



Child Protection Policy & Procedures

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Stable Life supports vulnerable young people and their families in the Scottish Borders who are experiencing personal challenges in their lives. Utilising Equine Assisted Learning (EAL), and Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT), working together using the horse and its environment, we have built a very special, safe and nurturing environment for these young people where they develop strategies/skills to discover a sense of self, build resilience, thereby changing attitudes whilst developing transferable life skills helping them move onto positive pathways as well as inspiring and exciting them about their life choices.

In addition we also run an Equine Centre providing various equine activities for customers aged 2 upwards.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Stable Life's services both charitable and commercial from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Stable Life including senior managers and board members, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in Scotland. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

Staff Handbook
Code of Conduct
Roles and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer
Online Working Policy
Social Media Policy
Adult Protection Policy & Procedures
Health and safety
Induction, training, supervision and support
GDPR Policies

In addition full information on Scottish Borders Child Protection Committee's Child Protection Procedures can be found [here](#).

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse
- 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:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

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

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection officer for children and young people, and a deputy child protection officer (board member) See appendix 1 – Role of the Child Protection Officer.
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures ensuring all staff and volunteers know and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers in a timely and appropriate manner
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying allegations
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are able to share concerns

Contact details**Nominated child protection officer**

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Deputy child protection officer

Name: Alyson Weir

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Child Protection Procedures

Section 1 - Introduction

- Stable Life is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. This Safeguarding Policy and Procedures reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed
- The Child Protection Officer and Chief Executive are responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's Child Protection Policy statement and other care and protection policies and guidelines. However, all workers (paid or unpaid) for Stable Life are required to implement the child protection procedures
- Section 5 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that "it shall be the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare". This places on Stable Life a Duty of Care for the children and young people we work with. Stable Life also recognizes that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. Stable Life will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people in its care. Stable Life's understanding of abuse can be found in Appendix 2
- Scottish Borders Public Protection- Child Sexual Exploitation Recovery Pathway provides a recovery pathway for children and young people who have been victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the Scottish Borders and can be found in Appendix 3
- Stable Life has a commitment to children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them

Section 2 - Recruitment

Stable Life recognizes that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as volunteers or staff of Stable Life:

- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form
- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete a self-declaration form
- All successful applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to provide suitable references
- All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview
- A self-declaration form will be used so that interviewed applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation
- All successful applicants appointed into a 'regulated work' position, as defined by the PVG Act, will be required to become members of the PVG Scheme or, if already a member, provide their PVG Scheme Record and permit access to a PVG Scheme Record Update
- Any applicant found to be fully listed on the Children's List will not be appointed to a regulated work (paid or unpaid) position.

Section 3 - Training

All newly appointed staff and volunteers at Stable Life will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Child Protection. This will include:

- Details of the structure of the organisation will be provided, including the details of overall responsibility for child protection within the organisation
- Details of the organisations aims and objectives will be provided
- An assessment of staffs (paid and unpaid) training and development requirements will be completed
- The roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the organisation will be clarified

- Clear details of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will be provided
- All staff and volunteers must agree and sign up to the organisations Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Training, information and a copy of the organisations Code of Conduct will be provided
- The contact details and roles and responsibilities of the organisations Child Protection Officer will be provided

Section 4 – Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse

Where a member of staff or volunteer has concerns about a child, or a client makes a disclosure to the worker they have a duty to report this to Stable Life’s Child Protection Officer immediately so that advice can be sought or a referral made to the Child Protection Unit (CPU). If the worker cannot get hold of the Child Protection Officer, they must contact the CPU themselves and ensure that the Child Protection Officer is notified as soon as possible. However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child or young person and their protection from any potential risk. During the reporting process the young person should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

As a worker or volunteer your role in child protection is not to investigate or decide if abuse has taken place. Your role is to observe, record and report. The responsibility for investigating a suspected case of child abuse or neglect lies with the Social Work Child Protection Unit (CPU) on behalf of the Local Authority.

Staff or volunteers should be prepared to:

- Outline concerns and make it clear if they believe the situation requires immediate response.
- Be ready to provide any information regarding the child/young person and family including names, dates of birth, family composition and any special needs of the child/young person or other family members.
- Provide details regarding what action if any has already been taken.
- Provide any other relevant information.

Informing children/young people and parents

Wherever possible children/young people and their parents should be advised of the intention to refer to Child Protection Unit/Police.

However, consideration must be given to the safety of the child or young person if the parents are informed whether alerting them may prejudice any subsequent investigation. This will be of particular importance if the child indicates that the parent, relative, or close family friend is alleged to be the perpetrator.

