



Child Protection Policy

“Keeping Namibian Children Safe”

August 2011

Preface:

Over recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the global nature of child abuse and a growing acceptance of the potential risks to children of adults working in positions of trust. In Namibia violence against children is such a serious human rights problem that, children, the perpetrators of violence against them and the public at large may accept physical, sexual and psychological violence as an inevitable part of childhood.

It is against this background that Lifeline ChildLine Namibia strives to be a “ Child Safe Organisation “ and has drawn on the initiative of the “Keeping Children Safe Coalition” to develop ways of keeping children safe and making sure that children involved in Lifeline ChildLine programmes are protected from all harm, abuse and exploitation. By adopting the standards advocated by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition and adapting them to the Namibian context, Lifeline ChildLine seeks to meet their duty to protect children, ensure that staff and other representatives are protected and deter potential abusers from joining the organization.

The standards are supported by the following principles. ¹

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential and inequalities should be challenged.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
- NGOs have a duty of care to children with whom they work and with whom their representatives work
- If agencies work through and with partners they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the children in their partners programme.

The following document was produced through cooperation and consultation with the staff, volunteers and management of Lifeline ChildLine Namibia ,children involved in Lifeline ChildLine programmes and activities, partner organizations and a range of primary stakeholders involved and interested in Child Protection issues in Namibia.

¹ Keeping Children Safe. Standards for Child Protection. Keeping Children Safe Coalition.

Table of Contents.

02	Preface
03	Table of Content
04	Statement of commitment
05	Our Goal, Objectives and Values
07	Definitions
11	Lifeline ChildLine Standards: Preventing Child Abuse
19	Lifeline ChildLine Guidelines and Procedures - Responding to a Child Protection Concern
31	Appendix 1
32	Appendix 2

1. Statement of Commitment

In 2006 the United Nations Study on Violence against Children called for the urgent protection of children worldwide, revealing that much violence against children remains hidden for reasons of fear, family “honor”, societal acceptance, and because all too often there are no safe and trusted ways for children or adults to report it.

There can be no compromise in challenging violence against children. Children’s uniqueness - their potential and vulnerability, their dependence on adults – makes it imperative that they have more, not less, protection from violence.²

Lifeline ChildLine Namibia is committed to providing all children in Namibia with this care and protection and firmly believes in the right of all children to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.³

Lifeline ChildLine is committed to supporting the Government of Namibia, which ratified the Convention on the Right of the Child in September 1990, in protecting its children and in upholding the Namibian Constitution.

No persons shall be subject torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.⁴

Lifeline ChildLine Namibia is dedicated to creating a safe environment for children who benefit from Lifeline ChildLine programmes and recognizes its legal and moral responsibility to adopt a duty of care which will seek to protect all children from abuse and exploitation.

In so doing, all staff, volunteers, interns, consultants and partner organizations are expected to respect and abide by the procedures and guidelines as set out in this policy document.

² United Nations, 2006, Secretary Generals Study on Violence Against Children-Article2.

³ United Nations, 1989, Convention on the Right of the Child-Article 19.

⁴ The Constitution of Namibia, 1989, Article9.

1 Our Goal, Objectives and Values

2.1 Goal

The goal of this policy is to ensure the creation of a safe environment for all children, in which their rights are understood and protected and which will enable them to grow into emotional resilient adults.

2.2 Objectives.

We hope this policy will achieve the following objectives.

- Create a child safe and child friendly organization
- The safety and well-being of children are at the centre of all Lifeline ChildLine programmes and activities.
- All children participating in Lifeline ChildLine programmes will be empowered by informing , upholding and understanding their rights
- All Lifeline ChildLine staff and partner organizations will know how to respond and report on cases of abuse towards children.
- Lifeline ChildLine staff will embrace and adhere to the beliefs and commitments of the organization, regarding child protection. In both their professional and personal capacities.
- All Lifeline ChildLine Staff and partner organizations will adhere to the code of conduct as set out in the policy
- Create a framework to deal transparently, consistently. and fairly with allegations concerning abuse
- Create a space where children feel able and willing to speak out about abuse, and are free from abusers

2.3 Principles and Values on which the policy is based.

- The rights of the child to protection from harm, abuse and exploitation as set out in the UN Convention of the on the Rights of the Child.
- All adults are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child.
- The best interest of the child is paramount and should guide the work of Lifeline ChildLine.
- Recognition of the importance of parents, families and other carers in children's lives.
- Recognition of the importance of working in partnership with other partner agencies in the protection of children
- Recognition of the rights of staff and volunteers to training and support
- The right of all children to participate and have a voice.
- The importance of creating an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults.

