to social services, NSPCC, or the police
- You may need support yourself. If this is not available within your project, find out what other agencies could offer it. Make sure this is included in your policy

## Dealing with allegations made against workers or management

If a child or parent makes allegations to your project against any person working for your farm or garden, whether they are paid, voluntary, or a member of the management group, it is important you know how you will deal with allegations. You must include this in your Child Protection Policy.

Any allegations must be taken seriously and must be reported to Social Services, who will then investigate and should be able to offer support to your group.

You should consider support structures for staff and volunteers when allegations are made, and how the disciplinary processes should operate in the context of child protection investigations.

Any staff, volunteer or management committee member who has an allegation made against them should be suspended immediately and remain suspended until the allegations have been investigated.

It is important to ensure as much confidentiality as possible, allegations should not be discussed with all staff or management - this can be harmful for the child/young person and the person the allegation was made against.

If Social Services investigate allegations this may affect your disciplinary process. Your disciplinary policy needs to be clear about what will happen in such a situation.

Remember - child protection, including the publicised use of police checks, promotes safe working practice; it should protect children and workers. It helps to minimise adults' vulnerability to allegations of abuse and will also put off adults who are intending to abuse.



# 4

## Recording information

There should be a confidential record book in which staff can record details of any incidents, circumstances and changes in behaviour that cause concern. Direct disclosures should also be recorded.

Staff and volunteers need to know:

- Where records are kept
- Who has access to records – and why
- Parents/carers have the right to have access to any records kept on their children
- Social Services may wish to see them, and use them if further action is needed

### What should be recorded

- Name and address of child/young person
- Date and time of incident
- Nature of injury or behaviour
- Young person's explanation of what happened
- Adult's explanation of what happened
- Date and time of record
- Signature of person recording the incident
- Information should be based only on facts, should not include assumptions, and should not refer to 'child abuse'

If you have any concerns about record keeping contact Social Services or NSPCC.

### What should not be recorded

- Do not make accusations
- Do not make assumptions



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# 5

## Child Protection Guidelines

# Good working practice – general guidelines

## Behaviour and roles of workers

As farms and gardens are very friendly and relaxed places it can be difficult for adults to know how to act appropriately. A friendly, relaxed atmosphere should also be a safe place for children and young people. Many people use the same rules and values as they would with their own families; this is not always appropriate in a work situation. For example, people have different ideas when it comes to things like discipline and punishment of children - no form of physical punishment is acceptable in a work situation.

Farms and gardens can be very physical places to work and close contact with animals and plants is an important part of the experience. This also means that young people will be in close contact with their peers and adults. Learning to use tools safely, learning to milk a goat, and various other activities, will necessarily involve close contact, but you might decide such learning only takes place in a group; that way both young people and adults are in an appropriate situation. If you change any of your practices or start new ones it is important that this becomes part of work practice for everyone working with children and young people.

Many workers are concerned about how their behaviour could be misinterpreted, or be seen as inappropriate - it may be useful to think about things like touch, giving lifts, etc.

### Guidelines for touching could include:

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different to a hug behind closed doors
- Touch should be related to the child's needs - not the worker's
- Touch should be age appropriate and initiated by the child rather than the worker
- Avoid physical activity which is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child
- Children and young people have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances where they need medical attention
- Adults should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood

### Other guidelines could include:

- Minimise the chances of spending time alone with children and young people. If you do spend time alone with a child tell other adults
- If you work with children of friends and family decide how you will deal with this; what are the differences between work and home?
- If adults are well known with family and friends in the community it is important to distinguish the role at work from the 'friend and family' role outside. For example, it is not appropriate to take children to your own home, or to offer lifts when in your work role. In the work role you have a responsibility to act professionally at all times
- Don't rely on your good name - rely on good, consistent work practices



# 5

- Giving lifts - it is not appropriate to offer lifts to young people when they are alone. It is not good practice to use your own car when working with young people. If you do use your car make sure you have 'fully comprehensive business cover' - check with your insurance company that you are covered for carrying other people's children. Always have parental consent if you use your car to transport young people

## First aid

- If you are administering first aid you are dealing with a medical situation. It is good practice to have a first aider on site and training is available which is specially designed for those working with children - contact your local St John's Ambulance, St Andrew's Ambulance, British Red Cross or other local first aid training provider
- Record all injuries and accidents in your accident book
- If you are concerned about injuries which did not take place on your site, make a record of these in your confidential record book (See *Recording Information*)

## Language

When working with animals you may use language that children are not familiar with – e.g. describing animal anatomy and sexual behaviour. It is important to agree terms and language that will be used by all workers.

