

SWI Policy on Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

1. Introduction

The Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO (SC053058) (**SWI**) is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all individuals who engage with its activities, including children, young people, and adults at risk.

This policy sets out the principles, responsibilities, and procedures designed to protect people from harm, abuse, and exploitation while participating in SWI activities, whether in person or online.

This policy supports compliance with Scottish legislation and national safeguarding guidance.

This policy may be reviewed and amended at any time by SWI. This policy is reviewed at least annually.

2. Definitions

applicable laws means all legislation, statutory guidance, and regulatory requirements governing the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk in Scotland, including but not limited to:

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- OSCR Safeguarding Guidance for Charities (2025)
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2023)
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government)

children and young people or **child/young person** means individuals under the age of 18.

adults at risk means individuals aged 18 or over who may be unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests because of disability, age, illness, or social circumstances.

safeguarding means actions taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and adults at risk and protect them from harm. Such practices include actions to protect such individuals from harm including physical, emotional, sexual and financial harm and neglect. This includes making sure appropriate policies, practices and procedures are put in place.

child protection is part of a safeguarding process and focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes child protection procedures detailing how to respond to concerns about a child.

abuse means any form of maltreatment which causes harm, or places children and young people or adults at risk at risk of harm. Abuse can be intentional or due to neglect, and it can occur within families, peer groups, online environments, intimate relationships, communities or organisational settings. Abuse may be a single incident or pattern of repeated behaviour.

exploitation means the use of power, control, manipulation or coercion to take advantage of children and young people or adults at risk for personal or financial gain.

3. Policy Statement and Scope

This policy applies to everyone who interacts with SWI (referred to as "**representatives**" in this policy) including:

- Staff of SWI - whether full-time, part-time, permanent staff and those on fixed-term contracts.
- The Board of SWI.
- Volunteers of SWI.
- Members of SWI.
- Third party suppliers and contractors of SWI.
- Charity partners of SWI (as described below).

This policy should be read alongside the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy.
- Code of Conduct Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.

4. Understanding Wellbeing

Using the "getting it right for every child" (GIRFEC) principles, the approach to considering children's/young person's wellbeing should be rights-based, strengths-based, holistic and adaptable enough to take account of the stage of development and the complexity of a child's/young person's individual life circumstances. In collaboration, with children and young people and their parent or guardian, we consider the following wellbeing indicators:

- **Safe** – an environment where a child/young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect.
- **Healthy** – having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.
- **Achieving** – being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem.
- **Nurtured** – growing, developing and being cared for in an environment which provides the physical and emotional security, compassion and warmth necessary for healthy growth and to develop resilience and a positive identity.
- **Active** – having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development.
- **Respected** – being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate.
- **Responsible** – having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.
- **Included** – having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following section explains the different levels of responsibilities related to safeguarding and child protection within SWI.

5.1 SWI representatives

All individuals representing SWI in any way have a duty to promote safeguarding and child protection. Therefore, the responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy lies with all SWI representatives.

All SWI representatives should:

- Prioritise the wellbeing of children and young people and adults at risk at all times.
- Recognise and report any concern or allegation immediately, following SWI's reporting procedures.
- Never investigate concerns themselves.
- Avoid actions which may place someone at further risk.
- Confirm in writing that you have read and understood this policy and cooperate with its processes.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment. SWI may incorporate this policy into any contract to provide services with a third party.

Failure to comply with this policy may expose SWI and/or specific individuals to substantial damage including civil and criminal sanctions, regulatory enforcement, competitive disadvantage and/or reputational harm. Because of the importance of this policy, violations of this policy by employees or volunteers may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, volunteering role or contract. If a non-employee breaches this policy, they may have their contract terminated with immediate effect and without liability to SWI. If members breach this policy, then we may require to suspend or cancel membership.

5.2 The SWI Board

The SWI Board holds the ultimate accountability for safeguarding across the organisation. Safeguarding is a regular item for discussion at board meetings.

Some of the Board's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring SWI complies with all applicable laws and guidance.
- Creating and overseeing a safeguarding culture embedded within the governance structure of SWI.
- Appointing the safeguarding lead.
- Approval and monitoring of this policy.
- Providing guidance to the SWI Federations and Institutes on safeguarding and ensuring they have their own policies.

- Ensuring compliance with charity trustees duties in accordance with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Responding to serious incidents where required.

5.3 Safeguarding Leads

The safeguarding leads are responsible for implementing SWI's safeguarding framework. Currently, the SWI safeguarding leads are Diane Cooper and Jacqui McGuire.

SWI's safeguarding lead is appointed by the Board of SWI, and may be changed from time to time by the Board.

Their duties include:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Receiving, recording, and referring information to appropriate authorities.
- Supporting volunteers to understand and follow safeguarding procedures.
- Ensuring records are maintained securely and in line with legislation.
- Liaising with child protection and adult protection services as needed.