- Children's right to be children (play, learn and be free)
- Work with children is based on respect for all children whatever their cultural, social, economic, political and religious backgrounds.

3. Definitions.

3.1 Child

For the purposes of this policy, a 'child' is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

3.2 Child Abuse

According to the World Health Organization, 'child abuse' constitutes 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.'⁴ A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger.

There are four main categories of abuse:

"Physical abuse"

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.

"Emotional abuse"

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

"Sexual abuse"

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

" Neglect"

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3.3 Factors which Make Children More Vulnerable to Abuse

While this policy applies to all children and recognizes that all children have the right to protection from abuse, it is important to be aware that certain factors make some children more vulnerable to abuse than others. While being alert and attentive to emotional, behavioral and medical indicators of child abuse among all children, particular attention should be paid to the following groups:

3.3.1 Children defined as Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs).

Lifeline ChildLine Namibia defines OVCs as children who are orphaned or vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS or other causes including:

- children with parents who have HIV or AIDS;
- children in a household with someone living with HIV or AIDS;
- children who have been orphaned by HIV or AIDS or another cause;
- children who are abused, neglected and/or trafficked;
- children who are very poor;
- children who are malnourished;
- children who are otherwise vulnerable.

3.3.2 Children with disabilities.

Children with disabilities are more dependent on adults for care and support for a greater period of their life than their non-disabled peers; this increases their vulnerability to abuse and the risk of them experiencing abuse. Furthermore, children with disabilities may be less likely to disclose that they are being abused because:

- they sometimes don't understand that they are being abused;
- they may not have the opportunity to tell people what is happening;
- they may have communication difficulties which make it difficult to express what is happening to them.

It is important to be aware that children with disabilities are both more vulnerable to abuse and often have less access to child protection services. It is also common for myths, prejudice and denial to prevent abuse from being recognized among children with disabilities. Unusual behavior may be seen as resulting from a child's disability rather than as a possible indicator of abuse which needs to be investigated. It is the responsibility of those who work with children with disabilities to ensure that they have

equal access to child protection services and that their needs, both as children with disabilities, and as children, are appropriately met.

3.3.3. Children who live in homes where domestic violence occurs.

Children who live in homes where domestic violence occurs are always affected emotionally, and are more likely to be affected physically in the form of abuse, than children from homes where there is no domestic violence. Special attention should be paid to children from homes where it is known that there is domestic violence so that preventative action can be taken to ensure the well-being and safety of the child. Preventative action could also include supporting the family to protect the child and minimize damage.

3.3.4. Children at risk of abuse through prostitution.

All children involved in prostitution are victims of child abuse, even if they do not perceive themselves as victims.

3.4 Child Protection

Child protection is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this document it applies particularly to the duty of Lifeline ChildLine and its partner organizations – and individuals associated with these organizations – towards children in their care.

3.5 Duty of Care

The term 'duty of care' identifies the moral and legal responsibility all organizations working with children, either directly or indirectly, have to protect children within their care from both intentional and unintentional harm. This responsibility to protect includes preventing abuse from happening by creating child-safe environments which minimize the risk of abuse, and responding immediately and appropriately where abuse does happen.

3.6 Direct Contact with Children.

Being in the physical presence of a child or children in the context of the organization's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term. This could involve visits to schools, churches or youth groups or attending conferences at which children are present. (This list is not exhaustive.)

3.7 Indirect contact with children.

- Having information on children in the context of the organizations work, such as children's names, addresses of children or projects, photographs and case studies.
- Providing funding for organizations that work "directly" with children. Albeit indirectly, this nonetheless has an impact on children, and therefore confers upon the donor organization responsibility for child protection issues.
(This list of examples is not exhaustive)

3.8 Child Protection Policy

A child protection policy is 'A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to protecting children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking it's duty and responsibility of care seriously.' 8

3.9 Partner organizations

Lifeline ChildLine works with other local NGOs in Namibia. These NGOs are referred to as Lifeline ChildLine partner organizations. This policy applies to the staff of Lifeline ChildLine and its partner organizations (unless the partner has its own child protection policy in place)

3.10 Staff

The term staff is used broadly and includes employees, trustees, interns, volunteers and consultants.

