

CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

Summary

Organisations outside the regulated child care sector are encouraged to comply with the requirements of the [Protection of Children Act 1999](#). Whilst QRS is not subject to the requirements of the Act, it owes a general duty of care both at common law and in certain circumstances under statute to take reasonable care of persons coming on to its premises or under the control or supervision of its staff. The adoption and implementation of a Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection policy facilitates the management of the risk associated with this duty.

Policy

QRS aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults. QRS may encounter children and vulnerable adults whilst conducting market research surveys.

This policy seeks to offer assurances to both staff and the general public, through its implementation, that QRS seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe from harm when in contact with QRS staff and interviewers (whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity).

Children are those under the age of 16 years / young people are those aged 16 / 17 years. QRS views a vulnerable adult as a person aged 18 or over who has one of more of the following conditions:

- a) A learning or physical disability,
- b) Physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs,
- c) Reduction in physical or mental capacity.

Code of Practice

The following code of practice applies to ALL QRS staff whether acting in a paid or unpaid capacity:

- ⇒ Avoid unnecessary physical contact,
- ⇒ Do not take a child or vulnerable adult alone in a car on journeys, however short,
- ⇒ Do not take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet, unless another adult is present or another adult is aware (this may include a parent / guardian),

- ⇒ In a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, make sure that others can clearly observe you,
- ⇒ Avoid personal relationships with a child or vulnerable adult,
- ⇒ Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted,
- ⇒ Participate in the training available to you to support you in your work with children and vulnerable adults,
- ⇒ If you have any suspicions or concerns regarding possible child abuse, or if there is anything, with which you feel uncomfortable, you should raise these with a Director,
- ⇒ If a child or vulnerable adult accuses a member of staff or interviewer, you should report this immediately to a Director,
- ⇒ If you are the recipient of any complaint or accusation from a child or vulnerable adult, it is important to listen without making or implying any judgment as to the truth of the complaint or accusation,
- ⇒ If a child or vulnerable adult makes a complaint, or if there are other reasons for suspecting abuse, you should not attempt to investigate this yourself, but should report immediately to a Director,
- ⇒ Good practice includes valuing and respecting children and vulnerable adults as individuals, and the adult modeling of appropriate conduct — which would exclude bullying, aggressive behavior, racism, sectarianism or sexism,
- ⇒ Remember that those who abuse children and vulnerable adults can be of any age (even other children and vulnerable adults), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

Recruitment and selection procedures (staff)

On specific Market Research projects where staff / interviewers are required to have “supervised” (only) personal contact with children and vulnerable adults the following selection criteria, **if appropriate**, must be adhered to:

Obtain two *written* references to ascertain what contact the applicant has had with children or vulnerable adults and any concerns that have arisen. Confirm the authenticity of referees by production of referee's letterhead or company stamp.

- 1) Require the applicant to submit at least two items of evidence to confirm their identity. This might include at least one item of photographic evidence (e.g. a current passport, or a new-style UK driving license) and at least one item of address related evidence (e.g. a utility bill, financial statement). Where an applicant claims to have changed name (e.g. through marriage, adoption, statutory declaration), evidence of such a change must be sought.

- 2) The applicant must sign a declaration to declare any unspent convictions. (The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 provides that any conviction for a criminal offence will be regarded as “spent” or ignored after a “rehabilitation period” providing that it did not carry a sentence excluded from the Act and no further conviction occurred within the rehabilitation period.)

Follow the steps where there is a requirement for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-application-forms-guide-for-applicants>

This policy applies to all staff, agency workers, contractors, members of the public, suppliers etc.

Any breach of this policy will be dealt with under the QRS Disciplinary Procedure.

These policies supplement your terms of employment but are not of contractual effect. Their purpose is to explain the Company’s current policies and procedures but they may be subject to change without notice if changes are considered appropriate by the Company or if there are changes in relevant legislation.