## Ratios, roles and responsibilities

- If you are working with children over eight years old the recommended minimum ratio is one adult to ten young people. If you are working with children under eight, contact your local Social Services for information. It's also important for adults to work in teams of two or more; on city farms and community gardens this is not always simple
- Often there will only be one person responsible for working with young people on site but it's very important for **all** staff and volunteers to be clear of their role in relation to young people. For example - a volunteer may offer a lift home to one of your young volunteers - how will you deal with that situation in terms of child protection? The volunteer may be offended at any implication that they are not trustworthy, the young volunteer may have missed the last bus - there are lots of possibilities. Your Child Protection Policy needs to consider the sort of situations that could arise on your site
- You may be the only worker on site - what will you do? It may be possible to work alongside volunteers, helpers, parents or young volunteers aged over 18
- You may feel it will be impossible to get such help. If you're the only person on site you are in a vulnerable position for many reasons - not just in terms of child protection. You are also setting a precedent for anyone else to work with children alone on your site



# 5

- Many sites have several workers working in different places. In this situation it is extremely important to have good communication, clear roles and a chance to discuss things at the beginning or end of your session. Develop a system to pass on information, messages and concerns, and make time at staff meetings to discuss any concerns. Work with **groups** of young people; this makes sense in terms of child protection and general safety. If you are worried about anything talk to your manager or contact someone on your management committee

## Volunteers

All city farms and community gardens encourage volunteers. Any volunteer over the age of 18 who works with, or has extensive contact with, young people has a responsibility to ensure the safety of young people on site. Supported and vulnerable volunteers should be supervised when they are working with children and young people - this protects the children and the volunteer.

## Vulnerable people

Most farms/gardens work with a variety of vulnerable people. When developing a Child Protection Policy you will encounter many issues that are also important to the welfare of vulnerable people. Your Child Protection Policy could also be a guide for working with vulnerable people.

## Keeping information

When you run organised activities or supervise young volunteers it's important to have relevant medical information and a contact for emergencies. This information should be kept safely and only used by workers/leaders who need to know. When you ask for information from parents/carers use the opportunity to give them information about the way you work with children and young people.

## Working with tools, plants and animals

- 8 - 11 year olds working with sharp tools should be individually supervised. Work with a group of less than eight children and only have one sharp tool available for use
- 11 - 14 year olds - assess the ability of the young people and the context in which they are using sharp tools. Work in groups of eight young people to one adult
- Insurance - check to see if your insurance covers young people working with tools - if not you may find it useful to affiliate to BTCV. This will enable you to take out BTCV's Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance which covers children
- Many plants and seeds are poisonous or cause allergic reactions
- Compost, manure and animals can all carry bacteria/diseases. Follow guidelines to prevent infection of E. coli 0157 - this will also prevent infection from other organisms (detailed advice is available in the Health & Safety Executive's Agricultural Information Sheet No.23)



# 5

- Animal behaviour - decide when it is appropriate to allow young people to work with/handle animals. Even a hand reared sow can become aggressive when she first lactates. Most farms ask visitors to avoid feeding animals that may bite; how do you ensure regular young volunteers are not bitten?
- Some projects offer certificates of competence when young people have enough skill in handling tools/animals. This gives the farm/garden and the young person a clear way of developing and recognising skills and responsibilities

## Trips and events off site – quick checklist

- Plan your visit well in advance - if you are camping or staying overnight, visit the site before your stay
- Make sure you have enough adult supervision - one adult to 10 young people is the minimum and always have at least two adults. Decide who will be the group leader - this person will be responsible for consent forms
- All young people must return a signed consent form and medical form before you leave
- Will you be supervising the young people all the time? Will you be using instructors for activities? Any activities must be led by qualified and approved instructors
- Agree ground rules with young people in advance. Make sure adult helpers and young people understand the ground rules
- Provide information for young people, adults and parents/carers in advance
- If young people need special clothing, food, etc, send out a list
- Ask someone from your project to act as a contact when you are away. This person should be contactable by phone while you are off site and able to give information to parents/carers if you have to change any plans
- Insurance – your project insurance may not provide adequate cover for off site activities – check this in advance. Also check if the insurance covers overnight activities away from your project
- Carry a travel first aid kit
- Leave a list of who you have taken and copies of emergency contact numbers/medical/consent forms



## Public sites

City farms and community gardens are visible and accessible to all members of the public. This can be an incentive for having good working practice but also brings difficulties with keeping children and young people safe.

# 5

## How do young people know who is a trusted worker from your project?

- Many farms have special sweatshirts that paid and unpaid workers wear. This can be a useful badge - unless members of the public also buy your sweatshirts!
- Some projects wear badges to identify workers, others display photographs
- It can be difficult to ensure that young people and parents/carers know who they can trust - you need to develop a system that works for your site

Open access sites will find it difficult to keep track of young people. You may have a system for supervising young volunteers, or young people may feel they can just drop in. It is important for young people and parents to know if the project can offer supervision or if young people on site are unsupervised in the same way as if they were in a public park.