Section 5 - Responding when a child or young person discloses abuse

It is likely that a child or young person who has been abused will have given a lot of thought as to whether they should disclose the abuse. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that staff and volunteers follow the steps outlined below. In addition the SBC Child Protection Flowchart in Appendix 4 should be used as a guide in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse.

Stay calm

Remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are trusted, not because you are an expert counsellor. Do not promise to keep the information secret; you may have to inform an appropriate person. You must take any disclosure seriously and reassure the young person that you believe them.

Listen and take the allegation seriously

Listen to what the child or young person is saying. Give them the time and opportunity to tell you as much as they are able and willing to. Do not pressurise them and allow them to disclose information at their own pace. You should not investigate, ask leading questions or ask specific or explicit questions. You should only clarify what they are willing to tell you in their own words. Try to do this in an appropriate place, such as a room where other people can see in through an open door or window. Whilst it's important to respect the young person's privacy it should not be at the expense of other child protection measures.

Reassure

Reassure them that you believe what they are saying and that you know it is not their fault. You should also give them some indication of what you will do next with the information that they have given you.

Confidentiality

Reiterate that you cannot promise to keep the information secret. You must take any disclosure seriously. Details of the disclosure should only be passed on to the Child Protection Officer, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities.

Wherever possible you should try not to discuss any concerns that you have about a child or young person in a way that may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.

Case Recording

If you are able to, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to the young person why you are doing it. If it's not possible to do so at the time, record the details as soon as possible after the disclosure with as many facts as possible (dates, times, actual words used) using the Child Welfare Report Form. See Appendix 5.

It is the responsibility of Stable Life Child Protection Officer to ensure records are kept in such a way that evidence of possible child abuse can be easily identified. Records must be factual with clear dates and times. Details of any communication with the Local Authority should be carefully recorded. In cases where there are child protection concerns, it is essential that noticeable changes of behaviour or appearance are systematically recorded.

Look after yourself

Being trusted with a disclosure of abuse directly from a young person can be emotionally draining, worrying and very stressful. Whilst it's essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times, it's important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with the Child Protection Officer. If appropriate, the Child Protection Officer will arrange additional support for you.

Section 6 -

Protection of Workers who report care and protection concerns

Deciding to report a colleague or volunteer you suspect of abusing or otherwise harming a child can be stressful and difficult and you may be worried about the person concerned taking action against you. The law does give you protection if you raise concerns or report a colleague as long as the report was not malicious or vexatious.

If a staff member or volunteer has a concern or suspicion of abuse or inappropriate conduct of another member of staff or volunteer, the Child Protection Officer should be contacted immediately. If the allegation is about the Child Protection Officer, then the person to be contacted is the Chief Executive. Please follow the whistle blowing procedures.

Upon receiving an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct towards a young person, the Child Protection Officer or Chief Executive should contact the Children and Families Duty Team to determine whether an immediate response or action needs to be taken.

Where there are grounds for suspicion of abuse (as determined by Children and Families Duty Team):

- The staff member or volunteer will be informed of the allegation and given the opportunity to respond
- The staff member or volunteer will then normally be removed from duties that have direct contact with young people or be suspended with full pay (if paid member of staff) without prejudice. This action will be taken by the Chief Executive, prior to referral of the allegation to the appropriate authorities. In all such cases Stable Life will fully comply with all aspects of an external investigation and will seek to review policy and procedures upon conclusion.

In all allegations of abuse involving a member of staff or volunteer, external support for that person will be provided. If the accused member of staff is permitted to return to work a programme of support will be given, including back to work support meetings and ongoing support in the workplace.

Lack of Police or other investigatory authority action will not preclude the possibility of disciplinary action being taken with staff/volunteers if deemed appropriate in response to poor practice. Procedure will take place as per the Stable Life's Disciplinary Policy. Where it is appropriate, a referral will be made to the Disqualified from Working with Children List, in accordance with the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003, by the Stable Life's Child Protection Officer or Chief Executive.

If there are clear grounds to suspect the allegation is malicious or completely unfounded an internal investigation will be held by the Child Protection Officer or Chief Executive within five days. After the five-day period, a report containing the information gathered and the decisions (including reasons for not pursuing the allegation) made should be placed in a confidential file, along with any comments from the person against whom the allegation has been made.

Section 7 - Data Protection and management of confidential information

Stable Life is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is kept locked and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is kept and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

Stable Life is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality and this will be respected by all workers. However, where a worker feels that the information disclosed by a child or young person should be referred to their line manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that confidentiality cannot be kept.

Section 8 - Review of Child Protection policy and procedures

This policy and procedures document will be reviewed annually by the Child Protection Officer, Chief Executive and Board. All staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

This policy has been approved by: The Board of Trustees

Date: 29/06/2023

Signed: Mags Powell

Appendix 1

Role description for nominated Child Protection Officer

Purpose of the role

To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are in place at Stable Life. To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in Stable Life's activities at all times.

