

# Operation Farm

## Child and vulnerable person's protection policy

### Operation Farm has a duty to ensure:

- That activities organised by Operation Farm are safe, and that working practices promote safety at all times.
- That appropriate support is offered to workers (whether paid or unpaid) to implement this policy.

## Operation Farm Policy Statement

Operation Farm is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults at all times. This policy is designed to actively promote awareness, good practice and sound procedures, and to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults (collectively referred to in this document as *vulnerable people*) have the opportunity to develop their physical, emotional and social skills and are respected regardless of their age, ability or sexual orientation.

## Operation Farm Procedures

These procedures apply to all Operation Farm workers, whether paid or unpaid, who come in to contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults during the course of their work. They set out how workers are expected to behave when working with vulnerable people, what to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed, and Operation Farm's policies on recruitment, training and support.

### 1 Roles of workers

#### 1.1 General

All workers, whether paid or unpaid, have an obligation to ensure the safety and well being of vulnerable people in their care.

Where member groups attend Operation Farm events, workshops and activities, they are responsible for ensuring that suitably qualified workers (whether paid or voluntary) accompany vulnerable people.

The Designated Vulnerable People Officer is responsible for handling complaints, completing reports, consulting with the Operation Farm Chair or Designated Officer for the venue as appropriate, and referring on to the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC, NSPCC or the police as required.

Responsibilities of workers **do not** include investigating suspected abuse or questioning children when they have disclosed abuse: this is the role of the Safeguarding Team or NSPCC, who have statutory powers and obligations under the

Children Act 1989.

Everybody should be clear about his or her responsibilities - clear roles help to provide a safe environment for all. If you are unsure, please contact the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC.

## **1.2 Designated Officers**

Operation Farm Designated Officers are listed in 6.1 below.

A Designated Vulnerable Person's Officer will attend any Operation Farm event or work programme that includes vulnerable people. If an Operation Farm Designated Officer cannot be present in person then an appropriate substitute will be agreed in advance (this would normally be the venue's own Designated Officer).

Any complaints must be acted on immediately by the Designated Officer, who is responsible for completing a concern form/Vulnerable Person's Report, consulting with the Chair (or Designated Officer for the venue as appropriate), informing parents/carers (unless they are implicated in the complaint) and referring on to the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC, NSPCC or the police as required.

The Designated Officers are responsible for monitoring this policy and its practical implementation, including ensuring that all workers have appropriate training and opportunities to update their skills.

## **2. Code of behaviour for workers**

Community kitchens, allotments and orchards are, by nature, friendly and relaxed places. This may make it difficult for people to always know how to act appropriately; however, a friendly, relaxed atmosphere must also guarantee a safe environment for vulnerable people.

Many workers are concerned about how their contact with vulnerable people might be misinterpreted or seen as inappropriate. To minimise this, consider how you will behave in advance and follow the steps set out below.

### **2.1 General behaviour**

- Minimise the chances of spending time alone with vulnerable people, and where required tell other workers or adults that you are doing so in advance.
- Where close contact is required (eg learning to use tools safely), ensure that it takes place in a group, so that all involved are in an appropriate situation.
- Avoid physical activity which is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating.
- Don't rely on your good name - rely on good, consistent work practices.
- Do not offer lifts to vulnerable people.
- Language should always be appropriate to the age and nature of the people you are working with.
- Any computer-based activity should be agreed in advance and closely supervised. Operation Farm will not tolerate access to pornographic or other inappropriate websites.

- If you work with the children of your friends and family ensure that you distinguish your role at work from your 'friend and family' role. For example, it is not appropriate to take children to your own home, or to offer lifts when you are in your work role.

## **2.2 Physical contact**

- 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 vulnerable person's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age appropriate and should not be initiated by the worker, except in exceptional circumstances such as where medical attention is required.
- Adults should monitor one another regarding physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood.

## **2.3 Promoting healthy lifestyles**

- Operation Farm supports healthy lifestyles and where possible will promote healthy eating at Operation Farm events and work programmes.
- Smoking including e-cigarettes in front of children is discouraged, and a no smoking policy is in place for Operation Farm workers during session times with vulnerable people.

## **2.4 Ratio of workers to vulnerable people**

- Owing to the nature of Operation Farm's work, it is not appropriate for staff to work with children under the age of eight years old unless accompanied by an adult parent or carer.
- Where over eight years old, a minimum ratio of 1 worker to 8 vulnerable people must be in place at all times, which will be reduced if their emotional/physical needs are significant. Where possible, workers should always work in teams of two or more, one of which can be a lead volunteer.

