

THEATRE GULEÒR THEATRE GALORE

Child Protection Policy

All children have the right to be safe, according to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. Theatre Gu Leòr is committed to the protection of children and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children as of paramount concern. We are also committed to the protection of vulnerable children from exploitative relationships. Theatre Gu Leòr considers it is the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of all children with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

Designated Child Protection Officer

Rhona Dougall (Company Co-ordinator)

Email: rhona@theatreguleor.com

Tel: 07504 851 582

Theatre Gu Leòr works with children and young people in the context of performances of children's shows as well as the delivery of workshops to children and young people in schools and other venues.

Who needs protection?

Children and young people under the age of 16 and young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are affected by disability or are vulnerable. A vulnerable young person includes those who are care-experienced.

What is child abuse?

The definition of child abuse adopted in Scottish Government states: 'Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment.'

Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members.’ (Paragraph 1.33).

Full Scottish Government guidelines: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021/pages/3/>

Current or impending legislation relevant to matters of Child Protection in Scotland can be viewed [here](#).

What to do if you think a child or young person is at risk of abuse

- Be supportive of the child or young person. Listen with care. Do not ask unnecessary questions. Take what the child or young person is saying seriously, and advise them that you will have to pass the information on;
- Write down the nature of your concern and anything the child or young person may have told you using, as much as possible, the exact words used by the child or young person. Remember to sign and date the notes taken;
- Immediately report the grounds of your concern to the named person for our organisation, Rhona Dougall (Company Co-ordinator), who will take steps to pass the information on to the relevant person or organisation who will investigate the concerns. The contact details for Rhona Dougall can be found at the beginning of this document. Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Rhona should be advised on the same day the concern arises; and
- If you are unhappy with the response from the named person, you should contact the local Social Work Services Office and outline your concerns and the basis for them.

Confidentiality

If a child or young person may be at risk of harm, this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with the organisation have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. Children, young people and their parents will always be told this.

Action to be taken by the appropriate person

All cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously and the local Social Work Services Office should be contacted immediately. The concerns should be clearly stated, as well as the basis for them. When the local office is closed the Emergency Social Work Service should be alerted (see important contacts listed below).

If you are unhappy with the response from Social Work Services, you can contact the local Police Office or the Reporter to the Children’s Panel and outline your concerns to them (see important contacts).

What happens next?

It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child or young person. Where it is alleged a crime had been committed against a child, the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.

The investigating Social Worker / Police Officer may require to speak to the person from whom the concerns originated. You should co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

What to do in an emergency

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a child – for example a child at risk of immediate harm or injury – contact your local police office immediately. Do not delay, as this could result in serious injury to a child.

What if it is someone within the organisation that you are concerned about?

If you have observed a member of the organisation acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned, and feel the matter needs to be investigated, you should contact Rhona Dougall outlining your concerns and the basis for them. Rhona will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve the use of the organisation's disciplinary procedures and/or a referral to Social Work Services/Police.

Supporting the child or young person

The child or young person is likely to continue to be involved with the organisation following the reporting of the concerns. Links should be maintained with the Social Work Services office involved in any investigation, in order to offer the appropriate support to the child/family.

It is important that employees and those involved with the child or young person act in a supportive manner. You should:

- Continue to listen with care;
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell;
- Affirm the child or young person's feelings as expressed by them;
- Do not question/interrogate the child or young person;
- Do not show disbelief;
- Avoid being judgemental;
- Do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse;
- Avoid displaying strong emotions

Historical abuse

Where a child discloses historical abuse, the organisation's child protection procedure must be followed. A full discussion should take place with the named person within the organisation to agree what action is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others.

What to do if you have general welfare concerns about a child

There are many circumstances that may cause harm to a child, and require a response, but fall short of a concern that a child is being abused. Nevertheless, a build up of concerns over time may in time become serious enough that the child is considered to be at risk of abuse.

Where you have general welfare concerns about a child you should:

- Address the incidents as they arise with the parents/carers, within the practice guidance of your organisation
- Discuss your concerns with your line manager
- Liaise with other agencies that are working with the child
- Record your actions, and note your concern on the chronology of significant events. You should review general welfare concerns periodically, to see whether the build up of concerns is significant enough to pass on to Social Work Services.

Training and awareness

Employees/volunteers will be made aware of the existence of the Child Protection Policy, and their responsibilities in relation to the child protection process. For example:

- Through the provision of training
- By issuing a copy of the policy to all new staff members
- Publicising it on our website – www.theatreguleor.com

In addition, staff can access the West of Scotland Child Protection Procedures here:

<http://www.wdhscp.org.uk/media/1640/west-of-scotland-child-protection-procedures.pdf>

These procedures outline how all organisations work together to identify, investigate and respond to child protection concerns. Theatre Gu Leòr will regularly monitor and review our policy to ensure good practice and relevant information.

Important contacts

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| Social Work Services (including out of hours) | https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/17272/Get-a-Social-Work-Service Tel: 0141 287 0555 Out of hours: 0300 343 1505 |
| Police Scotland | Glasgow West End Police Office 609-613 Dumbarton Road G11 6HY |
| Reporter to the Children's Panel | Merchant Exchange 10/20 Bell Street Glasgow G1 1LG Tel: 0131 244 2100 Email: GlasgowMailbox@scra.gov.uk |
| NSPCC Helpline | Tel: 0808 800 5000 |