3.10.1 *Employee* – A person who works for a salary

3.10.2 *Trustee* – A member of a board who has been elected or appointed to direct the funds and policy of an NGO

3.10.3 *Intern* – A person who works for a specific amount of time as an apprentice or trainee to gain vocational experience

3.10.4 *Volunteer* – A person who works for no salary

3.10.5 *Consultant* – An expert who offers their skills and experience to an NGO for a specific amount of time.

4. Lifeline ChildLine Standards: Preventing Child Abuse

These standards are designed to prevent child abuse from happening by ensuring that Lifeline ChildLine staff and all of its partners create child-safe environments for the children with whom they work.

Lifeline ChildLine will ensure that the following standards are met.

4.1 Recruitment

There will be a thorough and standardized process within Lifeline ChildLine that applies to the recruitment of all employees, Board members, interns, volunteers and consultants; having direct or indirect contact with children.

The process shall include:

- Advertisements for vacancies will clearly state that a child protection policy is in place.
- A candidate specification that accompanies each job description against which applicants are judged, to ensure that the best candidate for the job is selected, above and beyond child protection considerations.
- The requirement for the potential employee to read, understand and accept compliance with the organizations Child Protection Policy and guidelines as part of the terms and conditions of employment.
- The requirement for the potential employee to sign the employment contract with the understanding that this implies they are in fact also signing and are abiding by the Statement of Commitment as an addendum to the employment agreement.
- The requirement for the potential employee to sign a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including those considered 'spent'.
- The required minimum of two character references (excluding family members and those that have known the applicant personally for less than two years) that can be verified by phone. The existence of the referee must be confirmed and the reference taken up.

- A standardized interview process which includes “
 - One member of the recruitment panel will have extensive experience in issues of child protection
 - Specific questions will be incorporated in the interview on child protection and the candidates commitment to, and respect for child protection policies and procedures as well as the candidates motivation for working with children.
 - Attentiveness to anything suspicious in employment history, including gaps, and the use of telephone references to clarify any areas of concern.

4.2 Staff Awareness, Training and Support

Lifelines ChildLine’s commitment to promoting awareness and standards of child protection extends to all levels of its structure: Head office in Windhoek (employees, volunteers, board members, partner organizations.) Regional Offices (employees, volunteers, partner organizations.)

- Lifeline ChildLine will incorporate child rights and child protection awareness raising into all of their programs where they work with children, promoting its importance to the community wherever possible.
- Lifeline ChildLine’s organizational ethos will encourage opportunities to question and learn about child protection issues.
- There will be opportunities within the organization to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to safeguard children

These opportunities will include:

- An induction process for all employees, board members, interns and volunteers which includes; familiarization with the Child Protection Policy and procedures; opportunities to learn about the nature of child abuse, the effects of abuse and how to recognize and respond to concerns about child abuse issues; information and support on who to contact in the event of any concerns about child protection issues.
- New employees, board members, interns and volunteers should receive the child protection policy and get the opportunity to receive additional assistance in understanding and implementing the child protection as soon as possible(at least three months after taking up their position). This will be included in their induction process.

- Existing employees, board members, interns and volunteers should receive child protection training within a designated time period of the Child Protection Policy coming into force
- All employees, board members, interns and volunteers working in direct contact with children will be fully trained on the organization's code of conduct and who to contact in the event of any concerns.
- All employees, board members, interns and volunteers who have access to information about children such as personal contact information, including their address, cell phone numbers, email address etc., specific cases or incidents, or any details of the child's personal history will be trained to fully understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- Lifeline ChildLine will endeavor to offer staff individual support and counseling for employees who find child protection training challenging
- All Lifeline ChildLine offices will have a reference-only copy of the child protection policy -initially in English (possibility of adopted version in local languages) where it can be easily accessed by staff.
- All Lifeline ChildLine offices will display an enlarged copy of the Child Protection Code of Conduct where it is clearly visible to children, visitors and staff.
- All Lifeline ChildLine offices will display an enlarged copy of the Procedure for Reporting Abuse where it is clearly visible to staff.
- Lifeline ChildLine will deliver a briefing of child protection and the child protection policy to at least one senior member of staff from each region /office and if required partner organisation.
- A continuous evaluation of training and policy procedures will be administered, assuring up to date awareness of child protection issues within the organization.