# **3 How vulnerable people can report abuse**

Operation Farm aims to create an environment where vulnerable people are aware of their rights, thus empowering them to stop abusive situations. Details of how they can make a complaint, disclose abuse, or discuss concerns are set out in the Appendix, which should be displayed at events that vulnerable people may attend.

## 4 If abuse is suspected or disclosed

### 4.1 Defining and recognising abuse

Information on different types of abuse and how to recognise signs of abuse are listed in the Appendix.

#### 4.1 Responding to signs or suspicions of abuse

If somebody believes that a vulnerable person may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm then he or she must immediately make this known to a Designated Officer as soon as possible (see 6.1 below). The Designated Officer is responsible for completing a Vulnerable Person's Report/concern form, consulting with the Chair of Operation Farm or Designated Officer for the venue as appropriate, informing parents/carers (unless they are implicated in the complaint) and referring on to the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC, NSPCC or the police as required.

Responsibilities of workers **do not** include investigating suspected abuse or questioning children when they have disclosed abuse: this is the role of Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC or NSPCC, who have statutory powers and obligations under the Children Act 1989.

#### 4.2 Steps to follow if abuse is disclosed to you

Children, young people and vulnerable adults will talk to people they trust, which could include disclosing abuse to a worker. The situation may be very traumatic for both the person involved and the person to whom the disclosure is made. Should abuse be disclosed to you, follow the steps set out below and pass details on to a Designated Officer as soon as possible.

##### Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock and disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Take notes (see *Record* below).

##### Reassure

- Be reassuring, but honest.
- Don't 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".
- Don't promise confidentiality, you have a duty to refer.
- Do reassure them that they were right to tell you, and recognise how difficult it might have been to tell.
- Remember that they may feel guilty; 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, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to".
- What you say should be appropriate to their age and stage of development.

##### React

- Do not interrogate them 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 that something else did happen) or “did she touch your private parts?” Questions like this can invalidate your evidence (and the vulnerable person’s) in any later court case.
- Do ask open questions, like “Anything else to tell me?”
- Do not criticise the person the vulnerable person is talking about; they may love him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the person to repeat what they have said to another worker or management member.
- Explain 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 these in case they are needed by the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC.

When possible, record the following information and pass it on to a Designated Officer as soon as possible, who will complete a Vulnerable Person’s report/concern form, consult with the Chair of Operation Farm or Designated Officer for the venue as appropriate, inform parents/carers (unless they are implicated in the complaint) and refer to the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC, NSPCC or the police as required:

- Name of person
- Parents/carer’s details
- Their address and any relevant phone numbers
- What is said to have happened or was seen, in the words used by the person making the allegation (ie if the person uses ‘pet’ words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into ‘proper’ words)
- The date and time it occurred
- Who else, if anyone, was present
- What was said by others present
- Any evidence of abuse, eg bruises, bleeding, unusual behaviour (draw a diagram to show the position of bruises or marks they show you, include the size, shape and colour).

### **Remember**

- Ensure that you record, as accurately as possible, things that are really said, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.
- Follow this policy and refer any issues to a Designated Officer as soon as possible.
- You may need support yourself: if so, please talk to the Designated Officer

### **4.3 Confidentiality**

In the case of suspected abuse, it is important to ensure as much confidentiality as possible. Allegations should not be openly discussed with others - this can be harmful for person who made the allegation as well as the person against whom the allegation was made.

Any written reports must be passed to a Designated Officer and then on to the Chair at the first opportunity, ensuring that they are kept in a secure place at all times (eg a locked filing cabinet).

#### **4.4 Whistleblowing policy**

Abuse may occur in any organisation and there may well be someone who already has concerns about potentially abusive or unethical conduct but does not feel able to act on them. Operation Farm positively encourages people to voice any concerns they may have, either to a Designated Officer, honorary officer in the first instance, or if this is not possible or appropriate to the Chair of Operation Farm.

## **5. Recruitment and training of paid facilitators and volunteers**

Careful recruitment and selection of staff reduces the risk to vulnerable people. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 it is acceptable to ask for details of any convictions for criminal offences. Police checks alone are not effective in preventing abuse, so form only part of Operation Farm's recruitment of facilitator's process.

### **5.1 Training and support**

All paid facilitators and volunteers working with vulnerable people should have access to training and induction that will enable them to effectively put this policy into practice. This includes ensuring that there are regular opportunities for all those in contact with children and vulnerable people to learn about good practice and health and safety.

Regular support from the trustees is available through work review and planning sessions, which take place bi-monthly.

