



ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
Scotland

ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION SCOTLAND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

The English-Speaking Union Scotland (ESU Scotland) is an educational charity which provides opportunities for children and young people to learn and practise skills of public speaking and debate and to participate in other competitions, events and activities under its aegis.

It takes its responsibilities for the protection of children and young people very seriously and has established protocols and training opportunities which are designed as far as possible to ensure:

- That the risks to children participating in activities organised or promoted by ESU Scotland are minimised
- That staff and volunteers of ESU Scotland know how to respond should any disclosure be made to them in the course of their contact with any child or young person

The ESU Scotland Child Protection Statement

The Statement sets out the approach to Child Protection taken by ESU Scotland. It is widely publicised on ESU Scotland material.

(a) Governance

There is at all times at least one Trustee of ESU Scotland who is trained and experienced in Child Protection and has clearance under the Disclosure Scotland PVG Scheme. This Trustee has the responsibility of overseeing the operation of this Child Protection policy and compliance with it. The Child Protection Trustee should have the opportunity of making a report to the Annual General Meeting of ESU Scotland on the operation of this policy should he/she feel it necessary.

The Child Protection Trustee would receive any disclosures concerning staff members or other Trustees and provides support for the Programmes Director in dealing with any child protection matters.

(b) Child Protection Trustees

The Child Protection Trustee : **Wendy Bellars (Deputy Chair)**
The Deputy Child Protection Trustees: **Dr Helen Wright (Chair); Cameron Wyllie**

Operational Matters

It is the Programmes Director's responsibility to ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the ESU Scotland Child Protection Statement and their responsibilities under it.

Review

The Board of Trustees will carry out a review of ESU Scotland's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Protocols, and of events affected by these, on an annual basis. **This policy was last updated in November 2020.**



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THE ESU SCOTLAND CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

The English-Speaking Union Scotland (ESU Scotland) takes its responsibilities for the protection of children and young people very seriously and has established protocols and training opportunities which are designed as far as possible to ensure:

That the risks to children participating in activities organised or promoted by ESU Scotland are minimised

- Staff are appointed and volunteers recruited with the safety of children and young people clearly in mind. ESU Scotland staff are required to obtain PVG/Disclosure Scotland clearance if they do not already have this. Members of the Board of Trustees who undertake regulated work with children and young people are also required to obtain this. Volunteers are often teachers, who must have such clearance as a condition of their employment. In the case of non-teachers, for example undergraduate students who may act as judges or mentors, these volunteers are given training which includes how to give feedback in a way that is appropriate; the choosing of judges for ESU Scotland events involves assessing how mature and appropriate they are in their conduct. Where feasible, at the start of each debating competition an “equity briefing” is delivered to all volunteers and other participants. This covers issues such as bullying and intimidation, as well as inappropriate behaviour in general. There is an “equity officer” – usually the Programmes Director – to whom participants can come if they have any concerns.
- All children and young people who attend ESU Scotland events should be accompanied by school staff or parents/carers, who have principal responsibility for their care. Should a situation arise where school staff or parents are unable to attend an event and take responsibility for the care of their child/children, the member of staff running the event must refer the matter to the Child Protection Trustees who will formulate a plan to ensure the safety of all parties to the event.
- ESU Scotland staff and mentors who undertake regulated work with children and young people are members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme.
- ESU Scotland staff are required to update their own Safeguarding and Child Protection training on an annual basis.
- All volunteers or staff who attend ESU Scotland events for children and young people are sent a copy of the *ESU Scotland Code of Conduct* and, where appropriate, the *ESU Scotland Online Competition Protocol*.
- The *Code of Conduct* is issued to all participants in ESU Scotland events, which they are required to sign before taking part. The Code so signed is considered valid for the academic year in question. Representatives of schools may be asked to sign on behalf of all those from their organisation who will be taking part during the year, and it is the responsibility of these representatives to make the content of the Code known to all their participants.
- *Photography*. A consent form is sent out with competition entry forms, which allows participants to give consent to having their pictures used. This consent can be withdrawn at any time. When debates are recorded, permission is sought from all participants at the start of the debate and can be withdrawn afterwards for any reason.

That staff and volunteers of ESU Scotland know how to respond should any disclosure be made to them in the course of their contact with any child or young person

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- Where representatives of ESU Scotland have concerns about a child or young person, either through a disclosure or through actions/observations, they should share their concern, without delay, with the Programmes Director of ESU Scotland. See the **Child Protection Protocol** on page 8 below.
- If the concern relates to the actions of the Programmes Director then the concerns should be raised with the Child Protection Trustee or his/her Deputies.
- Where a disclosure in respect of the welfare or safety of a child or young person is made to a representative of ESU Scotland, the matter will be referred by the Programmes Director to the Child Protection Officer of the school attended by the child or young person.
- If the disclosure or observation relates to the actions of a representative of ESU Scotland then they will be suspended from their role, without prejudice, while an investigation takes place. This investigation will be conducted by the Programmes Director in consultation with the Child Protection Trustee, or his/her Deputies, in consultation with the child or young person's school.
- Accurate records of any disclosure, observation and investigation must be made and stored securely in line with ESU Scotland's Data Protection Policy. These records may be shared with the Child Protection Officer of the school attended if deemed necessary for the pupil's welfare and safety.