4.3 Management Structure

Lifeline ChildLine will ensure that a specific management process exists that will facilitate the implementation of the child protection policy and procedures.

The structure will include the following:

- Lifeline ChildLine will have open lines of communication where understanding abuse and listening and responding to concerns are the main priority. There will be an atmosphere of support and encouragement for those who want to report concerns and a positive environment for giving and receiving feedback.

- The management will reflect Lifeline ChildLine’s core principles and values, upholding a professional approach toward child protection issues and demonstrating awareness of matters of abuse.
- Members of the Board will take responsibility to assure them that the Child Protection Policy is being implemented.
- A named person will be designated to take responsibility for the implementation of the child protection policy. This national person will be identified at the first child protection policy training. The name will be added as appendix 3.
- At each appropriate level there will be a named person to whom individuals can report concerns or discuss child protection issues. This regional person will be identified at the first child protection policy training. The name will be added as appendix 3.
- The designated Child Protection Officer will be responsible for :
 - Acting as a focal point to receive information regarding concerns of harm, abuse or exploitation of children.
 - Accessing the information and making a prompt response.
 - Making formal referrals if appropriate
 - Ensuring that all information is recorded on an incident record of concern form.
 - Answering questions and supporting staff on any issues regarding child protection and the child protection policy.
 - Promoting awareness and implementation of the child protection policy.
 - Monitoring the implementation of the policy and reporting annually to the Board of Trustees.
 - The development of child protection training
 - Maintaining knowledge of best practice and statutory requirements.
- Staff appraisals will include an opportunity to discuss child protection issues. Any breach of the child protection policy shall be dealt with according to the LifeLine ChildLine disciplinary procedures as adopted by the organisation.
- The disclosure of personal information about children, including legal cases, should be limited to individuals on a need to know basis.

4.4 Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct clarifies **appropriate** and **inappropriate behavior** towards children in order to **protect children** from abuse, and to **protect staff** from unfounded accusations of child abuse.

Staff should interpret this code in the spirit of **transparency** and **common sense**, with the **best interests of the child** as the main consideration

4.4.1 Minimizing risk situations.

Try to:

- Avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position
- Be accompanied by a second adult whenever possible
- Meet with a child in a public place whenever possible

Try not to:

- Be alone with a single child, including in the following situations:
a car; overnight; in your home or the home of the child
- Show favoritism to any child
- Spend excessive amounts of time with any child.
- Give out personal information such as a phone number and address

4.4.2. Sexual Behavior.

Never:

- Engage in or allow sexual provocative games with children to take place.
- Kiss, hug, fondle, rub, or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children (regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally)
- Sleep in the same bed as a child
- Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for itself, such as dressing and bathing
- Encourage any crushes

4.4.3. Physical Behavior.

Always:

- Manage children's behavior in ways which are non violent and do not degrade and humiliate children

Never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Initiate any physical contact such as holding hands. Wait for the child to initiate it.

*4.4.4. Psychosocial Behavior***Always:**

- Be aware of the power balance between an adult and a child and avoid taking any advantage this may provide.
- Communicate with children in a way that is appropriate to their age , understanding and preference.
- Listen to children, take them seriously and treat them with sensitivity and respect

Never:

- Use language that can mentally or emotionally harm any child.
- Act in a way that intends to embarrass or shame , humiliate or degrade a child
- Show discrimination of race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political persuasion.
- Drink alcohol in the presence of children who are participating in Lifeline ChildLine programmes and activities
- Never provided alcohol to children who are participating in Lifeline ChildLine programs and activities.

*4.4.5. Peer Abuse***Always:**

- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse
- Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children
- Avoid placing children in high risk peer situations(e.g. unsupervised mixing of older children)

Never:

- Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.

*4.4.6. Physical Environment***Always:**

- Develop clear rules that will address specific safety issues relative to the local physical environment of a programme or activity.

