

Q. Does the group have procedures for complaints and is this made clear to group members?

- Does it have a named person within the group who can be contacted about any complaints or issues you are concerned about?
- This may be a member of a management committee or an independent party who is not directly involved in the running of the activity.
- Encourage your children to tell you if anything happens at the group that makes them unhappy or uncomfortable.

Q. Finally have you asked other parents and adults attending, about the group?

- Talk to other parents about the group, they are often the best source of information.

What to do if you are not satisfied with standards or have a complaint

These sample questions are based on things which every youth group should have. If you are not satisfied that the group has addressed these issues, or does not have the necessary controls and procedures in place, you could contact the management committee or the named individual who is responsible for dealing with complaints. If no complaints procedure exists, or if you fail to receive satisfaction, you should pass your concerns to the national organisation to which the group is linked, or advise SIC Children's Services, Tel: 01595 744000. You could also talk over your concerns with Parentline Scotland – the hotline for parents on issues concerning them. **Tel: 0808 800 2222** for advice.

Useful websites

www.shetland-communities.org.uk/vas/ www.scotland.gov.uk
www.safershetland.com

Useful contacts

Sports Development Officer, SIC, Tel: 01595 744045
Development Officer, Voluntary Action Shetland, Tel: 01595 743900

Duty Social Worker

Daytime: 01595 744421 Out Of Hours: 01595 695611

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KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE



Advice to parents and guardians on safe practice in youth groups and activities

INTRODUCTION

It's good for your children to get a wide variety of experience through taking part in groups. **But you need to be assured that groups that your child takes part in are well managed and keep your child safe.** The Shetland Public Protection Committee has put together this leaflet with questions you may want to ask before your child takes part. Many helpers and staff who work with children and young people will be parents themselves, and will welcome your interest and enquiry.

If you have any queries about Child Protection matters, get in touch with any of the contacts shown on the back of this leaflet.

Questions you may want to ask about a group your child takes part in:

Q. Who runs the group and how much information is available about the group?

- You can often find information about groups on their websites. Look for information about aims, constitution and procedures, staff and volunteers, activities, cost, meeting day(s) and times and holidays. If not, ask for written information.

Q. What kind of contact does the group have with larger groups?

- Is the group affiliated to a larger organisation and, if so, does it comply with their guidance and policies?
- National organisations like the Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade, Youth Scotland, and Sportscotland usually support affiliated groups with professional training and advice. However, not all youth groups belong to a larger organisation or network, and not all of these organisations have control over how each individual group operates.

Q. Is the group regulated and inspected by an outside body?

- If the group is inspected you can ask to see Inspection Reports. However, the majority of groups will not fall within this category. Some groups such as After School Groups are registered with the Care Commission.

Q. Are parents encouraged to visit and to support the group?

- Does the group have a management committee which includes parents? Getting involved gives you a chance to have your say about the group's activities and contribute your time to supporting the group.

Q. Does the group always ask for parental consent for visits, activities, medical emergencies and for photographs?

- Is there a system in place for emergency contact?
- All groups should ask for parental consent for these activities.
- Ask for copies to be made available, including emergency treatment.

Q. Are there adequate numbers of adults and emergency cover?

- There should be a clear policy that there is a minimum of two adults present for any activity to operate safely
- If at all possible there should be adults present of the same sex as the young people involved in the group.

Q. Does the group have a Health and Safety Policy?

- The group should have a Health and Safety Policy.
- Does the group have a first aid kit and a qualified first aider?
- Does it have adequate procedures for recording and notifying accidents?
- Does the group have the right insurance?
- Are activities risk assessed? You might want to see the documentation.
- Are activity coaches qualified for the level of activity?
- Policy and guidelines for Visits and Trips are available.

Q. Does the group have a policy for the protection of children and young people and is the policy made available?

- The group should have a clear Child Protection policy and it should be regularly reviewed.
- You should check that PVG's have been obtained for all adult helpers.
- The group should have procedures on the recruitment, training and management of all adults including training on child protection.
- Some groups adopt national policies and procedures of national organisations. Local workers/volunteers should be aware of them, meet the recruitment standards, have access to relevant training and have documented evidence of policies such as child protection.
- For more information go to www.safershetland.com/for-community-groups

Q. Are there clear procedures and guidance for adults in respect of behaviour towards children?

- Does the group have a written Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers so that parents know what standards of behaviour to expect? This might cover things such as physical contact with children.