## 6. Sources of information for vulnerable people, parents/carers and the general public

### 6.1 Designated Vulnerable Persons Protection Officer

Designated officers may be approached for information at any time:

- Alison Shockledge 07834242398 [alison.shockledge@gmail.com](mailto:alison.shockledge@gmail.com)

### 6.2 Operation Farm's Child Protection Guidelines - **check**

These guidelines set out further information on good working practice and can be used as a checklist to ensure that sites create a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### 6.3 Written code of behaviour for working with vulnerable people

This code is issued to all facilitators and volunteers who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. It covers ways of creating an environment to show that bullying, shouting, racism, sexism etc. are not acceptable. Specific guidance is also provided where personal or intimate care tasks are carried out, for example with very young or disabled children.

### 6.4 Operation Farm's Health and Safety Policy

Refer to Operation Farm's Health and Safety Policy for details on risk assessment, first aid and fire procedures.

### 6.5 Appendix 5 of this policy

This appendix contains essential contact details for use in an emergency, along with many sources of additional information and advice.

**This document will be reviewed bi-annually to incorporate any changes in legislation and current best practice.**

**Current version February 2014 Review due: February 2016**

# Appendix 1: Defining and recognising abuse

## Definitions for abuse

Abuse can take many forms. Some of the definitions, as interpreted by NSPCC, are as follows:

### **Physical abuse**

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a dependant whom they are looking after.

### **Emotional abuse**

This is the persistent ill treatment of a person such as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development and state. It may involve conveying to a person that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or only valued in the context of another person's needs. It may involve frequently causing a person to feel frightened or in danger, or their exploitation or corruption.

### **Sexual abuse**

This involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative sex (rape and buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving vulnerable people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Neglect**

This is the persistent failure to meet a dependant's basic physical and or psychological needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to protect a dependant from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, their basic emotional needs.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is a form of abuse and in some cases has led to serious physical injury, mental torture, death or suicide. People of all ages can be affected in many different ways. If bullying is happening it is probably affecting many people. Some people might be directly involved, whilst others may be scared it might happen to them, or be told not to be friends with certain other people. This behaviour must be stopped for the sake of the victims and the bullies. Childline and Kidscape have extensive experience of dealing with bullying and appropriate strategies and support.

## Recognising abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting vulnerable people. However, it's important to remember that changes in behaviour or signs you may have noted do not necessarily mean that someone is being abused - there may be another reason, such as problems at home. On the other hand, there may not be any signs - you may just feel something is wrong.

### **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.

If you are worried, it is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse – but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it. Pass any details on to a Designated Officer (see 6.1 above) as soon as possible, who is responsible for completing a Vulnerable Person's Report/concern form, consulting with the Chair of Operation Farm or Designated Officer for the venue as appropriate, informing parents/carers (unless they are implicated in the complaint) and referring on to the Safeguarding Team at Tameside MBC, NSPCC or the police as required.

# Who can help?



If you are worried that you or someone you know is being abused, it is usually best to talk to an adult because you will probably need help to stop the abuse happening.

**If you'd like to talk to someone now, please ask for Alison Shockledge, who will be happy to talk with you and answer any questions.**

Other people you could talk to include a relative, doctor, teacher, school nurse, neighbour, youth worker, a friend or their parents. You can also call ChildLine free on **0800 1111**.

## How to make a complaint

If you have a complaint about the behaviour of an Operation Farm worker or other person at this venue, please contact:

**Alison Shockledge, Operation Farm Designated Officer**

Telephone: 07834242398

Alternatively, you can make a complaint to:

**Jonathan Atkinson, Chair of Operation Farm**

Telephone: 07828617933

# Guidelines for educational visits and events

## Event planning

The leaders of all groups attending an event organised by Operation Farm are required to attend a brief to discuss guidelines and arrangements for the event. The Designated Vulnerable Persons Protection Officer should be agreed at this meeting.

Group rules (especially when involving more than one project) should be decided before or at the beginning of the event or visit, including any health and safety issues.

If using facilitators outside of the organisation, check that the company providing them has suitable and adequate insurance as well as qualified and DBS checked instructors. An Operation Farm staff member should always accompany vulnerable people on activities.

## Health and safety

A full risk assessment of the site and venue/accommodation must be carried out in advance. This must include details of the nearest available medical provision and pharmacy, plus a map of the site and planned travel times. A copy of the risk assessment must be filed at with the event organiser.

A first aid kit must be taken on any event/trips, and a qualified first aider should attend groups of over 20 people. Smaller groups must be accompanied by an appointed first aid person, who is responsible for the first aid kit, arranging (but not delivering) first aid and liaising staff and parents as required. The Operation Farm Accident Book (kept in the container) must be completed in the case of an accidents.

## Insurance

All Operation Farm events and work programmes require additional public liability insurance. Please contact the chair well in advance of the event to check cover.

