



Policy Title: Child Abuse Policy

Date Reviewed: April 2019

The College of Policing undertakes its own equality impact assessment and ECHR review relating to their Authorised Professional Practice. This policy has been reviewed for any local variance and has no additional impact.

1.0 About this Policy

1.1 Rationale

The Police are under a statutory obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. This policy has been reviewed in the light of the publication of "Working Together to Safeguard Children" in 2018 and associated guidelines for a Child Death Review.

1.2 Legislation/National Standards

- Children Act 2004

1.3 Intention

This policy is intended to ensure that Thames Valley Police achieves a consistent and professional approach when responding to concerns about the welfare of a child. Our priorities are as follows:

- To protect the lives and wellbeing of children and ensure that, in the policing of child abuse, the welfare of all children is paramount;
- To investigate all reports of child abuse and to protect the rights of child victims of crime;
- To ensure that investigating child abuse and safeguarding children is embedded as a mainstream policing activity;
- To take effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable, through the criminal justice system, while safeguarding the welfare of children;
- To adopt a proactive multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing all forms of child abuse;

1.4 General Principles

1.4.1 Child abuse is the generic term encompassing all situations of the ill treatment of children, including serious physical and sexual assaults. It will include cases where the standard of care does not reach reasonable expectations (neglect), where psychological harm is caused or where someone has failed to act to prevent harm.

1.4.2 Child abuse includes physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or the neglect of a child. Abuse may occur in a family, in an institution or in a community setting by those known to them or by others (e.g. via the internet). Child abuse can also include offences relating to female genital mutilation (FGM), human trafficking and exploitation. A child is deemed anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

2.0 Statement of Policy

Child Abuse

2.1 Thames Valley Police have adopted the Authorised Professional Practice from the College of Policing.

2.2 When dealing with incidents of child abuse or suspected abuse, officers and staff will:

- Identify and record all concerns about the welfare of a child to trigger the appropriate multi-agency response
- Deal appropriately with any immediate concerns about the welfare of a child
- Record all child abuse incidents, and appropriately investigate all crimes or suspected crimes
- Follow ACPO Guide to Investigating Child Deaths 2014

Child Sexual Offender Disclosure Scheme

2.3 When dealing with requests for information under the Child Sexual Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS) there is a presumption that relevant information will be disclosed in order to protect children, provided the relevant information sharing criteria is met. Officers will follow the current operational guidance relating to the CSODS when dealing with any such application.

Child Rescue Alert

2.4 Child Rescue Alert will be used appropriately to help recover a child at imminent danger of serious harm. The decision to launch a Child Rescue Alert is the responsibility of the duty Force Senior Investigating Officer and requires the agreement of Gold given the implications for the police service. The force will comply with the Child Rescue Alert Practitioners Manual of Guidance 2014 and staff will follow Operational Guidance.

3.0 Human Rights Articles Engaged

All children have a right to protection from all forms of violence and exploitation and to expect that the police will protect and help them. Children are citizens who have the same rights as adults to the protection offered by the criminal law and the expert services of the police. It is acknowledged that this policy has the potential to engage the following Articles:-

- Article 2 Right to Life
- Article 5 Right to Liberty and Security
- Article 6 Right to a Fair Trial
- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private & Family Life

In the event that an Article of the Convention is engaged, then the legitimacy for the engagement is provided within the text of the Articles. Any interference should be in accordance with the law and be necessary and proportionate.

4.0 Health & Safety at Work

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Force Health and Safety Manual the Generic Risk Assessments (GRA'S) for General Patrol, Custody, Protection of Vulnerable Persons (PVP) and any local risk assessments. The nature of the child abuse work will mean that supervisors should closely monitor their staff to ensure they are supported. Where they identify stress arising from the nature of the work supervisors will refer the staff member for appropriate support.

Statutory duties are set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999.

5.0 Challenges & Representations

5.1 Communication

All policies will be published on the Policy Intranet site. New and reviewed policies will be promoted in Managers' Briefing and "In the Know".

5.2 Challenges and representation

Any challenges or representations in respect of the contents of this policy should be directed to the

D/Superintendent Head of PVP
Thames Valley Police
Oxford Road
Kidlington
OX5 2HX.

6.0 Review Date

April 2020

The policy shall be reviewed annually or sooner should an operational need require it.

7.0 Related Guidance

Operational guidance can be found on the Policing Strategy intranet page.

8.0 Freedom of information

Suitable for publication.

9.0 Government Security Classification Policy

Official

10.0 Relevant Supporting information

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018