Duties and responsibilities

1. Take a lead role along with the Chief Executive in developing and reviewing Stable Life's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
2. Take a lead role in implementing Stable Life's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning children and young people who take part in Stable Life's activities are responded to appropriately.
3. Make sure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children and young people at Stable Life, including the board members, understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
4. Make sure children and young people who are involved in activities at Stable Life 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.
5. Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Stable Life's activities.
6. Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Stable Life may present a risk to children or young people. This includes:
 - a) assessing and clarifying the information
 - b) making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate
 - c) consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management
 - d) following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
7. Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as:
 - a) the local authority child protection services
 - b) the police.This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.
8. Consult the SBC Child Protection Team when support is needed.
9. Store and retain child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
10. Work closely with the Chief Executive to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.

11. Report regularly to the Chief Executive on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation.
12. Be familiar with and work within inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local child protection agencies.
13. Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse, and keep up to date with new developments in this area.
14. 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 Stable Life.
15. Attend team meetings, supervision sessions and management meetings as arranged.
16. Work flexibly as may be required and carry out any other reasonable duties.

Appointment to this role is subject to satisfactory vetting and barring checks.

Child protection leads must be have received relevant safeguarding and child protection training that is specific to their role.

This training should be refreshed regularly and they should keep up to date with any changes in safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidance.

Appendix 2

Stable Life's - Understanding of Abuse

Abuse to children or vulnerable young people is described under the following headings:

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or young person, whether willful or unintentional, which results in serious impairment to physical health and development.

Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child or young person where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Emotional Abuse

The adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person, caused by failure to provide for their basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse

Any child or young person below the age of 18 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person, by design or neglect, exploits the child or young person directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person including organised networks.

Other abusive behaviour towards children and young people

Staff, volunteers and board members should also be aware of other, perhaps less obvious, forms of abuse. These may be dismissed by perpetrators as 'just fun' or 'having a laugh' with young people but can have a serious impact and cannot be allowed or go unchallenged:

- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism if any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

Because Stable Life is a child-centred organisation, where there is a child protection concern, the protection of the child will be the overriding priority. Where Stable Life suspects a child has suffered harm or is likely to be at risk of significant harm, priority over all other work will be given to taking the necessary action to protect the child. It will be reported to the appropriate authority. The interests of children must always be considered separately from the interests of the parents and carers. Particularly where issues of emotional abuse and neglect arise, it is important that a child protection focus is not lost in concern for a parent or carer.

Appendix 3

Scottish Borders Public Protection- CSE Recovery Pathway

This document provides a recovery pathway for children and young people who have been victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the Scottish Borders. You can access the full document via this link: <https://bit.ly/36q4468>

There are 4 different sources of support for survivors of sexual abuse in the Scottish Borders (please see CSE Recovery Pathway for full details):

Scottish Borders Rape Crisis Centre (SBRCC)

SBRCC supports all young people of any gender/gender identity aged 12 to 18 who have experienced any form of sexual violence such as rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and the sharing of intimate images.

Website: www.scottishbordersrapecrisis.org.uk

Main number: 01896 661 070

Mobile number: 07584 149 391

For general information: info@sbrcc.org.uk

For support: support@sbrcc.org.uk

Children 1st

Children1st support young people from 3 to 18 years who have shared that they have been the victim of any type of sexual abuse or assault.

A referral to Children 1st can be made by anyone whether it is a self-referral, family member or professional.

Referral forms can be requested from ettrick@children1st.org.uk

Main number: 01750 22892

A confidential consultation can be requested at any time by contacting Sarah Axford, Service

Manager Main number: 01750 22892 Mobile number: 07554779264

sarah.axford@children1st.org.uk

Survivors unite

Survivors Unite offers support for adults over 16 affected by childhood sexual abuse.

Main number: 01750 22892

Mobile 07506 491 045

Email: info@survivorsunite.org.uk

Address: c/o Children 1st, Ettrick Family Resource Centre, Ettrick Road, Selkirk

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

CAMHS support any young person under 18, who in addition to having reported sexual abuse or assault is experiencing signs of a mental illness or distress to be eligible for support.

