



Museum of London Volunteer Training Bank: Child Protection

Handout 1: Child Sexual Abuse statistics

5% of children aged under 16 experienced sexual abuse during childhood by an adult stranger or someone they had just met.

Cawson, P. et al. (2000)

In total, 16% of children aged under 16 experienced sexual abuse during childhood. 11% of this was contact abuse and 6% was non-contact

Cawson, P. et al. (2000)

Three-quarters (72%) of sexually abused children did not tell anyone about the abuse at the time. 27% told someone later. Around a third (31%) still had not told anyone about their experience(s) by early adulthood.

Cawson, P. et al. (2000)

More than one third (36%) of all rapes recorded by the police are committed against children under 16 years of age.

Walker, A., Kershaw, C. and Nicholas, S. (2006)

9,279 children calling ChildLine in 2005/2006 gave sexual abuse as their *main* problem

19% of children who called ChildLine about sexual abuse in 2005/2006 had not spoken to anyone about it before calling ChildLine.

Information from NSPCC: <http://tiny.cc/nspccstats>



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Handout 2: Sample Procedure (From National Museum of Wales)

Child Protection Policy: Appendix 2 - Standards of Behaviour Expected of NMGW Staff February 2005

Do:

- Approach any child apparently in distress and ask if you can help
- Seek assistance from colleagues or supervisors where appropriate
- Be aware of the possibility of danger from others, and question situations that you find suspicious
- Keep a look out for children apparently unaccompanied
- Communicate the details of any lost children to the appropriate central point
- Keep any lost children in a public area where they can clearly be seen
- Act professionally in all matters
- Be aware of appearances, and avoid situations which might appear compromising
- Report an allegation (even if this is just a suspicion) of abuse or inappropriate conduct to your line manager immediately

Do Not

- Engage in any 'rough and tumble' or other horseplay
- Physically restrain a child or young person, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. to prevent injury, prevent damage to property to the collections, or to prevent theft), and even then be careful to use only the minimum restraint necessary
- Make sexually suggestive comments to any visitor
- Use foul or abusive language to any visitor, and especially not to, or within earshot of, a child
- Physically assault or abuse any visitor, and especially not a child or young person
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind. The main principals of touch are:
 - The desire to be touched should always be initiated by the child
 - Touch should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves, or that a parent/leader can do for them



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It is strongly recommended that staff do not, except in emergency situations:

- Go into the toilet with children unless another adult is present or gives permission (this may include a parent, teacher, group leader)
- Spend time alone with a child on his/her own. If you are in a situation where you are alone with a child, make sure you can be clearly observed or seen by others. You should, wherever possible, also avoid being alone in a vehicle with otherwise unaccompanied children or young people although this may not always be practicable, for example when accompanying work experience placements.



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Handout 3: Child Sexual Abuse – myths and stereotypes

- **You can spot child abusers – they come across as weird or creepy**

Child sex offenders usually present themselves very normally. Most will go to work and participate in community life without drawing attention to themselves.

- **Child sex offenders are dirty old men**

Most child sex offenders commit their first offence during their teen years and continue until they are caught. While it is true that most sex offenders are men it is inaccurate to characterise them as 'old'.

- **Strangers are the biggest threat to children**

The traditional image of the 'stranger' as the child molester is mistaken. Family members and other people known to the child make up the majority of offenders

- **He was sexually abused as a child, so couldn't help it**

Some people who sexually abuse children were themselves sexually abused as children. However most people who have been sexually abused do NOT become sex offenders. Recent research has found that sex offenders are more likely to have experienced physical and emotional abuse, including bullying, in their childhood and this appears to be a factor in sexually abusive behaviours.

- **Women never sexually abuse children**

Although the majority of child sex offenders are men, women are also known to sexually abuse children.

- **It only happened once, and he's promised it will never happen again**

It is rare for a sexual offence to be a one-off occurrence, and generally sex offenders are prosecuted for fewer abuses than they have committed.

- **The amount of abuse is low and over sensationalised by the media**

Most stories of child sexual abuse never become public. As many as 95% of child sex offenders do not have criminal convictions for these crimes. On best estimates only about 10% of offenders are prosecuted and only half of these are convicted.



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Based on material prepared by Child Hope

Handout 4: common signs of abuse

Working in a museum, even in an education role, is not a setting where you are likely to have ongoing contact with the same young people. However where this is the case it is worth being aware of the common signs of abuse.