## Contact details

Emergency contact details for all people attending the event should be taken along to all activities and kept in an agreed place at other times. A copy must be filed with The Trustees in advance, along with an itinerary for the trip. All parents/carers should be provided with contact details for the Designated Officer, the host site and Operation Farm representatives, in case a member of the group needs to be contacted or recalled.

## Ratio of workers to vulnerable people

There should always be at least 2 members of staff/trained volunteers on premises and fit to drive if needed. There may be call for more than 2 depending on the group numbers.

Staff teams should incorporate both men and women and ideally at least one female member of staff will be available at any time.

# Appendix 5: Sources of additional information and advice

## Operation Farm contact details

### Designated Vulnerable Persons Protection Officers

Alison Shockledge 07834242398 [alison.shockledge@gmail.com](mailto:alison.shockledge@gmail.com)

Operation Farm – [operationfarm@gmail.com](mailto:operationfarm@gmail.com)

## National support organisations for vulnerable people

**Safe Network** – [www.safenetwork.org.uk](http://www.safenetwork.org.uk) The Safe Network: providing information and resources to help keep children safe. The Safe Network provides safeguarding information related to activities outside the home

### 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
Internet Watch Foundation Hotline	08456 00 88 44

### Brook Advisory Centre Office

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

Helpline: 0800 0185 023 Tel: 0207 284 6040 Email: [admin@brookcentres.org.uk](mailto:admin@brookcentres.org.uk)  
[www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

### ChildLine

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

Helpline: 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Children's Legal Centre

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

Tel: 01206 872 466 Email: [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk) [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

### Criminal Records Bureau

Helpline: 0870 90 90 811 [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

PO Box 91, Liverpool L69 2UH

### Help the Aged

Tel: 020 7278 1114 Email: [info@helptheaged.org.uk](mailto:info@helptheaged.org.uk) [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)  
207-221 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UZ

### **Kidscape**

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

Helpline: 08451 205 204 Tel: 0207 730 3300 [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### **Mind**

UK mental health charity

Mind Info Line 0845 766 0163 [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline**

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24 hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to children and anyone concerned about a child at risk from abuse.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

NSPCC Asian Child Protection Helpline 11am to 7pm Mon – Fri

Asian/English	0800 096 7719	Bengali	0800 096 7714
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Gujarati	0800 096 7719	Hindi	0800 096 7716
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Punjabi	0800 096 7717	Urdu	0800 096 7718
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### **Other NSPCC Services**

NSPCC provide a range of services, including publications such as Firstcheck: A step by step guide for organisations to safeguard children (£20).

Tel: 0207 825 2500 Text phone: 0800 056 0566 Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

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

Online support for young people: [www.there4me.com](http://www.there4me.com)

### **PACE**

PACE provides counselling for gay men and lesbians for issues including HIV.

Tel: 020 7700 1323 [www.pacehealth.org.uk](http://www.pacehealth.org.uk)

### **Samaritans**

Confidential emotional support 24 hours a day

08457 90 90 90

### **Saneline**

UK mental health charity

Helpline 0845 767 8000 [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

### **Youth Access Office**

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

Tel: 0208 772 9900 Email: [admin@youthaccess.org.uk](mailto:admin@youthaccess.org.uk) [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)

## **Tameside MBC**

<http://www.tamesidesafeguardingchildren.org.uk/>

<http://www.tameside.gov.uk/socialcare/adultabuse/tasp>

[http://www.tamesideandglossopccg.org/your-health/safeguarding?site\\_locale=en](http://www.tamesideandglossopccg.org/your-health/safeguarding?site_locale=en)

## Support and information for parents

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

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

Tel: 01268 757 077

### **Parentline Plus**

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

Helpline: 0808 800 2222 Tel: 0207 284 5500 [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

## Safety

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

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.

Tel: 01302 572 244 Email: [information@btcv.org.uk](mailto:information@btcv.org.uk) [www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)

### **Health and Safety Executive**

HSE provide information sheets (many free of charge) including Avoiding ill health at open farms.

HSE infoline: 0845 345 0055 Publication order line: 01787 881 165 [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### **Child Accident Prevention Trust**

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

Tel: 020 7608 3828 Email: [safe@capt.org.uk](mailto:safe@capt.org.uk) [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)

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

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

Tel: 0121 248 2000 Email: [help@rospa.com](mailto:help@rospa.com) [www.rospa.org.uk](http://www.rospa.org.uk)

## Play and outdoor activities

### **National Playing Fields Association**

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.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)

**With thanks to:**

Tameside MBC Safeguarding Team

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Community and Voluntary Action Tameside

Safe Network