

EveryChild Child Protection Policy and Procedures



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These Child Protection Policy and Procedure materials were drawn up specifically for EveryChild, with the assistance and advice of the NSPCC. They conform to current child protection legislation and guidance. The NSPCC cannot accept responsibility for the implementation and application of the procedures.

Child protection policy statement

EveryChild aims to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation in all that we do, in line with Article 19 of the UNCRC¹.

Part one: About EveryChild

Vision

A world where every child enjoys the right to a childhood in a safe and caring family, free from poverty, violence and exploitation.

Mission

We work worldwide to give vulnerable children who are, or risk being, separated from their family or community a safe and secure future.

- We give children the chance to grow up in loving families and communities.
- We protect children from abuse, discrimination and exploitation.
- We empower children, their families and communities to create opportunities for a better life.
- We innovate to bring about lasting, positive change in partnership with communities and governments

Approach

Our approach to our work with separated children is:

- Keeping families together
- Keeping children safe
- Getting children back into families

Child protection is a primary focus in all our programmes and planning.

In line with Article 19 of the UNCRC, EveryChild's policy states that all children have a right to protection:

'...from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child.'

EveryChild is an international development charity working in 12 countries all over the world. We protect children who have become separated from their families and we keep vulnerable families together so that children can grow up safe and secure.

According to the UNCRC, growing up in a family environment gives a child the chance to fully and harmoniously develop his/ her personality in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

EveryChild protects children who grow up without parental care. These children may have parents who are still alive, but are unable or unwilling to care for them. When every day is a struggle for food, shelter or

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

warmth, harsh social and economic conditions can force a parent to place their child in an institution (to be cared for by the state), send their child out to work, or leave them to fend for themselves.

EveryChild supports vulnerable families to prevent breakdown and separation, reintegrates separated children back into their families, and develops family-based alternatives like foster care for families who can no longer take care of their children. Above all EveryChild protects children against exploitation, violence and abuse.

Through our network of overseas offices and national staff, we identify the violated rights of children and families and operate projects that directly benefit them. Wherever possible our projects are integrated with authorities who have overall accountability for providing services for children.

Part two: EveryChild's child protection policy

Children and young people² need protection and safeguarding for many reasons. They may need protection from the effects of poverty, disadvantage, exclusion and violence. But in addition to the economic, social, and political problems affecting large numbers of children, individual children may also be at risk from specific forms of abuse by adults or other children.

In this policy EveryChild is concerned with specific incidents of maltreatment against a child who is in contact with an EveryChild representative³.

EveryChild recognises the International Standards for Child Protection⁴ which provide a benchmark for agencies and organisations working with children. We affirm our belief in the right of all children to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence as set out in the UNCRC 1989.

There are additional child protection concerns in emergencies and disasters, when families are under extreme stress. It is EveryChild's policy not to respond to emergencies unless specific criteria apply. However if EveryChild intervenes, it agrees that emergency projects will also follow this policy and procedures to protect children at risk.

It is not EveryChild's role to determine whether a child has been abused. EveryChild's task is to refer concerns of abuse to the correct authorities. If no appropriate authorities exist, organisations dealing with child protection are contacted.

This mandatory policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees and clarifies EveryChild's position on child protection. It applies to all EveryChild representatives..

It is essential that all EveryChild representatives and those coming into contact with the organization are aware of its central messages and any duties/responsibilities it places on them. The policy is publicised and promoted in EveryChild material to relevant audiences.

EveryChild offices have adopted this policy statement and set out local procedures to ensure these are relevant to their work and cultural context, whilst continuing to follow International Standards. EveryChild's independent partners are required to create, implement and monitor their own child protection policy, in line with these global standards.

² The term 'children' will be used to refer to those individuals who are under 18 years of age as recognised in the UNCRC.

³ 'Representative' means any person presenting themselves to a child because of their relationship with EveryChild. This includes staff, volunteers, board members, partners, consultants, donors, supporters including sponsors and the media.

⁴ The Standards for Child Protection form part of the Toolkit put together by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition which includes EveryChild.

Part three: What is abuse and neglect?

Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institution or community setting by those known and trusted to them or by a stranger.

