

WHY DOES MY TARA NEED A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?



Many of our members are interested in setting up youth TARAs or youth sections - get professional support and advice from youth workers, police etc both to ensure good practice and to protect you and your TARA.

Sometimes it's difficult for a TARA to see why it should have its own Child Protection Policy. Think of these possible scenarios:

- 1) An incident involving abuse to a child has happened at one of your social events. Could the committee put their hand on their hearts and know that they had done everything they possibly could to prevent this incident happening? This is what will be expected of them.
- 2) A child has disclosed some information to a committee member of your organisation. Does that member know what to do next?

A Child Protection Policy should protect children and young people and also protect your TARA from criticism in the event of a Child Protection incident occurring. It also sets in place some sort of procedure in case a child or an adult should make a disclosure to a member of your committee.

Some of this sounds bureaucratic but it will be there to protect the young people and the children you work with as well as yourselves in the activities you do.

PUTTING TOGETHER A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Try to keep the policy no longer than 1-2 pages of A4 or nobody will read it! You will need to consider including the following sections:-

A general statement e.g. *'.....TARA believes that every child and young person, regardless of age, has at all times and in all situations the right to feel safe and protected.'*

Aims - Why your TARA is undertaking this action.: " To guide committee members and volunteers of....TARA should any child protection issue arise during their work" If your TARA has direct contact with children, an example of an aim might be "To create an environment where children and

young people feel safe, secure, are listened to, valued and respected."

Who the policy applies to – Groups who work with your organisation, Committee members, volunteers, children and young people? Also what is your definition of a child/young person? (usually up to 18 years old with an extension to 25 years old if the young person has learning difficulties).

Responsibilities - In broad terms list what your TARA is going to do to fulfil your aim.

- You will need to consider having someone in your organisation who is designated as the Child Protection representative. If there is a Child Protection incident or a child discloses some information to a tenant or resident, the designated Child Protection representative is the person who will take responsibility for any action taken. It is also good practice to decide who will take on this responsibility if the designated Child Protection representative is not available.
- You will probably want to adopt a code of practice & procedure should there be a Child Protection incident or a disclosure of abuse at your organisation.
- Get your committee to sign & date a copy of their Child Protection policy to show they have read and agreed to abide by it.
- It would be wise to have a procedure about use of volunteers who are likely to come into contact with young people ensuring that CRB checks are being carried as appropriate. Rother Fed will get these CRB checks done for you (the first two are free for your TARA)
- You may want to encourage Child Protection Awareness training to your members especially for the person who is designated as the Child Protection representative. Rother Fed will pay for you to undertake a basic online child protection awareness training course supported by NSPCC – contact Steve at the tenants resource centre on 01709 368515 for more details.
- It is good practice to put together a 'List of Recommended Behaviour' for your volunteers to reduce the risk of a Child Protection incident. Your list will be unique to your TARA and it will be easier to write it after you have considered what the risks are in

the course of the work you do. It might include things like this:-

1. Always have a minimum of 2 adults present when supervising Children
2. Do not play physical contact games with young people
3. Adults should wear appropriate clothing at all time
4. Make sure that accidents are recorded in an accident book
5. Never do anything for a young person of a personal nature.
6. Keep records in an incident book of any allegations a young person may make to any of your members

Declaration - As in most policies, at the end, you need a declaration to say that this policy has been adopted by the committee and what date it was adopted. The approved policy should be signed by the Chairperson. Some organisations include the name and contact details of the Child Protection representative here as well.