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# 6

## Child Protection Guidelines

# Support for city farms and community gardens

## Local support

City farms and community gardens provide a variety of opportunities for children and young people. These include:

- Young volunteers and helpers
- Play
- Informal social education of young people
- Formal education
- Young trainees

The variety of work means there are often several organisations that can offer support or share good practice.

## Social Services

If you work with children under eight you may need to register your group. This could include activities such as playgroups, crèches, afterschool clubs, playschemes and adventure playgrounds – it may be possible for your group to register as one or all of these. All Social Services have an Inspection Unit responsible for registering groups working with children under the age of eight for two hours or more per day.

If your project works with children over eight it's still worthwhile contacting your local Inspection Unit for support and information on good practice.

If your farm or garden is used by children as a drop-in facility it's worth considering that parents/carers may have an expectation that your project is safe and you are looking after their child - you need to be clear what you are offering.

Even if you are not registered with Social Services the project still has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people.

## Networking

Networking with similar projects can be valuable in many aspects of your work. Giving each other support and sharing information or resources can help you improve your working practice or raise workers confidence in dealing with child protection issues. You may like to contact other farms/gardens, other local agencies or networks, or form relevant networks of your own.

## Useful local agencies

- Youth and play associations
- Local authority youth departments/services
- Social Services
- Local branches of NSPCC
- Councils for Voluntary Youth Service (CVYS)

Find out who your local contacts are. Introduce your project and let them know what you're doing. Find out a name - if you need help it's always easier talking to someone who knows your project.



# 6

## FCFCG support

FCFCG can offer support to members in various ways, sometimes with further advice or signposting to other farms or gardens who have gone through the issues you are tackling. We try to support networks for specific workers - volunteer co-ordinators, managers, education workers, etc, and where resources allow, arrange training to enable projects to develop and implement Child Protection Policies.

### FCFCG

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[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)

## National support

A number of national organisations produce leaflets, books or posters dealing with child protection. Simply having a poster up with the helpline number for ChildLine or NSPCC can be a lifeline to a child, a way of recognising that what is happening to them is wrong and that they have a right to be protected and listened to.

### ChildLine

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Helpline: 0800 1111

Confidential counselling for any child with problems. Provides books, information and posters.

### Children's Legal Centre

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

Tel: 01206 872 466

Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)

Legal advice and information about issues that affect young people and their rights. Produce guides, handbooks and information sheets.

### Kidscape

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Tel: 0207 730 3300

Helpline: 08451 205 204

Campaign for personal safety of children and young people. Deals with bullying, getting lost, stranger danger and threats of abuse from known adults.

### NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

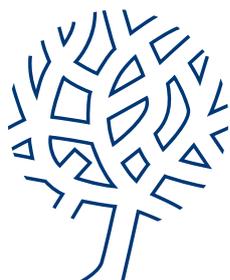
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Tel: 0207 825 2500

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Produce information, advice and training information. 24-hour Child Protection Helpline is for anyone worried about the safety or welfare of a child.



# 6

## **Children 1st (Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children)**

[www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)

Tel: 0131 446 2300

Independent child care and protection agency providing a complementary service to existing statutory services.

## **Brook Advisory Centre Office**

[www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

Helpline: 0800 0185 023

Tel: 0207 284 6040

Email: [admin@brookcentres.org.uk](mailto:admin@brookcentres.org.uk)

Brook centres offer young people under 25 counselling for sexual, emotional and family problems, contraception advice and pregnancy testing.

## **Youth Access Office**

[www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)

Tel: 0208 772 9900

Email: [admin@youthaccess.org.uk](mailto:admin@youthaccess.org.uk)

Produce a national directory listing advice and counselling agencies for young people.

## **Guidelines**

### **Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency (NIVDA)**

[www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org)

Tel: 028 9023 6100

Email: [info@volunteering-ni.org](mailto:info@volunteering-ni.org)

Produce guidelines which have lots of practical samples - e.g. sample volunteer reference form, sample policy statements.

### **Volunteer Development Scotland**

[www.vds.org.uk](http://www.vds.org.uk)

Tel: 01786 479593

Email: [vds@vds.org.uk](mailto:vds@vds.org.uk)

Produce code of practice for voluntary organisations in Scotland working with children and young people.

