

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

LOST CHILD

Very often, the nature of youth support work will bring you into contact with young people with complex needs and behavioural difficulties. Young people may react quite unpredictably in certain situations, and this may include them running off.

Always adopt a common sense approach to these situations but the following guidelines may assist:

- Ensure you have contact details for parents or carers of young people with you
- Ensure you have the right staff to young people ratio
- Ensure that your Line Manager or another member of staff in another department has the contact details of all young people that are with you so they can make any necessary telephone calls while you search for the young person
- Spend no more than 30 minutes searching for a young person in an unfamiliar place before you contact the police for assistance
- If possible, arrange for another member of staff to meet you to help search so that your colleague with you can escort the other young people back to your base
- If you know that a young person in your care may react in such a way, ensure that you have a plan in place, agreed with their parents or carers before you embark on any trips

RESTRAINING YOUNG PEOPLE

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Youth Options offer all members of staff in-house Control and Restraint training, delivered by a qualified trainer. This training is also available to our affiliated groups on request.

You must be clear about the following:

- Only use control and restraint if you have been trained in the procedure correctly
- Any form of restraint must be a last resort
- Control and restraint must only be used when a young person is at risk of harming themselves, another young person or a member of staff
- A report must be written as soon as possible after the event, detailing exactly what happened and all other attempts that were made to calm the situation prior to the use of control and restraint, and submitted to your Line Manager
- Only experienced staff should intervene in violent situations
- Should an incident occur involving physical violence between young people, seek assistance from the appropriate authority immediately
- Never place yourself at risk

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

Hampshire & Isle of Wight strongly believe that a major part of the working with young people involves challenging those involved in potentially harmful activities and providing them with the best possible support to deal with the issues they face as a result of these activities. Following good practice in these areas requires the application of common sense to certain situations. The following guidelines may assist you in deciding what course of action to take:

DRUGS: If you know that a young person in your care is in possession of drugs you must make an informed decision based on the information available to you as to what action you take. Your main concern must always be for the safety of yourself and the young person.

ALCOHOL: If a young person arrives at a session you are running under the influence of alcohol, you must make an informed decision as to whether you are happy to allow them to participate. This must be based on whether it is safe and appropriate for the young person in question, other young people participating and members of staff.

WEAPONS: If you are aware or suspect that a young person may be carrying a weapon, whether they have any intention of using it inappropriately or not, the sensible option is to report this to the police and have the young person removed. Under no circumstances should you attempt to remove a dangerous weapon from a young person, unless you are experienced or qualified to do so. Your safety is paramount and you are responsible for it.

BULLYING

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Youth Options are committed to providing a caring, friendly, stimulating and safe environment for all young people. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, young people should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying can be described as deliberate hostility or aggression towards another with the specific intention of hurting that person. It usually takes place over a period of time and can result in physical and emotional distress to the victim. It is recognisable in many forms:

- **Physical** – kicking, hitting, pushing or any other form of violence
- **Verbal** – name calling, spreading rumours, teasing, racial abuse, making threats
- **Emotional** – excluding, tormenting, humiliating
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical or sexually abusive comments
- **Cyber** – threatening or abusive phone calls, texts, e-mails

Responding to Bullying

All members of staff have a responsibility to respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying. In order to ensure that this responsibility can be met it is advised to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that the young people you are working with are aware that bullying will not be tolerated or ignored
- Ensure that young people know that they will be supported if they disclose an incident
- Where appropriate, invite parents or carers of all young people involved to a meeting to discuss the problem, and if necessary and appropriate, inform the police
- Ensure that all incidents are recorded appropriately and any agreed actions are followed through

Supporting Victims of Bullying

- Offer an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff
- Reassure the young person that appropriate action will be taken
- Support the young person in rebuilding their self-esteem and confidence

Supporting Young People who Bully

Young people who bully others must learn that bullying is unacceptable, and that there are consequences for this type of behaviour and provide support and encouragement to change their behaviour through discussion, trying to establish why the young person has resorted to bullying and explaining why their behaviour needs to change.

Employment of Ex-Offenders

There is often confusion around the suitability of employing individuals with criminal records. Youth Options is firmly committed to the belief that having a criminal record should not necessarily be a bar to employment. The important element to consider is whether the offence(s) raise any concerns about the suitability of the individual to work with young people. Youth Options recommends CRB checks at enhanced level for all employees and volunteers, and is able to provide support to affiliated groups to obtain these vital checks.

The following guidance may assist:

REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974 - GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

If the post you are applying for with (Organisation Name is inserted here) is exempt from the Act, you must be aware of the following:

ALL CONVICTIONS, WHETHER SPENT OR UNSPENT, MUST BE DISCLOSED IN THE DECLARATION CONTAINED IN THE APPLICATION FORM

If the post you are applying for with (Organisation name is entered here) is not exempt from the Act, you must be aware of the following:

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, you do not need to provide details about previous convictions which are spent, **unless they carried the following:**

- A sentence of life imprisonment
- A sentence of imprisonment, youth custody, detention in a young offender's institution or corrective training for a term exceeding 30 months
- A sentence of preventative detention
- A sentence of detention during her majesty's pleasure or for life or a sentence of detention for a term exceeding 30 months given to a young offender convicted of a grave crime, or detention of more than 30 months of a child convicted on indictment or a Court Martial punishment
- A sentence of custody for life

(Please note that a sentence of life imprisonment can never become 'spent')

Sentence	Rehabilitation Period	
	<i>People aged 18 or over when convicted</i>	<i>People aged 17 or under when convicted</i>
Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, some convictions become spent after a certain length of time. Examples are:	7 years	3½ years
Prison sentences of 6 months or less	10 years	5 years
Prison sentences of more than 6 months to 2½ years	7 years	6 years
Borstal training (abolished in 1988)	3 years	3 years
Detention centres (abolished in 1988)	5 years	2½ years
Fines, compensation, probation, community service, combination action plan, curfew, drug treatment and testing and reparation orders	6 months	6 months
Absolute discharge		

If you have any doubts about whether you have to declare a previous conviction, you should seek legal advice.