



Policy Statement on Child Protection

The Highlands & Islands Theatre Network Limited (HITN) is committed to promoting understanding and enactment of the principles and practices of child protection.

HITN aims to provide a safe and healthy environment for children when they are engaged in activities and projects that place them within its care. This includes major projects such as Dràma Na h-Alba – Scotland's International Theatre Arts Festival and Forum (DNA).

It is the policy of HITN to take all reasonable measures so that it may ensure the safety and well-being of all participants in any activities or projects in order to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

HITN recognises that children and young people need to feel safe, secure, and involved in order to enable them to gain from participation. HITN will provide information and assistance to help them do so and it will involve and inform parents about the running of the activities and projects in which their child is a participant. HITN recognises special consideration must be applied to issues of recruitment, training and review of work with children.

1. HITN Management

It is the responsibility of HITN to implement the company's child protection policy, but child protection is the responsibility of everyone who is involved at any level within the organisation.

All Board Directors, Members, paid employees and/or contract workers and volunteers should be issued with brief guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse (see section 5 below).

HITN will ensure that paid employees and/or contract workers and volunteers have adequate training on awareness, recognition and prevention methods to minimise risk of child abuse.

2. Appointing Staff

HITN recognises that child protection should not be treated in isolation and will take on board guidance given by the Highland Child Protection Committee and will address recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees and/or contract workers by doing the following:

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84 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1LU, Tel.: 01463 717091
E.: muriel@hitn.co.uk / stuart@hitn.co.uk W.: www.hitn.co.uk
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- 1) HITN accepts responsibility to check that all adults with regular access to children have been appropriately vetted, including Disclosure Scotland checks as appropriate;
- 2) HITN will ensure that every new paid employee and/or contract worker and volunteer completes a Personal Profile Form;
- 3) HITN will make a request for previous addresses on job application forms;
- 4) HITN will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference, and who may be interviewed personally;
- 5) HITN will follow up each reference with a phone call or personal contact during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children. A record of this discussion will be kept in the applicant's file;
- 6) HITN will interview prospective employees and/or contract workers and volunteers;
- 7) HITN will note at interview all previous relevant experience of prospective employees and/or contract workers and volunteers.

3. Supervision

The HITN Board will have the responsibility to supervise the implementation of the Company's Child Protection Policy within the Company's activities and projects.

4. Training and Support

HITN will provide support and access to training for staff and/or contract workers and volunteers in order that they can effectively implement this policy for child protection.

5. Guidelines

The following guidelines for HITN should be brought to the attention of all Directors, Members, paid employees and/or contract workers and volunteers. These guidelines should apply to all potential members (Member Companies should submit their Child Protection Policy as a constituent part of their annual HITN Membership), employees and/or contract workers and volunteers no matter what the person's background. There should be no exceptions.



The criteria on which these guidelines are based are as follows:

- The need to protect children and young people in our care;
- The need to protect employees and/or contract workers and volunteers;
- The need to protect HITN as an organisation, especially from litigation.

Code of good behaviour and good practice

You should:

- Respect everyone as an individual;
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour;
- Respect everyone's right to personal privacy;
- Be available as a listening ear, and if necessary refer for more appropriate help;
- Be sensitive to other people's likes and dislikes;
- Try to make sure your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence;
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues;
- Where possible plan activities which involve more than one person being present or at least within sight or hearing.

You should not:

- Permit abusive behaviour, e.g. bullying, ridiculing;
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others;
- Jump to conclusions or make assumptions about others without checking facts;
- Encourage inappropriate attention seeking behaviour;
- Show favouritism to anyone;
- Make suggestive remarks or actions, even in jest;
- Deliberately place yourself or others in a compromising situation;
- Believe it could never happen to you.



What you should do if ... abuse is disclosed or discovered

- Stay calm and try to act normally;
- Do not delay to take action;
- Do not act alone;
- Do not start to investigate;
- Do consult with another appropriate person.

... if a young person tells you that s/he has been abused

- You must never promise you will not tell anyone;
- Do show acceptance of what the child or young person says;
- Your reaction should be neutral;
- Do not press for information or ask leading questions;
- You should be aware the child or young person may have been threatened;
- As soon as possible afterwards you should write down what the child or young person has told you (see Incident Report at section 6 below).

Confidentiality must be a priority, but under no circumstances should any individual, or the organisation itself, attempt to deal with the problems of abuse alone.

Always RECORD and REFER never investigate or try to deal with such issues alone.



6. Child Protection Incident Report

Name of Child:

Name of Incident Reporter:

Contact Address of Child:

Contact Telephone No.:

Date of Incident:

Description of Incident:

Reported to:

Action Taken:

Signature:

Date:

Reported by:

HITN Child Protection Policy, April 2007.