

Scottish Women's Institutes (SWI)
Working with Children and Young People

Safeguarding Guidance – for members only

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Introduction

Ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people is a paramount concern for the SWI. The SWI Safeguarding Guidance provides a comprehensive framework to protect children and young people from harm, abuse, and exploitation while participating in any SWI activities. This guidance outlines essential policies, procedures, and best practices designed to create a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. By adhering to these guidelines, members demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding. This proactive approach ensures the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of participants. The SWI Safeguarding Guidance serves as an invaluable resource, helping members to not only meet legal obligations but also to adopt trust and confidence among children, young people, their families, and the wider community.

This guidance applies to all members, staff, volunteers, and partners involved in SWI activities. It covers all interactions with children and young people, both in person and online, during any organised event, programme, or initiative under the SWI umbrella. The document provides clear instructions for recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns, ensuring a consistent and effective approach across the membership.

To ensure clarity and common understanding, the following definitions are used throughout this document:

- **Children and Young People:** Individuals under the age of 18 years.
- **Safeguarding:** Actions taken to promote the welfare of young people and protect them from harm.
- **Abuse:** Any action that intentionally harms or poses a risk of harm to a young person, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect.
- **Exploitation:** The act of treating someone unfairly to benefit from their work or resources.

Safeguarding Policy

We are women supporting women to live their best lives by experiencing lifelong learning, fun and lasting friendships.

We celebrate our traditional Scottish heritage and crafts and embrace new adventures. While lifelong learning is at the heart of everything we do, lasting friendships and improved confidence are often wonderful results!

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people from any harm while engaging in SWI activities.
- To protect volunteers, as well as children, young people, and their families, through the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
- This policy applies to any SWI member working with children and young people.

Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people in Scotland.

Supporting documents:

Ensure that the listed supporting documents are bulleted for clarity,

- Role of child protection lead
- Applying for PVG certificate
- Behaviours
- Reporting Procedures
- Preventative measures
- Online resources
- Policy acknowledgement
- Risk assessment

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children and young people is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children and young people who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for volunteers
- providing effective management for volunteers through supervision and support to ensure all know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns

Role of Child Protection Lead

Purpose of the role

1. To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are in place at _____ SWI
2. To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in _____ SWI's activities.

Duties and responsibilities

3. Take a lead role in adhering to _____ SWI's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures
4. Take a lead role in implementing _____ SWI's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning children and young people who take part in _____ SWI's activities are responded to appropriately.
5. Make sure that everyone volunteering with or for children and young people at _____ SWI understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
6. Make sure children and young people who are involved in activities at _____ SWI and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.
7. Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in _____ SWI's activities.
8. Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with _____ SWI may present a risk to children or young people.

This includes:

- a. assessing and clarifying the information
- b. making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate
- c. consulting with and informing the relevant members of the SWI management
- d. following the SWI safeguarding policy and procedures.

9. Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as:
 - a. the local authority child protection services
 - b. the police. This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.

10. Consult the NSPCC Helpline when support is needed, by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

11. Store and retain child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

Contact details:

Nominated child protection lead:

Name:

Phone:

Email:.....

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Certificate (PVG)

[Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services](#) facilitate access to disclosure checks for qualifying organisations within the voluntary sector. They provide disclosure checks to volunteers at no cost to the organisation.

If you want to apply for a PVG, please visit [Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services](#) who have a new process in place, or:

Follow the following steps:

Step 1: Enrol your organisation or group [HERE](#): In order to enrol, you must:

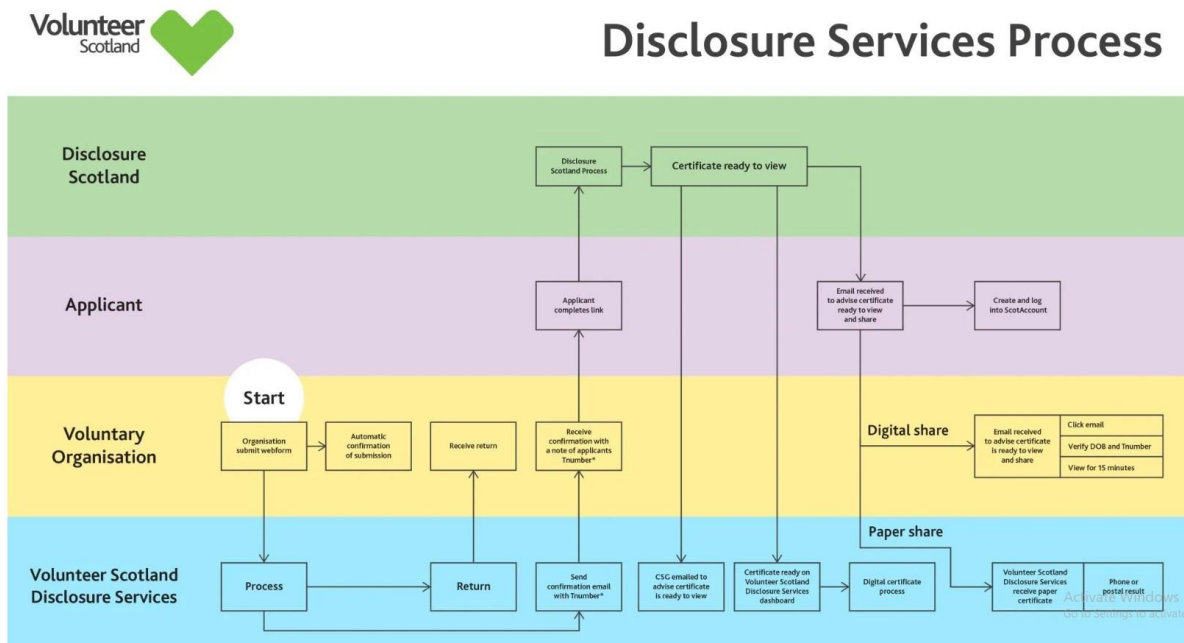
- be a qualifying voluntary organisation e.g. registered charity or a not-for-profit organisation
- provide a service to children and young people and / or protected adults
- carry out work in Scotland

Step 2: Follow the online application process [HERE](#)

Step 3: Attend any training [HERE](#)

Step 4: Make use of guidance and resources [HERE](#)

Below is an easy guide to the Disclosure Services process:



Behaviour Code for Volunteers

The behaviour code outlines the conduct that _____ SWI expects from all our volunteers. The behaviour code is there to help us protect children and young people from abuse. It has been informed by the views of children and young people.

_____ SWI is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow the behaviour code, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of volunteers

In your role at _____ SWI you are acting in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. As a role model to young people, you are expected to act appropriately. We expect people who take part in our services to always display appropriate behaviour.

Responsibility of volunteers

- prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
- ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and acting when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing and online safety
- always staying within the law
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to safeguarding lead
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures - this includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Respecting children and young people

You should:

- always listen to and respect children and young people
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible - if you need to break confidentiality to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

Diversity and inclusion

You should:

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Appropriate relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid showing favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people - if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults - if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other volunteers know where you and the child are
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible - unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely.

Inappropriate behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive - including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people

- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

Upholding this code of behaviour

You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you.

If you have behaved inappropriately, depending on the seriousness of the situation, you might be asked to leave the group. We might also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services. If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to the safeguarding lead. If necessary, you should follow our whistleblowing procedure and safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Behaviour Code for Children and Young People

This behaviour code is here to make sure everyone who takes part in SWI's activities knows what is expected of them and feels safe, respected and valued.

_____ SWI must make sure that everyone taking part in activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow the behaviour code, and that they understand what will happen if there is inappropriate behaviour. We expect people who take part in our activities to always display appropriate behaviour.

This behaviour code aims to:

- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- encourage cooperation, honesty, fairness and respect
- create an environment where your self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence will grow
- encourage you to recognise and respect the rights of others encourage you to take responsibility for your own behaviour
- help resolve conflicts and make it clear what will happen if you decide not to follow the code.

Do's and don'ts for children and young people

You should:

- be supportive and kind to others
- be friendly
- listen to others
- be helpful
- have good manners
- treat everyone with respect
- take responsibility for your own behaviour
- talk to _____ about anything that worries or concerns you
- follow this behaviour code and other rules (including the law)
- join in and have fun!

You shouldn't:

- be disrespectful to anyone else
- bully other people
- behave in a way that could be intimidating
- be abusive towards anyone.

What happens if I do not to follow the behaviour code?

This behaviour code is part of our process for making sure everyone who takes part in our activities gets the support they need.

Minor or first-time incident

If you behave in a way that doesn't follow our behaviour code, our volunteers will remind you about it and ask you to change your behaviour. This gives you the chance to think and to plan how you could behave differently, with support from volunteers.

Formal warning

If you continue not to follow the behaviour code after your first reminder, or if your behaviour is more serious, you will be given a formal warning by the person running your activity. They will make a record about what happened and inform your parents or carers if it is appropriate. They will also talk with you about what happened and agree what support you need to improve your behaviour in the future. We might also decide that further steps should be taken, such as restricting you from taking part in some activities.

Reporting Procedures

Allegations Against Volunteers

Any allegation or concern that an employee or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly, regardless of where the alleged incident took place.

Depending on the situation, an appropriate response may involve:

- the police investigating a possible criminal offence
- your local child protection services making enquiries and/or assessing whether a child needs support
- your organisation following the relevant disciplinary procedures with individuals concerned.

Responding to concerns and allegations

_____ SWI will take seriously any concerns raised about volunteers, regardless of who the person is or how long they've been involved with the organisation.

No attempt will be made to investigate the matter, but the facts of the case will be gathered, and written records will be kept.

If an allegation is made that a staff member or volunteer has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

This will be reported **immediately** to the relevant agencies (for example the [NSPCC Helpline](#) on [0808 800 5000](tel:0808 800 5000) or help@nspcc.org.uk, local child protection services or the police).

The NSPCC Helpline can help when we're not sure if a situation needs a safeguarding response.

Resignations

If someone resigns from their post or refuses to cooperate with the process, this must not prevent an allegation being followed up.

Confidentiality and support

Every effort must be made to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Everyone involved in the investigation must understand this.

The children and young people involved, their parents or carers, and individuals who have had an allegation made against them will be supported. This includes:

- telling parents or carers and the employee or volunteer concerned about the allegation as soon as possible (if this does not place any child or young person at further risk of harm)
- telling them how you are going to manage the allegation
- keeping everyone informed about the progress and outcomes of the case.

Record keeping

Records will be kept of:

- all allegations that have been made
- details of how allegations have been followed up and investigated
- decisions made about the allegation and actions taken.

Referral

Guidance on how and when to refer can be found on [NSPCC website](#).

Whistleblowing Guidelines

If you have any concerns about a child always talk to your organisational safeguarding lead first.

If you're concerned about how child protection issues are handled in your own, or another, organisation you can share your concerns by whistleblowing.

Whistleblowing is when someone reports wrongdoing on the basis that it is in the public interest for the wrongdoing to be brought to light. This is usually something they've seen at work but not always. The wrongdoing might have happened in the past, be happening now, or be something the whistleblower is concerned may happen soon.

NSPCC has a dedicated Whistleblowing Advice Line. You can use it to get free advice and support. Contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line if:

- your or another organisation doesn't have clear safeguarding procedures to follow
- concerns aren't dealt with properly or may be covered up
- a concern that was raised hasn't been acted upon
- you're worried about being treated unfairly.

You can contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line on:

- [0800 028 0285](tel:08000280285)
- help@nspcc.org.uk

Adult to Child Supervision Ratio

There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors.

We recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. We recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children and young people safe:

- **8 - 12 years** - one adult to eight children/young people
- **13 - 18 years** - one adult to ten children/young people

Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, we may need to have more adults than the minimum. This will be identified in activity specific risk assessments.

You should have at least two adults present, even with smaller groups. At least one of these will have a PVG Certificate although it is advisable for all involved adults to apply for a PVG certificate. One adult will be identified as a First Aider.

If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

Photography Policy

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- protect children and young people who take part in _____ SWI services, events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken
- set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs/videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities
- to ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people. This policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers and other adults associated with the _____ SWI

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people in Scotland.

We believe that:

children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to take, share and use images of safely.

We recognise that:

- sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- the welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount
- children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- consent to take images is only meaningful when children and young people, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- there are potential risks associated with sharing images of children and young people online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- always asking for **written consent** from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published

- changing the names of children and young people whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children and young people and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children and young people will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by: only using images of children and young people in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary); using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

Anti Bullying Policy

The purpose of this policy is:

- to prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities
- to make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- to provide information to all volunteers, children, young people and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying

What is bullying?

- Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is repeated. It is intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and operate in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- bullying causes real distress and affects a person's health and development
- in some instances, bullying can cause significant harm
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in our organisation is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- providing support and for all volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place.

Responding to bullying

We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystanders
- our organisation.

We will review the plan we have developed to address any incidents of bullying at regular intervals, to ensure that the problem has been resolved in the long term.

Online Resources

SWI Data Protection

<https://www.theswi.org.uk/data-policy.html>

SWI Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

<https://www.theswi.org.uk/Policy%20Equality,%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion.pdf>

NSPCC Listening poster

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1638/let-children-know-listening-poster-english.pdf>

PVG Application Process

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/disclosure-services/our-services>

OSCR – Safeguarding

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/safeguarding-guidance-keeping-vulnerable-beneficiaries-safe/what-is-safeguarding/>

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Policy Acknowledgement

I _____ of _____ SWI have received, read and understand the enclosed policies.

I acknowledge that they form the guidelines for my volunteering role with the Children and Young People. (Please tick).

- Safeguarding Policy
- PVG
- Child Protection lead
- Behaviours
- Reporting procedures
- Preventative Measures
- Online Resources

Name:

Telephone:

Date:

Federation/Institute:

RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE FOR _____SWI			
Subject of Risk Assessment			
Task/Activity			
Assessor		Location of Assessment	

Risk Rating Matrix (RR)	Likelihood (L)		
Severity	Certain or near certain to occur (High)	Reasonably likely to occur (Medium)	Unlikely to occur (Low)
Fatality; major injury or illness causing long term disability (High)	HIGH (H)	HIGH (H)	MEDIUM (M)
Injury or illness causing short term disability (Medium)	HIGH (H)	MEDIUM (M)	LOW (L)
Other injury or illness (Low)	MEDIUM (M)	LOW (L)	LOW (L)

Ref	Hazards	Who is at risk?	Controls in place	L	M	H	Adequately controlled?
1.	Setting up	All present					
2.	Assembling Furniture	All present					
3.	Trip Hazards	All present					

Ref	Hazards	Who is at risk?	Controls in place	L	M	H	Adequately controlled?
4.	Fire, Smoke, Panic	All present					
5.	Toilet facilities	All present					
6.	Spillages	All present					
7.	Hot water/Drinks	All present					
8.	Food Allergies	All present					
9.	Minor Accidents	All present					
10.	Equipment for activities	Organising committee					
11.	Volunteer to young people ratio	Young people, Volunteers					
12.	Using Scissors	Young people, Volunteers					
13.	Paints/glues/clay	Young people, Volunteers If ingested or if harmful substances get on skin or in eyes					
14.	Other materials	Young people, Volunteers					

Ref	Hazards	Who is at risk?	Controls in place	L	M	H	Adequately controlled?
15.	Electrical Equipment	Young people, Volunteers					
16	Glue Gun	Young people, Volunteers					
17.	Food Preparation	Young people, Volunteers					

Date of Assessment		Signature	
Review date	Annually		