5.4 Members

SWI works with Institutes and Federations, along with other external partner organisations.

SWI is currently made up of 28 Federations, which are unincorporated charities which operate regionally across Scotland. Each Federation is composed of multiple local Institutes, which are unincorporated community groups of members who operate locally.

Federations, Institutes and partner organisations must ensure they:

- Have their own policies that meet or exceed SWI's policy in accordance with all applicable laws.
- Ensure any relevant staff and volunteers are safely recruited, including PVG membership where required.
- Report concerns related to any joint work between SWI and the partner organisation.
- Follow SWI's requirements as set out in document entitled "Safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk - Guidance Document for SWI Federations and Institutes".

6. Our framework for safeguarding and protection

SWI believes that everyone has the right to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and young people and adults at risk by providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.

We will seek to keep people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting all participants.
- Appointing safeguarding leads at national level.
- Adopting best practice in safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Providing training and support for volunteers and members.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring PVG checks where appropriate.
- Reporting concerns promptly.
- Maintaining secure and confidential record keeping.
- Promoting equality, inclusion, and an anti-bullying culture.

Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

6.1 Safer Recruitment

SWI ensures that anyone working or volunteering with children and young people or adults at risk undergoes appropriate screening. SWI is committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting.

Where SWI becomes aware that any current staff member or volunteer may pose a risk to children and young people and adults at risk it will comply with all applicable laws and any criminal record disclosure guidance in respect of referring that individual to the authorities, where appropriate.

Disclosure Scotland/Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG)

This includes Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks through [Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services](#). All PVG records are handled in compliance with data protection requirements.

Please note, Disclosure Scotland have recently made changes – always check the website for [updated guidance](#)

6.2 Code of Conduct and Training for SWI representatives

All staff and volunteers must read and sign SWI's Code of Conduct before they are recruited. Such code shall be reviewed annually.

All SWI representatives shall ensure they:

- Comply with this policy.
- Never follow or connect with any child/young person on social media.
- Never contact any adults at risk for personal purposes (contact is permitted where required for SWI purposes only).
- Never enter into a relationship with a child/young person or adult at risk.
- Never engage in any abuse or exploitation.
- Never use inappropriate language.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments.
- Never provide any child/young person with personal contact details and never contact any child/young person for personal reasons.
- Never take pictures or films of child/young person or adult at risk on a personal device.

SWI will ensure that relevant SWI representatives are adequately trained on this policy and safeguarding measures.

All SWI representatives must complete all mandatory training when requested by SWI, and failure to complete mandatory training may be treated by us as a breach of this policy.

Our safeguarding leads complete all necessary safeguarding, PVG and GDPR courses on a regular basis.

6.3 Creating a Welcoming and Safe Environment

SWI will ensure:

- All children and young people and adults at risk are treated with respect and dignity.
- SWI does not tolerate bullying, harassment, or discrimination in any form. SWI promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion across all activities.
- All environments are safe, comfortable and private where necessary with risk assessments being completed for all activities, considering accessibility, health and safety, and safeguarding risks. (See attached event risk assessment template).
- All SWI staff and volunteers will avoid unnecessary contact with children and young people.

- All children and young people are provided with appropriate supervision with appropriate adult-to-participant ratios being maintained.
- Relevant emergency contact details are obtained from children and young people and adults at risk.
- Any relevant medical information has been obtained, and suitable arrangements have been made to accommodate the child/young person and adults at risk.

6.4 Personal Data and Images

- We store and use any data obtained, including that which relates to children and young people and adults at risk, in accordance with this policy and UK data protection legislation.
- Any information shared shall only be shared in line with UK data protection legislation.
- SWI shall maintain secure, accurate and timely records of child protection concerns and actions taken in accordance with all applicable laws.
- Written consent must be obtained before taking or using photographs or videos of children and young people or adults at risk.
- Images must be respectful, appropriate, securely stored, and not accompanied by unnecessary personal information. (see attached photography and video consent form).
- When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing before the start of the event.

7. Responding to Concerns and Allegations

7.1 Disclosure and response

Incidents resulting in safeguarding concerns or child protection concerns may be raised by anyone (including but not limited to all personnel, child/young person or an adult at risk). If someone tells you that they are subject to abuse or exploitation, or you suspect there might be a concern:

- Always stop and listen straight away, ensure they understand you take the allegation seriously.
- Encourage the individual to talk, but do not ask leading questions, interrupt or ask the individual to repeat themselves. It is **NOT** your responsibility to investigate suspected cases.
- Never promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret - explain that if you are told something important you will only tell the people who need to know.

- Record what you have been told accurately and as soon as possible. Use the child/young person or adult at risk's own words if possible. Make a note of the time, location, whether anyone else present.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser or perpetrator.
- Report your concerns immediately in accordance with section 7.2. DO NOT worry that you might be mistaken; you have a responsibility to pass on your concerns following a disclosure. Never think abuse is impossible, or that the accusation is bound to be wrong.

