

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

It can be very difficult to know what to do if faced with a concern about a child, especially if the concern involves someone you know. A set procedure ensures that everyone is clear on what action to take in the event of suspected abuse or inappropriate behaviour. It gives staff and volunteers clear, important steps to follow; ensuring action is taken quickly and in the best interests of the child. Cricket Scotland is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers where possible when there are concerns about a child. Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children.

Basic principles are that the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. Concerns should be passed on without delay to those with the authority, expertise and skills to deal with them. Information should be shared with those immediately concerned with the issue in hand and remain confidential in order to ensure any investigations are not prejudiced and to protect those involved.

These procedures apply to all staff/volunteers involved in Cricket Scotland

If the concern involves a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff and/or volunteer working on behalf of Cricket Scotland please see also section 8.

1. Concerns about the General Welfare of a Child (NOT involving concerns about child abuse)

Where the concern does not involve the possibility of abuse, worries may be discussed with parents/carers.

Any significant, untoward or unusual incidents that cause concern about the welfare of a child should be recorded on the *Significant Incident Form* and reported to Cricket Scotland CPO as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.

Advice should be sought from Cricket Scotland CPO if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action where there are concerns about the general welfare of a child.

2. Concerns about the possible abuse of a child

If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child, take whatever action is required to ensure his/her safety and contact the police immediately. No member of Cricket Scotland shall investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether a child has been abused.

Information about the possible abuse of a child may be presented from various sources - the child themselves, another child, an adult, an agency or an organisation.

Allegations of abuse will always be taken seriously. False allegations are very rare. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure.

1. Respond

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to the child and take what they say seriously.
- Reassure the child they are not to blame and were right to tell someone.
- Be aware of interpreting what a child says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate, or English is not their first language.
- Do not assume that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
- If necessary only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the *possibility* that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions e.g. Who? Where? When?

Avoid:

- Panicking.
- Showing any feelings of disbelief
- Showing shock or distaste.
- Probing for more information than is offered.
- 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 and giving a guarantee of confidentiality
- Introducing personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children
- Projecting your own reactions onto the child.
- Asking questions.



Pass on the information to the Cricket Scotland CPO and/or social work services or the police without delay.

2. Record

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the *Significant Incident Form*. If completing the form electronically, do not save copies anywhere. Print a copy, sign and date and then delete immediately.

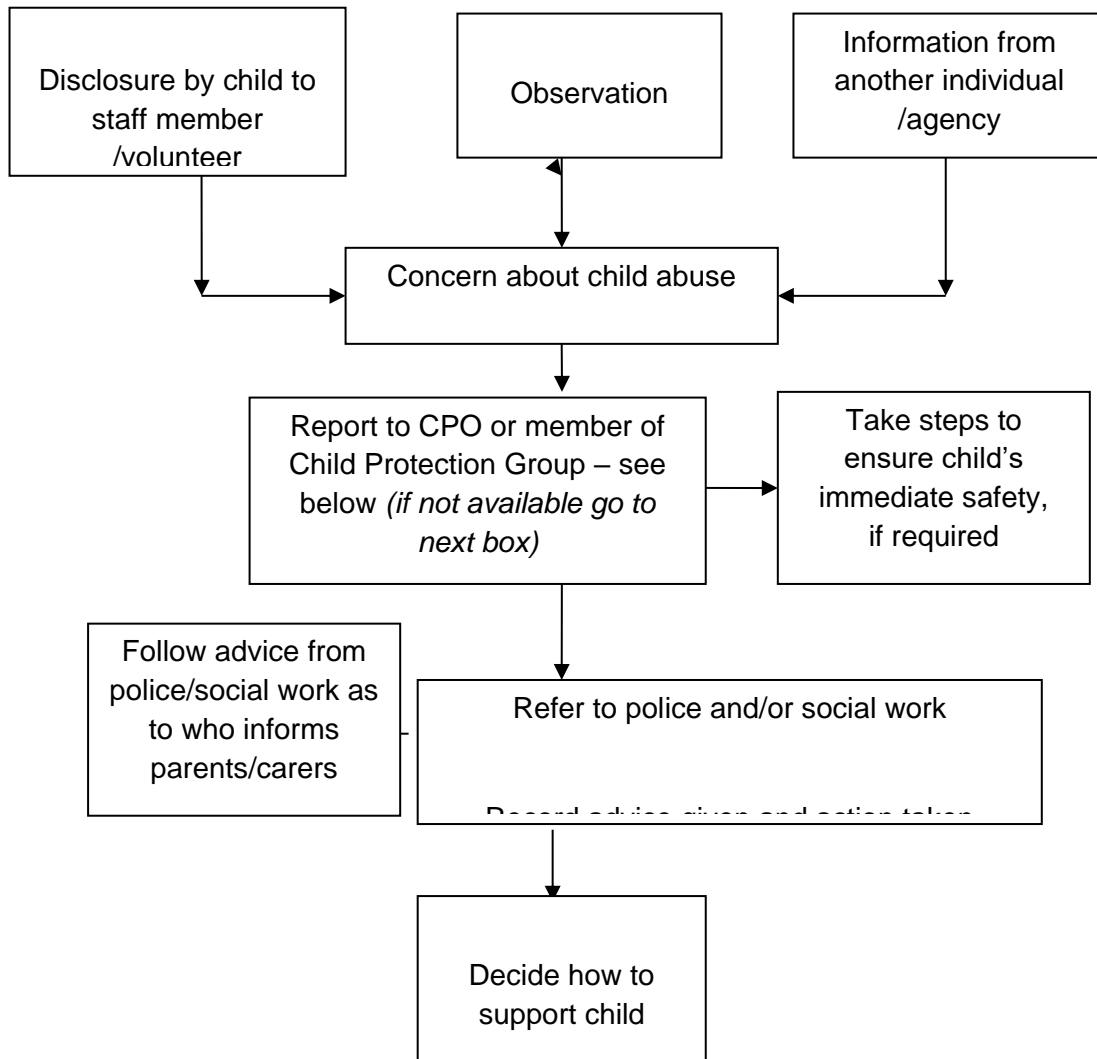
Reporting the concerns to the Cricket Scotland CPO should **not** be delayed by gathering information to complete the form or until a written record has been made. The information in the *Significant Incident Form* will help the CPO, police and social workers decide what action to take next.

For advice and guidance when/if the Cricket Scotland CPO or a member of Child Protection Group is unavailable, or when an immediate response is required, contact the police and social work services. Record any advice.

3. Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers

Advice must always firstly be sought from the police or social work services as to who informs the parents/carer where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse and that sharing concerns with the parents/carers may place the child at further risk.

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Cricket Scotland Child Protection Committee Members

Head of Participation

Child Protection Officer

PVG Administrator