4.4.7. Travel and Trips.

Always:

- Obtain consent from the parents /caregivers consent to take a child on a trip or engage in an activity
- Request the parents/caregivers to sign an indemnity form before engaging the child in any activity.
- Ensure that the child has access to a seat belt in any motor vehicle.
- Ensure the child has a safe means of traveling home after any activity.

Never:

- Travel alone with a child.

Lifeline ChildLine staff, volunteers , interns and Board member should always be a role model for children that you work with, and for the adults who see the way in which you work with children

4.5 Communication Guidelines.

4.5.1. Imagery and text.

- Access to printed and electronic personal information about children will be restricted to the minimum number of individuals who need to know within the organisation.
- Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child and put them at risk will not be placed on the Lifeline ChildLine website or any other form of communication for general and public purposes.
- All children participating in Lifeline ChildLine programmes and activities will have their right to be accurately represented, through both words and images, protected and promoted. This will ensure that the following are avoided:
 - Language and images that could possible degrade, victimize or shame a child.
 - Making generalizations that do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation.
 - Discrimination of any type
 - Taking pictures out of context
- Text and images included in any print, broadcast or electronic materials will depict an accurate and balanced depiction of children and their circumstances.

- In images children will be appropriately clothed and not depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.
- Lifeline ChildLine staff, volunteers, board members and interns will always ask permission from the child to take their photograph.
- Informed consent from the child/ Childs guardian will always be sought if the image is to be used for publicity, media, fundraising, awareness raising or any other purpose.
- Under no circumstances shall pictures of the children taken during events and activities be placed on social media sites such as facebook, by LifeLine ChildLine staff, interns and board members. If pictures are to be placed on the Lifeline ChildLine websites / blogs, prior written consent from the parents should be obtained.
- Children will always be presented as human beings with their own identity and dignity preserved.
- Where possible children will be asked to give their own account rather than somebody speak for them.

4.5.2. Confidentiality.

- If a member of staff is concerned that a child they are working with is at risk of, or is suffering from abuse they must report this to the designated child protection officer. The CPO will then decide who else needs to be informed on a strictly 'need to know' basis in the best interests of the child, in order to protect the child and their right to confidentiality.

5. Lifeline ChildLine Guidelines and Procedures - Responding to a Child Protection Concern,

5.1 What to do if you are worried a child is being abused:

These guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure that where child abuse does happen damage to the child is minimized and appropriate action is taken to care for and rehabilitate the child. The guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child protection is that the safety and welfare of the child always comes first. No child should be put at more risk by any action taken in response to the concern

These guidelines and procedures must be followed whenever:

- a) **there is suspicion that a child is being abused** (you identify emotional, behavioral or medical indicators of abuse and/or you suspect the abuser);
- b) **an allegation is made that a child is being abused** (someone else tells you that a child is being abused and/or the abuser admits abuse to you);
- c) **child abuse is witnessed** (you witness abuse);
- d) **a child discloses abuse** (the child tells you s/he is being abused).

It is the duty and responsibility of any person who is worried that a child is being abused (even those who do not work directly with children, or in the area of child protection) to report their concerns as soon as possible (and always within 24 hours) so that further investigations can be made.

It is essential that:

- Concerns raised regarding child abuse are responded to immediately, professionally and appropriately.
- Positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns are always taken.
- As far as possible children who are the subject of any concerns are kept informed of any child protection measures that may have to be taken and involved in the decision making process.

The child's best interests are the most important factor when child protection measures are considered.

5.2 How to respond to a child's disclosure of abuse.⁵

General points

- Stop and listen straight away
- Accept what the child says
- Keep calm and don't panic
- Do not appear shocked
- Do not seek help while the child is talking to you
- Look at the child directly
- Assure the child that they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be honest
- Let the child know that you will have to tell someone (but reassure them that only those who need to know will be told, and that it is in their best interest)
- Try not to repeat the same questions to the child
- Never push for information
- Never ask leading questions (- questions which encourage a child to give one answer over another)
- Do not fill in words, finish in sentences, or make assumptions
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made. Accuracy is very important in this stage of the procedure
- Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation to the organization's CPO

Things to say

- 'I believe you'
- 'I am going to try to help you'
- 'I am glad that you told me'
- 'It's not your fault' (A child can never be held responsible for abuse received at the hands of others)

Things not to say

- 'You should have told someone before'
- 'I can't believe it! I'm shocked!'
- 'No not him/her, he/she is a friend of mine'
- 'I won't tell anyone else'
- 'Why? When? How? Where? Who?'