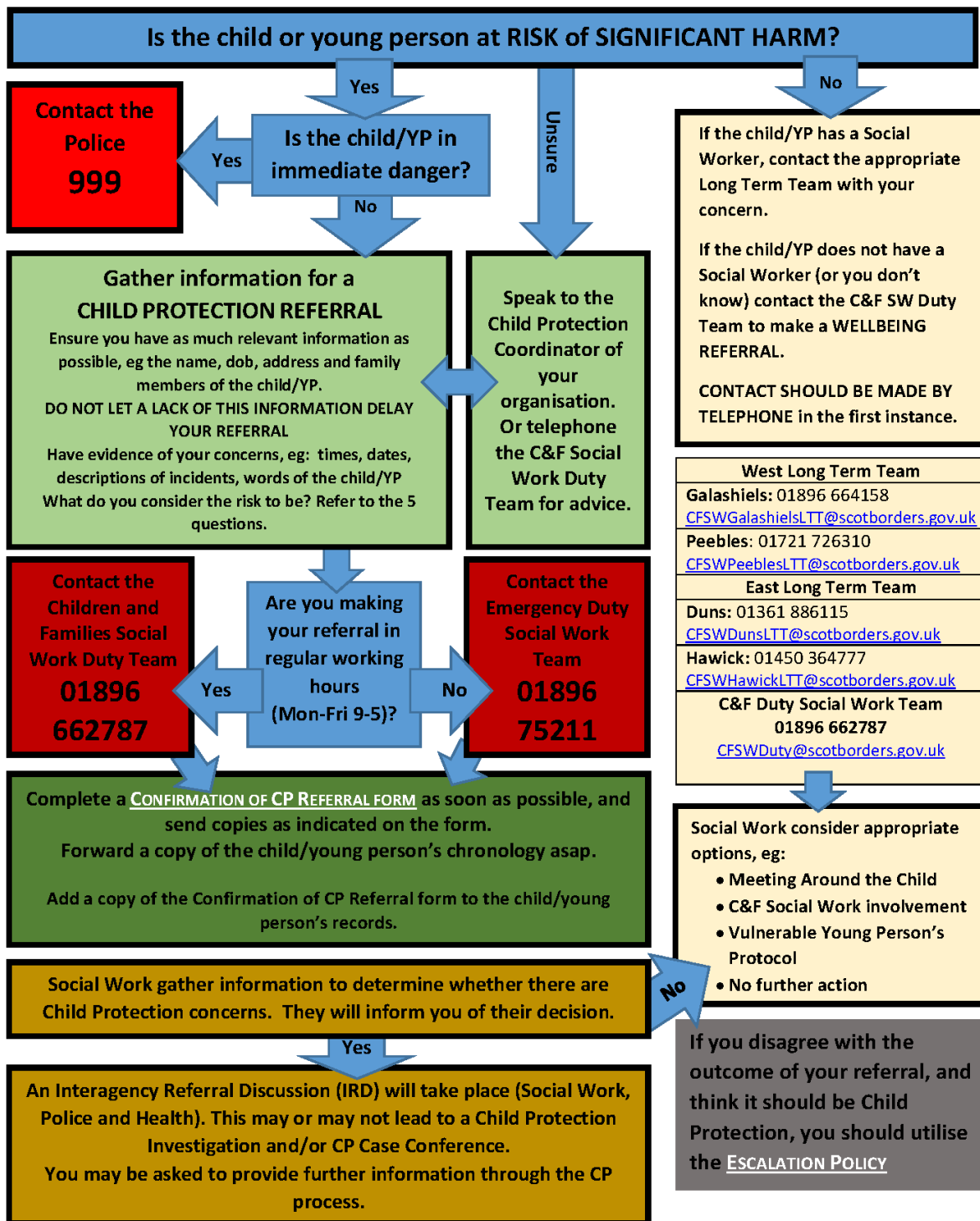
Main number: 01750 23715

Address: CAMHS, The Andrew Lang Unit Viewfield Lane Selkirk TD7 4LJ

Referrals are accepted from: Health: GP, School Nurse, Health Visitor, Paediatrician, Occupational Therapist, Dietician, Speech & Language Therapist, Family Nurse

Partnership Education: Educational Psychologist Social Work: Social Worker who has met with the child or young person.

Children and Families Social Work Referral and Child Protection Workflow



<http://www.sb-cpc-procedures.org.uk/>

<http://www.sb-cpc-procedures.org.uk/contents/forms/confirmation-of-child-protection-referral-form/>

<http://www.sb-cpc-procedures.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/New-Escalation-policy-flowchart-2014.png>

Appendix 5

Child Welfare Report Form

- A report should be made by the person who has had the initial concerns about a child's welfare using this pro forma
- The report should be handed to the Child Protection Officer in a sealed envelope
- The Child Protection Officer should contact the appropriate Social Work Dept/Police

Name:

Date:

Who is putting the child/young person at risk? (eg staff member, family member)

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Name and contact details of child/young person/s you concern relates to:

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Outline your reasons for concern:

Key Points

Brief outline of any action you have already taken to protect the child/young person:

Signature:
Designation:
Date:

Follow up action taken by Child Protection Officer:

Signature:
Designation:
Date: