

Key Messages from Research¹

- ♣ All children are potential victims and as such protection efforts should consider the welfare of all children;
- ♣ Staff not being held accountable for their actions; children not being believed and a lack of scrutiny and excessive trust in the 'goodness' of institutional administration are all factors associated with abuse in organisations;
- ♣ Child abuse and maltreatment can be minimised through appropriate organisational management;
- ♣ There is no reliable profile available to help identify the overwhelming majority of abusers- those that remain unconvicted;
- ♣ Many child abusers do not have a criminal record – estimated as only 1-5% of child abusers;
- ♣ Abuse and maltreatment is prevented, not by pre employment screening alone, but through robust and ongoing organisational policies and procedures;
- ♣ Training staff to be aware of the possibility of abuse in organisations – and to recognise abuse when it does occur – is important in creating conditions where staff are more willing and able to report concerns they may have;
- ♣ Clear behavioural boundaries for staff and volunteers will help prevent child abuse and encourage a culture of openness in which staff feels able to raise concerns.

1. Introduction

The British Council has pledged to take **all reasonable measures to protect children from abuse** (physical, sexual, emotion and neglect) and assigned a **zero tolerance risk appetite** for not doing this. In other words, as an organisation we need to take all necessary measures to mitigate child protection risk.

This reports aims to:

1. Articulate what is our duty of care towards all children we engage with;
2. Categorise risk factors present in the organization;
3. Assess how far or near the British Council is taking all reasonable measures to ensure that we are keeping children safe and;
4. Identify where we have to improve to create a child safe environment.

2). Duty of Care

The British Council has a fundamental duty of care towards all children we engage with including a **duty to protect them from abuse**. This duty is clearly outlined in both UK and international law. The central tenet of the UK legal and regulatory framework is the **Children Act 1989, 2004** and the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**. The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989** is the international framework which sets out the specific rights of children. It is the most widely ratified international human rights instrument with over 190 countries signed up to it. The British Council affirm the position that **all children have the right to be protected from all forms of**

¹ Beyer et all (2006) **Understanding Organisational Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment: A Review of Literature**, Australian Institute of Family Studies.