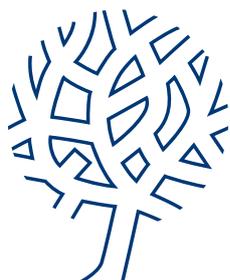
### **Volunteering England**

[www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

Tel: 0845 305 6979

Email: [information@volunteeringengland.org](mailto:information@volunteeringengland.org)

Produce 'Safe and Alert' good practice advice on volunteers working with vulnerable people. Also produce other guidelines for volunteering.



Federation of  
& City Farms  
& Community  
& Gardens

## **Helplines**

**Brook Advisory Centre Helpline**

0800 0185 023

**Kidscape**

08451 205 204

**Children's Legal Centre Helpline**

01206 873 873

**ChildLine** Freephone

0800 1111

**NSPCC Child Protection Helpline**

0808 800 5000

**Parentline Plus**

0808 800 2222

**Samaritans National Helpline**

08457 909 090

# 6

## Support and information for parents

### **Parentline-Opus (Organisations for Parents under Stress)**

Tel: 01268 757 077

Network of groups providing support for parents, including confidential anonymous local help lines and self help groups.

### **Parentline Plus**

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Tel: 0207 284 5500

Helpline: 0808 800 2222

A UK registered charity, offering support to anyone parenting a child – the child's parents, step-parents, grandparents and foster parents.

## Safety

### **British Trust for Conservation Volunteers**

[www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)

Tel: 01302 572 244

Email: [information@btcv.org.uk](mailto:information@btcv.org.uk)

BTCV produce a variety of information and training on safety with tools, conservation, etc. Groups who affiliate can access insurance cover and reduced fees for training.

### **Health and Safety Executive**

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Publication order line: 01787 881 165

HSE infoline: 0845 345 0055

HSE provide information sheets including *Avoiding ill health at open farms*.

### **Child Accident Prevention Trust**

[www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7608 3828

Email: [safe@capt.org.uk](mailto:safe@capt.org.uk)

CAPT produce a number of publications aimed at reducing the risk of serious accidents involving children.

### **Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents**

[www.rospa.org.uk](http://www.rospa.org.uk)

Tel: 0121 248 2000

Email: [help@rospa.com](mailto:help@rospa.com)

RoSPA produce health and safety information for use with children and young people.

## Play and outdoor activities

### **National Playing Fields Association** - [www.npfa.co.uk](http://www.npfa.co.uk)

**NPFA England** 0207 833 5360 [info@npfa.org](mailto:info@npfa.org)

**NPFA Scotland** 01382 817 427 [scotland@npfa.org](mailto:scotland@npfa.org)

**NPFA Wales** 029 2063 6110 [cymru@npfa.org](mailto:cymru@npfa.org)

NPFA provides a wide range of good quality play and safety information, plus general safety information for working in open spaces with children and young people.

[www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk) [admin@farmgarden.org.uk](mailto:admin@farmgarden.org.uk)



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# Appendix 1

## Local contacts/support list

Social Services Child Protection Team:

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NSPCC:

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Local Doctors:

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Local Health Visitor:

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Police Child Protection Team:

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Local Schools:

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Youth Clubs:

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Other Support Agencies:

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# Appendix 2

## Sample consent form

Consent form for: \_\_\_\_\_ *[name of your project]*

\_\_\_\_\_ *[name of activity/trip]* on / / 20

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. / /

### Contact Details

Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### Medical Details

Does your child suffer from any illness or disability which may affect him/her when taking part in activities? **Yes / No**

Does your child require any medication? **Yes / No**

Does your child have any special dietary requirements? **Yes / No**

If yes to any of these questions, please give details and instructions below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of last Tetanus vaccination: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that should any accident or illness occur every effort will be made to contact me in an emergency. I authorise the leaders to give any written consent on my behalf if the delay in obtaining my own signature is considered inadvisable by the doctor or surgeon concerned. (Please delete this section if you would prefer us not to give written consent.)

I give my permission for: \_\_\_\_\_ *(child's name)*

to participate in the: \_\_\_\_\_ activity on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ *(Parent/Guardian)* Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I also give my permission for photographs of my child to be taken during the above activity, for use in publicity and funding applications.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ *(Parent/Guardian)* Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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These guidelines have been produced by the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, which exists to support, promote and represent community-managed farms and gardens throughout the UK.

City farms and community gardens are not just about muddy boots, backache and sweet smells - they are about people. Young and old people learning and working together, people enjoying themselves and getting involved in their community. Each city farm and community garden is different, having been developed by local people in response to their interests and needs of their communities.

Most city farms and community gardens involve children and young people. They may come along to help, play, learn about plants and animals or just because it is a nice environment. They may come in school groups, youth groups, groups of friends, with their families, with carers, on their own and as student/work placements.

This document is also available in **large type**, in **Braille** or on **audio cassette**.

Please contact the FCFCG Head Office.



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