Contact Details

Programmes Director

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Child Protection Trustee

Wendy Bellars E: wabellars@yahoo.co.uk
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Deputy Child Protection Trustees

Dr Helen Wright

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The Legislative Context in Scotland *(Ctrl + click to follow links electronically)*

The Scottish Government is responsible for child protection in Scotland. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.

Child Protection Committees (CPCs) are responsible for multi-agency child protection policy, procedure, guidance and practice.

Within each local authority, CPCs work with local agencies, such as children's social work, health services and the police, to protect children.

Each local authority and its relevant health board are required to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan for each three-year period. This relates to services which have a significant effect on the wellbeing of, or are of benefit to, children and young people. The new [statutory guidance on children's services planning](#) was due to come into effect from 1 April 2020 (Scottish Government, 2020).

The national approach to improving outcomes for children and young people in Scotland is [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#) (Scottish Government, 2015). This provides a framework for those working with children and their families to provide the right support at the right time.

The key guidance for anyone working with children in Scotland is the [National guidance for child protection in Scotland](#) (Scottish Government, 2014).

In Scotland, a child legally becomes an adult when they turn 16, but statutory guidance which supports the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) includes all children and young people up to the age of 18. Where concerns are raised about a 16 or 17 year old, agencies may need to refer to the [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#), depending on the situation of the young person at risk. Section 21 of the [National guidance for child protection in Scotland](#) explains how professionals should act to protect young people from harm in different circumstances (Scottish Government, 2014).



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When should we be concerned?

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC notes that it's everyone's responsibility to ask five key questions when they have concerns about a child.

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others? (Scottish Government, 2014a).

If anyone connected with ESU Scotland is concerned about a child, (s)he should raise his/her concerns with the Programmes Director as soon as possible. No concern is too small to raise, and sometimes concerns can be allayed quickly with the help of the parent(s) or teacher(s) accompanying the child.

If the concern is more difficult to address, and does not involve a complaint against the child or young person's school, it will be passed to the school's child protection officer or other responsible adult, for example Year Head, Guidance Teacher or Head Teacher. At this stage the Programmes Director will ensure that the Child Protection Trustee or his/her Deputy is informed of the concern.

Concerns about the Programmes Director should be raised with the Child Protection Trustee or his/her Deputy (see Contact Details on page 4, above).

Should it be inappropriate to inform the child or young person's school of the concern, it will be raised with the Local Authority, the Care Inspectorate or the NSPCC as appropriate.

Any concern for a child or young person's immediate safety should of course be reported to the police.

Concern may be raised by a **disclosure** from a child or young person to an ESU Scotland member of staff or volunteer. Such concerns should be listened to and the child or young person assured that his or her concerns will be addressed. The child or young person should not however be promised confidentiality, as it will be necessary to involve those who can help him or her. As far as possible, questions should not be asked of the person making the disclosure, as these can influence the account being given. As soon as possible after the disclosure, the member of staff or volunteer should make a note of what was said and pass this to the Programmes Director after making an initial verbal report.

Paperwork in connection with a Safeguarding or Child Protection concern, and which is not passed to the appropriate authorities, will be kept in accordance with ESU Scotland's Data Protection Policy.



Child Protection and Safeguarding Protocol

If you are present at, or otherwise involved in, an ESU Scotland event and have reason to be concerned about a child's or young person's wellbeing, inform the ESU Scotland Programmes Director – Jordan Pfothenhauer – of your reasons for concern. If he is not contactable, or if the concern is about him, inform any other member of ESU Scotland staff or the Child Protection Trustees (see p4).

If you believe that a child or young person is in immediate danger, you should of course contact the police.

Why might you be concerned?

Sometimes a child or young person will reveal – either deliberately or unintentionally – **physical signs of abuse**. This can be self-inflicted or the result of actions by another.

A child or young person's **behaviour and/or language** might concern you if it is inappropriate for his or her age, or for the setting in which it occurs. Detailed references to sexual behaviour, especially if the behaviour is unpleasant or harmful, may be of concern. (Debates can cover some difficult issues – crime, drugs, social issues, *etc.* ESU Scotland takes care to challenge young people but still to set topics that are age-appropriate.)

A child or young person may tell you about something which you believe requires investigation. This is called **disclosure**. It is important not to ask leading questions of the child or young person; if there is to be an investigation it will be carried out by suitably qualified professionals. Do not promise her or him confidentiality even if you are asked for it; explain that it may be necessary to pass on what you have been told in order to help the child or young person, and possibly help others too.

Notes

When you have time, and as soon as possible, make a note of your concern and the reasons for it. Pass on these notes to the Programmes Director.