⁵ Jackson, Wernham and Child Hope UK 2005, Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit.

At the end of the disclosure

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you
- Let them know what you are going to do next (for example that you will speak to the CPO as they will know what to do to help the child in the best way)
- immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated CPO
- Write down accurately what the young person has told you using the child protection reporting form. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure and confidential place for an indefinite period. These are essential in helping Lifeline ChildLine /other child protection organizations/the police decide what is best for the child, and as evidence as necessary
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support⁶

⁶ Jackson, Wernham and Childhope UK, 2005, Child PROTECTION Policies and Procedures Toolkit.

5.3. Procedure for Reporting Abuse.

The procedure for responding to reports of concern is as follows.



The CPO will oversee and monitor the child's rehabilitation by liaising with the child and all those involved to ensure that action is being taken and the child is making progress. In regions where the "safety net" operates the CPO will attend the monthly case management meetings.

The CPO will complete and file the Child Abuse Reporting Form and the Post Abuse Care Plan,

The Regional CPO will submit the Child Abuse Reporting Form and the Child Care Plan to the National CPO in Windhoek quarterly.



The National CPO will report to the senior management on Child Protection Cases and issues on a quarterly basis. If any problems relating to effective protection of children occur within Lifeline Childline the National CPO will call an emergency meeting with the senior management team of Lifeline Childline.

The National CPO will monitor all reports of child abuse and subsequent child protection cases that occur within Lifeline Childline programmes and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy on child protection.

5.4. Child Abuse Reporting Form

If you are worried that a child is being abused you must report your concerns directly to your organization's CPO (or the next most appropriate person if the CPO is not available or if your concerns involve the CPO). You must also complete this form to the best of your knowledge either before reporting or after. This form will be kept in a secure and confidential place and the information on it only shared with those who need to know in the best interests of the child.

About You

Your name:----- Your job title:-----

Your organization and location:-----

Your contact details (phone, email and address):-----

Your relationship to the child - if relevant:-----

About the Child

Child's name:----- Child's gender:-----

Child's age:-----

Who does the child live with?-----

Child's address:-----

About your Concern

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? If you are passing on the concerns of somebody else, what is their name and relationship to the child?

Please give a brief description of why you are concerned (include dates, times and location of any specific incidents, names of any witnesses and name(s) of alleged abuser):

Have you spoken to the child? If so what was said?

Any relevant observations made by you (emotional, behavioral or medical indicators):

Any other relevant information not previously covered:

Have you spoken to or reported your concerns to anyone else? If so give details of who you have spoken or reported to (name of person, name of organization – if relevant, their contact details, date and time you contacted them):

Is the child in immediate danger? -----
Are you in immediate danger? -----

Does the child require medical attention?-----

"I confirm that the information I have given is true and complete to the best of my knowledge."

Your Signature:

Date:

FOR THE CPO TO COMPLETE.

Outline immediate action taken (for example were child's parents/carers informed of the abuse, was child moved from their home, given medical treatment? etc).
If you did not take further action you must state why not. File in a secure and confidential place.

5.5 Post-abuse Care Planning Form

If a CPO finds that a child has been abused they must decide on an appropriate course of action that works towards the long term rehabilitation of the child. This course of action must be recorded on this form and the CPO must oversee and monitor the child's progress.