Every child is unique, so behavioural signs of abuse will vary from child to child. In addition, the impact of abuse is likely to be influenced by the child's age, the nature and extent of the abuse, and the help and support the child receives. However, there are some behaviours that are commonly seen in children and young people who have been abused:

- The child appears distrustful of a particular adult, or a parent or carer with whom you would expect there to be a close relationship.
- He or she has unexplained injuries such as bruising, bites or burns - particularly if these are on a part of the body where you would not expect them.
- If he or she has an injury which is not explained satisfactorily or properly treated.
- Deterioration in his or her physical appearance or a rapid weight gain or loss.
- Pains, itching, bruising, or bleeding in or near the genital area.
- A change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unexpectedly aggressive. Such changes can be sudden or gradual.
- If he or she refuses to remove clothing for normal activities or wants to keep covered up in warm weather.
- If he or she shows inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour for their age.
- Some disabled children may not be able to communicate verbally about abuse that they may be experiencing or have witnessed. It is therefore important to observe these children for signs other than 'telling'.

Remember that the above signs should be seen as a possible indication of abuse and not as a confirmation. Changes in a child's behaviour can be the result of a wide range of factors. Even visible signs such as bruising or other injuries cannot be taken as proof of abuse. For example some disabled children may show extreme changes in behaviour, or be more accident prone, as a result of their impairment. However, if you are concerned about a child or young person **you have a responsibility to act** on those concerns.

A child or young person may also try to tell you directly about abuse. It is very important to listen carefully and respond sensitively

Listening to Children

Again, with limited contact with children it is unlikely that you would be in this position.



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Remember, it is **NOT** your responsibility to decide if a child is being abused. Your role is to **ACT** on any concerns you may have.

Your museum should have clear guidelines about how child protection concerns and poor practice should be dealt with. You should make yourself aware of these and must follow them. Failing to respond to concerns or responding in contravention to your guidelines could have serious implications for the future handling of a case.

If a child tries to talk to you about something that is worrying them, it is important to listen carefully and respond sensitively:

- If the child tells you about the abuse they are experiencing, listen carefully to what they tell you.
- Don't ask direct questions. Avoid 'Who?', 'What?', 'When?', and 'Where?'.
- Encourage them to talk – 'Do you want to tell me about this?' – but do not pressurise them.
- Keep calm, and even if you find what they are saying difficult or distressing, keep listening.
- Be honest with them about what you can and cannot do. Tell them you are not able to keep what they have told you secret, and that you will try and find them the help that they need.
- When they have finished make a detailed note of what they have said, using an incident record form if possible.
- As soon as possible, pass the information to the designated officer, or someone in a position of authority within your museum.
- Do not contact or confront the alleged abuser.
- Find someone you trust to talk to about the situation or to support you but remember not to name or identify those involved in the allegations. You can call the NSPCC child protection helpline on 0808 800 5000.
- If you have **serious concerns about the immediate safety** of the child contact the police or social services. Record the name of the person you spoke to and tell your club official what you have done.

BASED ON MATERIAL PRODUCED BY THE CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT UNIT



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Handout 5: MLA/NSPCC Principles in relation to physical contact with children

Museums, libraries and archive organisations provide a wide range of activities and services to children. Most of this activity does not require any physical contact to take place. There could, however, be occasions or specific activities that do involve some contact.

The MLA Safeguarding Guidance indicates that the issue of physical contact could be placed within the code of conduct when considering your policies. It talks about 'avoiding physical contact except in emergencies'; it does not say contact should never occur. The following information provides some broad principles for organisations to consider. This is not an exhaustive list and will not necessarily be relevant to all organisations, but it provides a basis to work from.

- Treat all children with dignity and respect and never touch a child in a way that would be considered indecent.
- Any physical contact that occurs with a child should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and ability.
- Physical contact should normally take place in a safe and open environment, ie one easily observed by others, and should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority.
- Always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form it will take.
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently.
- There may be occasions where a distressed young person needs comfort and reassurance, which may include physical comforting such as any caring parent would give. Physical contact may also be required to prevent an accident or injury. Making physical contact to mark a success, however, would be wholly inappropriate. Adults should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time.
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact should be open to scrutiny.



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- Ensure you know who to speak to if you have a concern about any in appropriate physical contact with a child. Additional information on this subject is included within the 'Guidance for Safe Working Practices for Adults Working with Children and Young People' document which can be accessed at:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/dcsf.gov.uk/everychild/matters/resources-and-practice/ig00311/>

A personal code of conduct

- Respect all individuals, irrespective of age, developmental stage, ability, sex, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.
- Place the safety and wellbeing of children first; before any personal or organisational goals and before any loyalty to friends.
- Form only appropriate relationships with children, based on trust and respect.
- Be aware of the relative powerlessness of children, and especially disabled children, in relation to adults.
- Be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of children.
- Be aware of your organisation's child protection policy, and your responsibilities within it.

From the NSPCC Educare Programme