Within the broad definition of child maltreatment, five subtypes are distinguished – these⁵ are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect and negligent treatment
- Sexual and commercial exploitation

These sub-categories of child maltreatment and their definitions were devised following an extensive review of different countries' definitions of child maltreatment and a 1999 WHO consultation on child abuse prevention.

Physical abuse of a child is the actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents (WHO, 1999).

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to, the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances, internet pictures and materials (WHO, 1999). The recent use of technology such as the internet by adults, to entice children to meet or participate in virtual sex, is also an abuse.

Neglect and negligent treatment is the inattention or omission by the caregiver, to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers. In addition which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm, as much as is feasible (WHO, 1999).

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can reach their full potential in the context of the society in which the child lives. There may also be acts toward the child that cause, or have a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of

⁵ Keeping Children Safe, A Toolkit for Child Protection, produced by the Keeping Children Safe Coalition, CR Rom, Tool 5, Trainers Notes.

responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, scape-goating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment (WHO, 1999).

Sexual exploitation is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another (for example child prostitution and trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation).

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development (WHO, 1999). Children being recruited into the army come under this category.

Many of EveryChild's beneficiaries are marginalised, and the following vulnerable groups are particularly open to abuse:

- Disabled children
- Children from minority ethnic groups
- Street children
- Children who live in an environment where there are mental health, alcohol or drug problems, or domestic violence
- Orphans and other vulnerable children

Different definitions and understandings about what constitutes child abuse exist in the countries where EveryChild works, and so in-country guidelines and procedures are culturally relevant and socially sensitive.

However, they never undermine the fundamental principle that children must be protected. EveryChild's actions always represent the best interests of the child, as defined by the UNCRC - they cannot be a reflection of local behaviour, if that behaviour permits abuse.

Who abuses?

Most children are loved and cherished by parents, carers and communities. Similarly most people working with children recognise they are in a special position with respect to the influence and power they wield. But EveryChild recognises it needs to be vigilant as those who want to abuse and harm children exist in all societies, cultures and organisations.

International children's organisations, such as EveryChild, provide possibilities for befriending and establishing relationships with vulnerable children and must therefore be vigilant to the possibility that a small minority of individuals may abuse their position to gain access to children.

EveryChild has projects involving the sponsorship of children. The substantial majority of child sponsors are genuine and have no ulterior motives in supporting projects that help the children they sponsor. It is EveryChild's duty to protect children from any sponsor who may want to misuse the sponsorship system. The protection applies to sponsor and other representative visits to projects, and to defining what is appropriate for sponsors and all other EveryChild representatives in the areas of behaviour, correspondence, gifts and visual information⁶.

EveryChild recognizes that children are also vulnerable to abuse by other children.

⁶ Sponsorship Visit Policy.

Part four: Procedures

The responsibility for managing this policy lies with the Director of Corporate Services and the Global Programmes Director, supported by the Chief Executive, all based in London.

Every office and partner organisation must have a designated person(s) with responsibility for the implementation of the child protection guidelines and procedures in their programme and office(s).

The contact goes from the designated person(s) in the field, to the Child Protection Committee in London via the Country Director. Or it may go directly to the Child Protection Committee in London, according to the flow chart⁷. The Child Protection Committee will refer concerns and make recommendations to the Directors' Management Team. Any final decision lies with the Directors Management Team and the Chief Executive.

All information relating to concerns about abuse by EveryChild representatives must be sent and/or copied to the Child Protection Committee so that all incidents are recorded. This information will be kept securely and confidentiality and will be respected. Confidentiality will only be breached if and when it is in the best interests of a child.

A simple Referral Form⁸, available in the local languages of the country programmes, will enable referral to the Child Protection Committee in London. The form will be discussed with users (including children and their parents/carers). This will be a participative exercise in line with EveryChild's child rights-based approach. The form must be emailed or faxed to the relevant London directors within 12 hours of any concern being raised.

The interests of the child are of paramount concern and any urgent medical needs should be addressed as a priority. Any serious concerns about a child's welfare in a country programme where no specific allegation is made will be referred to the Country Director who will communicate this information to the Child Protection Committee. This applies to country programmes where project workers may come across families where children are being maltreated.

Any child protection concerns regarding an EveryChild representative staff must be communicated to the London office. Concerns relating to external parties will be referred, reported and managed according to national legislation. In the UK, all concerns should be referred to local social services and/or police. The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (0808 800 5000) can also be called in situations where some external advice or guidance is needed. The best interests of the child should always be the overriding concern.

Details of contacts for the police and local social services departments are available in the London office and kept by the relevant directors. Similar local information on reporting is available in the field.

EveryChild aims to create a safe organisation for children, but also to keep child protection concerns proportionate to the real risks to children. All complaints received are recorded and kept safely in London and in-country. Confidentiality will be respected in all circumstances except in instances where it is necessary to protect the best interests of a child.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently if appropriate.

⁷ See page 9 for flow chart

⁸ See page 10 for Referral Form.

Part five: Prevention

Recruitment

EveryChild strives to ensure that it applies the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies across the organization as laid out in the EveryChild Staff Policies and Procedures. Candidates are checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of child protection. Partner offices are required to have robust child protection recruitment procedures as set out in the partnership agreement.

Safeguarding checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), forms an important part of our recruitment policy and covers all those representatives that we have an employment relationship with. If police checks are impossible, other checks are put into practice and noted. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases.

Criminal Records Disclosures are completed for all Trustees and Disclosure Scotland or police checks are be completed where possible for employees, and when sponsors and other visitors wish to visit children's projects overseas or are contracted to work there. The Overseas Visit Agreement Form details requirements for all sponsors and other visitors to projects.

Duty of Care

EveryChild takes its duty of care for children seriously and aims to ensure that all our programmes, including child sponsorship projects, comply with child protection policies.

Written material and visual images used by EveryChild and all representative visitors are checked as being appropriate and not denigrating for any child. Photographs, films of children and websites must show respect for children, be in their best interest and conform to EveryChild's policy on 'Use of Visual Images'. Information generated from interviewing children is in accordance with the 'Interviewing Children Guidelines'.

Part six: Codes of values and behaviour

EveryChild's 'Values and Behaviours' and 'Code of Conduct' help build a safe organisation. Through defining what is and is not acceptable behaviour, good practice can be promoted and opportunities for abuse minimised (please refer to the EveryChild Staff Policies and Procedures).

Programmes that implement projects for children, families and communities, including child sponsorship projects, must be implemented in a safe environment.

EveryChild's Staff Policies and Procedures have information on EveryChild's Values and Behaviours, Code of Conduct, whistle blowing, disciplinary procedures, grievance procedure, harassment policy, and equal opportunities.

In addition, EveryChild adheres to the Core Principles of the United Nation's Task Force on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises 2002. These apply to implementing projects for children, families and communities and apply irrespective of whether there is an emergency situation or not.

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by project workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. A mistaken belief about a child's age is not accepted as a defence.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour are prohibited.
- Sexual relationships between project workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships would undermine the integrity of work to help vulnerable and excluded children.
- Where a project worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether in the same organisation or not, s/he must report such concerns in accordance with the system and procedures in place.

Part seven: Support, communication, training and implementation

Child abuse is a difficult and emotional subject for the victim, as well as the staff dealing with the issue. EveryChild supports staff who disclose abuse, refer concerns or are involved when an incident occurs⁹

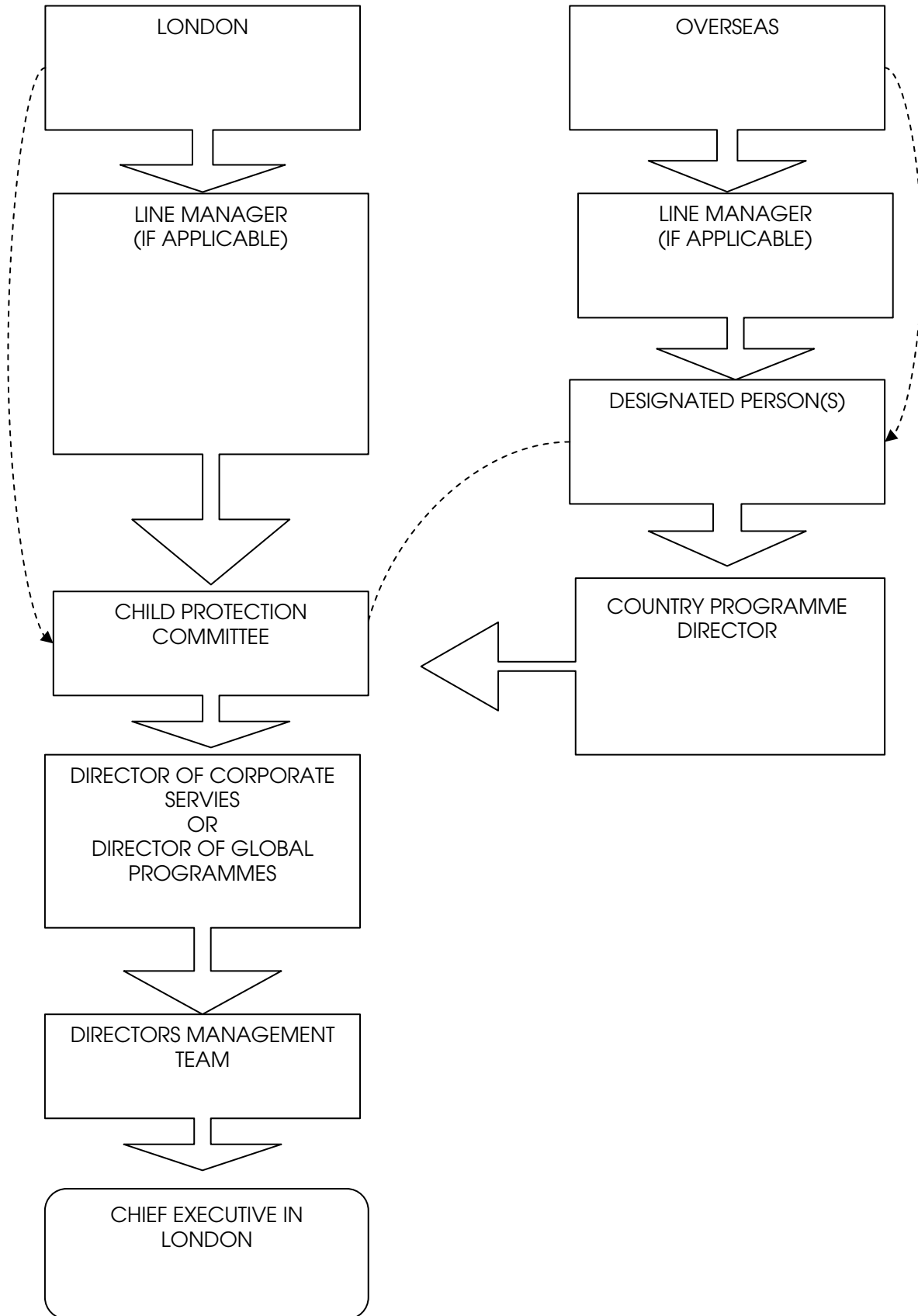
All staff receive child protection training to help them understand why it is necessary to protect children and to be fully aware of the procedure for reporting concerns¹⁰.

EveryChild's child protection policy has recently been reviewed to accommodate the new organisational focus, and is monitored to check that all safeguards are in place, and that the policy is being properly implemented. Furthermore, information about EveryChild's commitment to keeping children safe is openly displayed and made widely available.

⁹ Refer to Whistle Blowing Policy

¹⁰ Refer to the Keeping Children Safe Toolkit training exercises.

Child Protection Procedures Flow Chart



Example of Child Protection Referral Form

The child referral form can be found on the intranet

EveryChild Referral Form

About YOU

Your name and email address:

Your relationship to EveryChild:

Your relationship to the child concerned- if relevant:

About THE CHILD/ CHILDREN

Name of Child: _____

Age and Date of Birth of child: _____

Who does the child live with? _____

Address/ place of residence (and telephone no. if available): _____

About YOUR CONCERN

Are you reporting your own concern or passing on those of someone else? Give details:

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns (include dates and times of any specific incidents):

Observations made by you: Physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

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

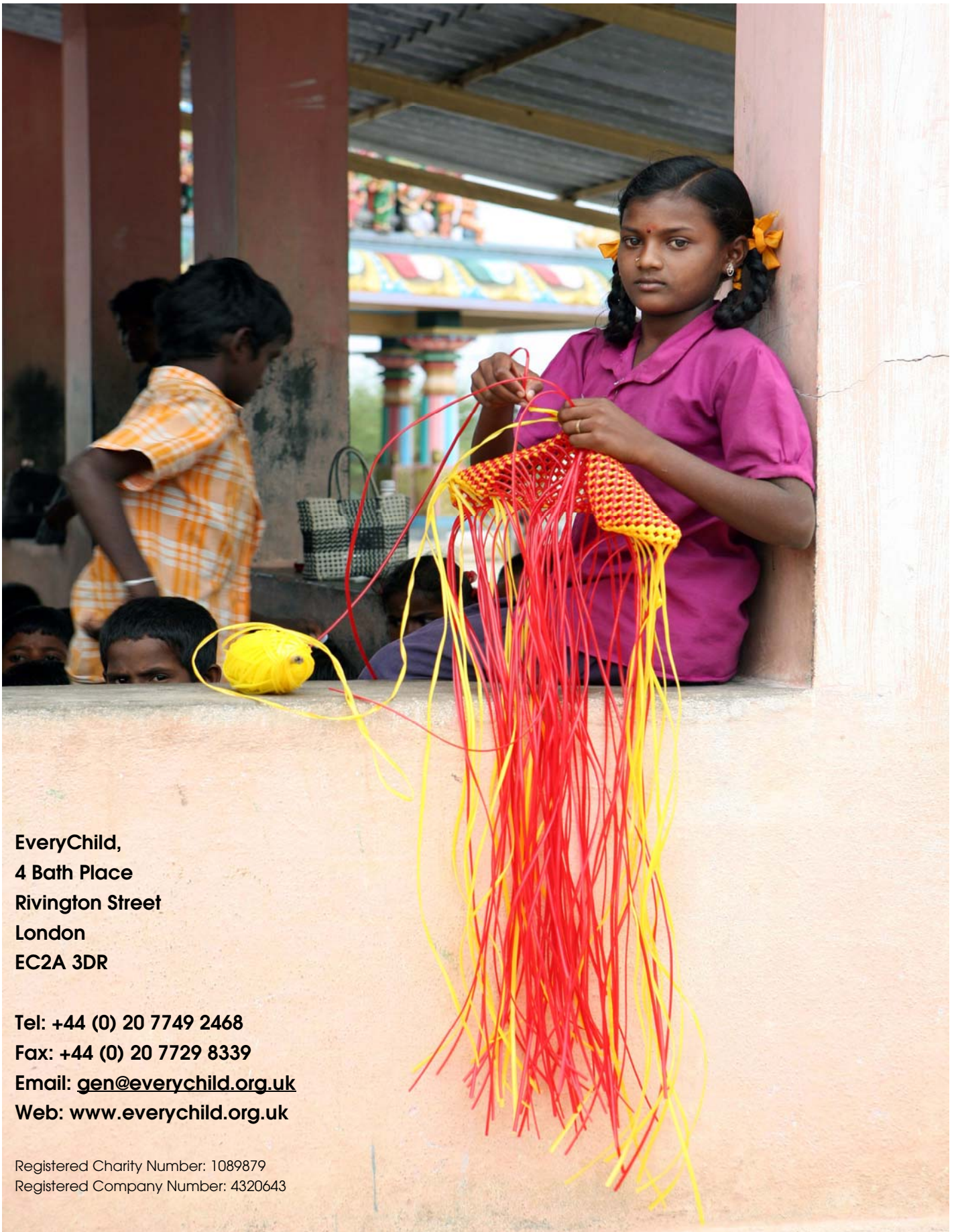
Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so give details:

Have you consulted a government department or any other agency, or reported this to anyone else? Give details (name of person, organisation, date and time):

Does the child require any medical attention?

Signature

Date



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