About the Child

Child's name: ----- Child's gender: -----

Child's age: -----

Who does the child live with?-----

Child's address:-----

Outline the child's current situation:

Outline what would help the child to recover from the abuse (for example medical treatment, a new place to live, involvement in youth activities, counseling? etc):

Care Plan - List the actions you will take or oversee to support the child:

Action: ----- By when:-----

Key person: -----

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Signatures of child, CPO and child's parent/carer as appropriate: (Sign and print name)

Child: ----- Date:-----

CPO: ----- Date: -----

Parent/carer:----- Date: -----

Signatures of others involved in the child's care and rehabilitation as appropriate:

1. Name: ----- Relationship to child: -----

Signature: ----- Date:

2. Name: ----- Relationship to child: -----

Signature: ----- Date:

CPO to file in a secure and confidential place

5.6. Recording Information.

- A person reporting a concern, allegation or disclosure should use the standard reporting form to gather all the relevant information.
- Any concerns, allegations, disclosures should be written down as soon as possible. Within 24 hrs
- Records should be detailed and precise, focusing on what you and the other person said, what was observed and who was present and what happened. There should be no speculation or interpretation.
- Any concern, allegation or disclosure is seen as alleged rather than proven at this stage.
- All records will be treated as confidential and only passed to the persons specified in the reporting procedure explained above.
- It is the responsibility of the each individual in possession of the information to maintain confidentiality.

5.7 Monitoring and Review.

- All concerns, allegations and disclosures of child abuse are recorded , monitored and filed in a safe secure place.
- Steps will be taken to regularly consult with children and their parents/caregivers on the policies and procedures for keeping children safe and the effectiveness of these.
- The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed at least every three years.
- Children and parents/caregivers will be consulted as part of these reviews of safeguarding policies and practices.
- Child Protection will be a key component of all Lifeline ChildLine Programme evaluations. The evaluation will consider if the programme activities have led to any unforeseen negative impacts on the protection of children.

5.8. Consequences of Misconduct.

- In accordance with Lifeline ChildLine's Disciplinary Code and Procedures; if an allegation of a violation of the policies, guidelines, principles or practice of child protection is made from a verifiable source against any employee, volunteer, intern or consultant, they may be suspended from all activity with Lifeline ChildLine pending the outcome of an independent investigation. Staff will continue to receive full pay during this time.

- The decision to suspend is not suspect to challenge. When investigating and determining the concerns or complaints, the process will always be fair and any adverse determination should be open to challenge through an appeals process (Refer to Disciplinary Code and Procedure: Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, Lifeline ChildLine Namibia, 2008.)
- Depending on the outcome of the independent investigation; if it is proven that the member of staff has contravened the principles and standards contained in this document, immediate disciplinary action will be taken according to the disciplinary policy of LLCL and any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances. This may mean:
 - Employees- disciplinary action/ dismissal according to LLCL HR policies.
 - Volunteers, board members, interns.- ending the relationship with the organization
 - Partners- withdrawal of support.
 - Consultants – termination of contract.
- Depending on the nature and circumstances of the case. Lifeline ChildLine will consider involving authorities such as the police to ensure the protection of children and criminal prosecution where this is appropriate.

Appendix 1.

Staff Statement of Commitment to Lifeline ChildLine Child Protection Policy

I,----- have read and understood this Child Protection Policy. I agree with the values and beliefs contained within it and agree to work in accordance with the standards, guidelines and procedures it outlines while working with Lifeline ChildLine Namibia. .

Print name:-----

Job title:-----

Signature:-----

Date:-----

Appendix 2.

Character Reference and Declaration of Criminal Convictions Form

This form must be completed and signed by all those applying for a job (including trustee posts, consultancies, internships and voluntary placements) with Lifeline ChildLine Namibia

Character References

Please provide us with the name and contact details of two character references that you have known for at least two years and that are not related to you.

(Referee 1) Name:

Address:

Email:

Contact Number:

How do you know the referee?
(friend, neighbor, teacher, colleague, employer etc)

How long have you known the referee?
.....

(Referee 2) Name:

Address:

Email:

Contact Number:

How do you know the referee?
(friend, neighbor, teacher, colleague, employer etc)

How long have you known the referee?
.....

Declaration of Criminal Convictions

(Staff will have to hand in a police clearance certificate within a specified time as indicated in employment contract.

Have you ever been in trouble with the police and/or convicted of a crime? (Y/N)
.....

Have there ever been any criminal allegations made against you? (Y/N)
.....

If you answered yes to either of the above questions please provide details below. Information will be kept confidential by [Name of organization] and will be used to assess whether you pose any risk in relation to child protection.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

"I declare that the information I have given is complete and true and understand that to knowingly make a false statement may result in termination of any agreement held between myself and Lifeline Children Namibia".

Print name:

Signature:

Date: