

<b>Approved</b>	<b>18/06/25</b>
<b>Review Frequency</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Effective from Date</b>	<b>18/06/25</b>
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>NEW</b>
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>17/06/26</b>
<b>Trustee Approval</b>	<b>18/06/25</b>
<b>Owner</b>	<b>Meg Thomas – Designated Safeguarding Officer</b>
<b>Executive Lead</b>	<b>Meg Thomas – Deputy CEO</b>

## 1. Background

Forces Children Scotland is committed to the protection of everyone we come into contact with through our services. Our mission is to improve the interests and wellbeing of children, young people, young adults, their families and communities. At all times, every person involved with Forces Children Scotland should be and feel supported, protected and safe from harm.

As a relationship-based organisation, those we work with may take the opportunity to share information about a harmful experience or incident involving an adult. This may happen be in relation to themselves or another adult. It may in a direct way through verbal disclosure, or indirectly through play or demeanour or there may be physical evidence of neglect or apparent injury, which is noted by a member of staff. Forces Children Scotland considers it the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of everyone with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

## 2. Purpose and application of Policy

Forces Children Scotland are fully accountable for ensuring appropriate actions are taken by us in order to safeguard anyone who uses our services. This may also include ensuring our partner agencies have taken appropriate actions.

This policy will apply to everyone over the age of 18. For any concerns relating to a young person aged 17 years or younger, please refer to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to set out what actions are required of all staff and volunteers of Forces Children Scotland when dealing with adult protection and to ensure effective links are made into Local Authority Adult Protection Procedures.

This policy:

- a) applies to all adults including the Board of Trustees, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of our organisation with young adults;
- b) the expectation for all “at risk” adults involved with Forces Children Scotland is that they are empowered to be free from any preventable harm or exploitation. They are enabled to make their own choices about their lives and to live independently as their personal circumstances may permit; and

- c) aims to ensure that all young adults have a positive and enjoyable experience, in a safe and child centred environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in Forces Children Scotland and other activities.
- d) may apply to parents, whereby the nature of being from the armed forces or as a former serving member, may expose them to violence and/or abuse, self-harm or may be a danger to others.
- e) recognises that the protection of adults at risk of harm is placed above all other operating principles and supersedes the principle of confidentiality and consent.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

We will seek to safeguard vulnerable adults by:

- ensuring a culture of respecting, listening to and engaging in dialogue with them.
- responding to all allegations and concerns, swiftly and appropriately.
- following safer recruitment processes at all times for all roles.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- providing effective management for staff through supervision, support and training.
- following appropriate whistle blowing procedures and ensuring a culture that enables issues about the protection of children to be addressed.
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer and providing Education, Training and Support to that person.
- monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy.

It is essential that everyone is aware of their duties concerning safeguarding and ensure that:

- their behaviour is appropriate at all times.
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of young adults.
- they follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse or exploitation.
- they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.
- in every respect, the relationships they form are appropriate.
- the law and statutory guidance concerning adult protection and safeguarding is complied with.
- Forces Children Scotland recognises the statutory responsibility of Local Authority Social Work and Police Scotland to ensure the welfare of vulnerable adults, and it is committed to complying with Local Area Adult Protection Procedures.
- all staff and volunteers comply with the child protection and safeguarding policy.

It is not the role or responsibility of Forces Children Scotland to investigate allegations of harm or risk of harm. Disclosures or concerns arising out of all aspects of our work will be treated the same and are all covered by the policy.

**Whistleblowing** – If you are concerned of a wrongdoing or that appropriate action has not been taken to deal with a safeguarding concern, then this is when whistleblowing should take place. This is sometimes referred to as ‘making a disclosure’ or ‘blowing the whistle’. The wrongdoing will typically (although not necessarily) be something you have witnessed at work. Please see Forces Children’s Scotland’s Whistleblowing Policy for further information.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure all people working with vulnerable adults are fully aware of what is required of them within the guidelines of the Forces Children Scotland Adult Protection Policy

- Ensure all those working with children and vulnerable adults are recruited in accordance with Forces Children Scotland’s Safe Recruitment procedures. (See page 64 of the Organisational Handbook.)
- Be the organisational decision maker on any issues concerning the well-being of service users.
- Act as adviser, when required, to the Forces Children Scotland Board of Trustees on matters of policy & procedures related to Safeguarding and Recruitment
- Ensure that all incidents are correctly recorded and reported in accordance with Forces Children Scotland policy and procedures

Trustee Safeguarding officer will:

- Support the Designated Safeguarding officer
- Provide cover for both the Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy Safeguarding Officer when they are on leave.
- Take on the responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer in their absence to ensure any concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.
- Be responsible for ensuring all members of the Board of Trustees have relevant Safeguarding training.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Meg Thomas – Deputy CEO

07831 336354

[Meg.thomas@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk](mailto:Meg.thomas@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk)

**Deputy Safeguarding Officer**

Nina Collins – Participation Manager

[Nina.collins@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk](mailto:Nina.collins@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk)

**Trustee Safeguarding officer**

Gordon Rae - Trustee

Phone number available on request

[Gordon.rae@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk](mailto:Gordon.rae@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk)

**Deputy Trustee Safeguarding officer**

Sarah Dickie - Trustee

Phone number available on request

[Sarah.Dickie@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.Dickie@forceschildrenscotland.org.uk)

#### **4. Guidance and Legislation**

In legal terms, in Scotland vulnerable adults are classed as those aged 16 and above. For our purposes, vulnerable adults are those aged 18 and older, since our child protection and safeguarding policy covers all those aged up to 18.

For the avoidance of doubt, the policy and procedures are the same regardless of whether we are supporting a young adult, or the vulnerable adult is a parent of a child or young adult involved with Forces Children Scotland.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act define “adults at risk” as adults aged 16 or over who:

- a) are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests,
- b) are at risk of harm, and
- c) because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

It is the responsibility of adult protection agencies such as Social Work Services and the Police to make enquiries (proactive and reactive) and to carry out appropriate investigations in order to establish:

- whether or not an adult is at risk from harm or suspected harm; and, if so,
- which, if any, of the protective measures available in terms of the legislation are most appropriate to an adult at risk’s individual circumstances?

The [Social Work \(Scotland\) Act 1968](#) provides the primary mandate for social work intervention in Scotland.

## 5. Recognition and reporting

Harm can be a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an adult. It can take the form of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or domestic abuse, acts of neglect or omission, financial and material abuse and the withholding of information. The abuse can be multiple, involving some or all of the above.

These signs do not necessarily mean that an adult is being abused. There may well be other reasons for changes in a person’s behaviour such as a bereavement or relationship problems between parents/carers. It is not your role to assess whether signs are related to abuse or not, but it is your duty to report the concern immediately.

## 6. Supporting the vulnerable adult

If you are concerned about the welfare of a young adult, including a change in demeanour or an injury which could indicate abuse or there is a concern, complaint or allegation about an adult or yourself, inside or outside Forces Children Scotland, it is your duty to report the concern. **Do not delay in reporting your concerns.**

Do:

- Take all disclosures seriously and listen carefully, in a calm and compassionate way;
- Reassure the person that you will work with them to be safe
- Affirm the feelings as expressed by them
- You may wish to use the acronym ‘TED’ as a reminder that the young adult can be encouraged to ‘Tell’, ‘Explain’ and ‘Describe’ the concern.
- If it is necessary to seek further clarification, you should keep to open questions such as What? When? Who? How? Where? wherever possible. If closed questions are needed for clarification,

move as quickly as possible back to open questions. Avoid asking leading questions, however, it is appropriate to ask open/clarifying questions or ask the child if there is anything else they would like to share. Remember your role is not to investigate.

- Approach this situation with a curious attitude
- Write careful notes of what was said using the actual words
- Include the time and date and full names of those involved
- Make sure that there is no immediate risk to their welfare and call the appropriate emergency services if there is
- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will support you to take steps to pass the information on to the relevant person or organisation who will investigate the concerns and for their awareness.
- If you are unhappy with the response from the Designated Safeguarding Officer, you should contact the local Social Work Services Office and outline your concerns and the basis for them.

Do not:

- Promise confidentiality
- Accept any retraction or backtracking from an individual. If it has been said, it needs to be reported
- Show disbelief
- Be judgmental
- Introduce personal or third-party experiences of abuse
- Display strong emotions
- Make assumptions
- Investigate the disclosure. This is to avoid contamination of evidence gained in any subsequent investigation undertaken by Police and/or Social Services and to ensure that the young adult is not placed in the distressing position of having to repeat their story over and over again.

NOTE: You should follow the above procedure for all instances of suspected abuse, for example where you become aware of

- Abuse by another service user
- Abuse by someone from within the community (family or friend)
- Abuse by a member of staff.

DO NOT discuss this further with any parent/carer/helper – you could make the situation worse.

Our role is to refer, not to investigate.

Further information on what may constitute a concerning change in demeanour or non-accidental injury can be found at the end of this policy.

It is important that employees and those involved with the vulnerable adult act in a supportive manner.

### **Confidentiality**

In establishing an initial contract with the young adult, the limits of confidentiality must be explained, i.e. that Forces Children Scotland staff and volunteers will need to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and external agencies if there are concerns about their safety. This is an important part of the contract with the young adult at the outset of the work.

If a young adult may be at risk of harm, this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with Forces Children Scotland have a responsibility to act to make sure that a young adult whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. The young adult will be informed about action taken, as is assessed as appropriate to the nature of the concern.

### **Reporting**

All cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously and the appropriate Local Authority Social Work Services Office should be contacted immediately. The concerns should be clearly stated including the basis for them. When the local office is closed, the Local Authority Emergency Social Work Service should be alerted. All telephone calls should be followed up in writing within 48 hours using the Forces Children Scotland "Incident Reporting form" (see appendix).

### **What happens next?**

It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the young adult. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a vulnerable adult, the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.

The investigating Social Worker / Police Officer may require speaking to the person with whom the concerns originated. You should co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

Remain in contact with the Social Worker / Policy Officer until the matter is resolved to everyone's satisfaction. The response from the Social Work Office should be clearly documented in the young adult's record.

If you are unhappy with the response from Social Work Services, you can contact Police Scotland and outline your concerns to them.

### **What to do in an Emergency**

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a vulnerable adult, contact Police Scotland **immediately**. Do not delay, as this could result in serious injury to them or others.

## **7. Disputes, Challenges or Concerns**

If, at any stage, there is a disagreement or concern about a safeguarding case, Forces Children Scotland staff must consult the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Examples of such disagreements or concerns are:

- Concerns that the school or other organisation has not fulfilled its duties in dealing with a safeguarding concern.
- Concerns about a delay in a case being progressed by the external agency.
- Lack of feedback from an agency about the outcome of a referral.
- Concerns about the response of the local authority to a referral by another agency.
- Differences of opinion within the Forces Children Scotland team about a case.
- Concerns expressed by another agency about the manner in which Forces Children Scotland has handled an adult protection issue.
- Concerns that a member of staff or volunteer from Forces Children Scotland has not followed the policy.

The relevant Safeguarding Policy or Partnership Agreement should describe the mediation procedures which are to be used in circumstances where there is disagreement concerning actions taken/not taken relating to a safeguarding concern.

Forces Children Scotland reserves the right to make a referral to statutory agencies if the other agency is reluctant to do this, and if this is considered to be in the adult's best interests. This is written into our partnership agreement with schools and other agencies. In such circumstances, there must be a discussion involving the staff member, Designated Safeguarding Officer, CEO and, if appropriate, a member of MOD Families and Safeguarding Team.

## **8. Managing Allegations against Staff or Volunteers**

If you have observed a member of Forces Children Scotland acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned, and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer outlining your concerns and the basis for them. If the concerns involve the Designated Safeguarding Officer, this should be reported to the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

As a charity working with children, young adults and families, Forces Children Scotland has a duty to ensure steps are taken to investigate an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. This may involve the use of the organisations disciplinary procedures and / or a referral to Social Work Services / Police.

Where an allegation has been substantiated, Forces Children Scotland equally has a wider duty to ensure that the necessary authorities are informed of concerns about situations where a member of staff or volunteer has harmed a young adult, placed them at risk of harm, or is unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Forces Children Scotland therefore takes responsibility for making the required referrals, to external regulatory bodies such as but not limited to PVG (Scotland)

Where you have general welfare concerns about a vulnerable adults that are below three point test threshold you should:

- Discuss your concerns with your line manager during regular supervision

- Liaise with other agencies that are working with the young adult where appropriate and in consultation with the DSO
- Record your actions and note your concern on the chronology of significant events. You should review general welfare concerns periodically, to see whether the build-up of concerns is significant enough to pass on to Social Work Services or another agency where appropriate

**Appendix: 1**  
**Safeguarding Policy Incident Report Form**

**Appendix: 2**  
**Safeguarding Process - Lamplight**

Once informed of a safeguarding concern:

1. Staff to inform manager of concern via phone call and/or email.
2. Staff to flag safeguarding concern on the Safeguarding tab of the YP record in Lamplight (this flags it at the top of the profile as Current Concern: Yes)
3. Manager confirms action to be taken by member of staff and themselves.
4. School/partner organisation informed of concern.
5. School/partner organisation informs staff what steps will be taken and timelines for action.
6. Staff to create Safeguarding work record for the YP in Lamplight
7. Manager informs Safeguarding Lead by phone/email - by sending YP Lamplight record ID.
8. Safeguarding Lead will review document on LL
9. Manager to update Safeguarding log with relevant information.
  - a. Safeguarding Log is held in closed drive accessible only to Managers.
10. Other staff currently working with YP to be notified concern has been raised and given further information where appropriate.

**Appendix: 3**

**Types of harm which may constitute an adult protection concern**

**Physical Abuse** - involving actual or attempted injury to an adult defined as at risk. For example:

- Physical assault by punching, pushing, slapping, tying down, giving food or medication forcibly, or denial of medication
- Use of medication other than as prescribed
- Inappropriate restraint
- Non-accidental injuries.

**Emotional/Psychological Abuse** - resulting in mental distress to the adult at risk. For example:

- Excessive shouting, bullying, humiliation
- Manipulation of, or the prevention of access to, services that would be of benefit to the adult
- Isolation or sensory deprivation
- Denigration of culture or religion

**Financial or Material Abuse** - involving the exploitation of resources and property belonging to the adult at risk. For example:

- Theft or fraud
- Misuse of money, property or resources without the informed consent of the adult at risk.

**Sexual Abuse** - involving activity of a sexual nature where the adult at risk cannot or does not give consent. For example:

- Incest
- Rape
- Acts of gross indecency
- Inappropriate touching or verbal or physical sexual harassment.

**Neglect and acts of omission by others charged with the care of the adult, including ignoring medical or physical care needs.** For example:

- Failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services
- Withholding of the necessities of life such as nutrition, appropriate heating, etc.

**Exploitation** - the deliberate targeting of vulnerable adults for personal benefit.

**Information abuse** - deliberately giving erroneous information or withholding information.