7.2 How to report concerns

If you see or suspect abuse or exploitation, you must report such concerns.

- **When to report?** Immediately. Do not delay.
- **Who to report to?**
 - **If there is immediate risk of harm:** If an individual is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, the appropriate authorities (police/medical/social services) should be contacted as soon as the risk occurs. Please also inform the safeguarding lead.
 - **If there is no immediate risk of harm:** The safeguarding lead. If the allegation is against the safeguarding lead or the safeguarding lead is unavailable, then the information should be reported to SWI CEO or the SWI Board.
- **How to report?** Concerns should be recorded factually and submitted to the safeguarding lead in person, or by phone call, or through use of a secure written reporting channel (e.g. encrypted email).
- **What to report?** The reporting individual should include details such as:
 - The nature of the concern.
 - Date, time and place of the incident or disclosure.
 - Exact wording used by child/young person or adult at risk.
 - Name and roles of those involved.
 - Actions taken so far.

7.3 Internal Process

Within 24 hours of receiving a concern, the safeguarding lead (or where relevant the CEO or Board) is responsible for:

- Reviewing the concern.
- Whoever is the subject of the allegation they should be required to stop any activity they are doing until an investigation has been completed.
- Consulting with the relevant external authorities where required.

- Making decisions on next steps.
- Recording all actions taken.
- Informing the SWI Board of the concern.
- Considering whether any other parties need to be informed (for example, grant providers).

The exact process of the investigation will be determined by the safeguarding lead (or where relevant the CEO/Board) with reference to the nature of the incident.

7.4 Whistleblowing

SWI encourages a culture of openness and accountability. Anybody who believes safeguarding procedures are not being followed can raise concerns with the safeguarding lead or directly contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

8. Policy Acknowledgement

I, _____ of _____ SWI, confirm that

I have read and understood this policy, and agree to follow its principles and procedures.

Signature:

Date:

Name:

Telephone:

Photography and Video Consent Form

The Scottish Women's Institutes (SWI) occasionally takes photographs and videos at events and activities for the purpose of celebrating and promoting our work. These images may be used in printed publications, on our website, and across official SWI social media channels. We are committed to ensuring that all images are used responsibly, respectfully, and in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and Policy on Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

1. Event and Participant Details

Event Name: _____

Event Date: _____ Location: _____

Participant Name: _____

Age (if under 18): _____

Parent/Guardian Name (if applicable): _____

Contact Telephone/Email: _____

2. Purpose of Photography and Video

Images and recordings may be used by SWI for the following purposes:

- Inclusion in printed materials such as newsletters, reports, and event programmes
- Use on the official SWI website and social media channels
- Display at exhibitions, presentations, or promotional events
- Sharing with media outlets to promote SWI activities

3. Consent Options

Please tick one option below:

I GIVE my consent for photographs and/or videos of me (or my child) to be taken and used for the purposes stated above.

I DO NOT GIVE my consent for photographs and/or videos of me (or my child) to be taken or used.

4. Data Protection and Storage

SWI will store images securely and will not share them with any third party other than for the purposes outlined above. Images will be retained for up to 5 years unless withdrawn earlier. Consent may be withdrawn at any time by contacting the local Safeguarding Lead or SWI office at info@theswi.org.uk.

5. Signature and Declaration

I have read and understood how images and recordings will be used by SWI. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time without disadvantage.

Signature:

Date:

If participant is under 18:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

6. For SWI Office Use Only

Received by (Name):

Position/Role:

Date Received:

Storage Location:

Note: Completed consent forms must be stored securely in line with SWI Data Protection Policy and retained only for as long as necessary.

Event Risk Assessment Template

1. Event Details

Event Name: _____
 Date: _____ Time: _____
 Venue/Location: _____
 Assessor Name: _____
 Position/Role: _____
 Assessment Date: _____ Review Date: _____

2. Risk Rating Guidance

Each identified hazard should be evaluated for its Likelihood (L) and Severity (S). The Risk Rating (R) is calculated as $L \times S$.

Likelihood (L): 1 = Unlikely | 2 = Possible | 3 = Likely

Severity (S): 1 = Minor injury | 2 = Moderate injury | 3 = Major injury or fatality

Risk Rating (R): 1–2 = Low | 3–4 = Medium | 6–9 = High

3. Risk Assessment Table

Ref No.	Activity / Hazard	Who Might Be Harmed	Existing Controls	L	S	Further Action Required / Controls Needed
1	Setting up equipment – trip hazards	Volunteers, participants	Ensure clear walkways; cables secured; adequate lighting	2	2	Check area prior to event start; monitor throughout
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

4. Approval and Review

Assessor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed By (Safeguarding Lead / Event Chair): _____

Date: _____

5. Notes

- All identified high risks (R = 6–9) must be mitigated before the event proceeds.
- The assessment should be reviewed if the event plan changes or new hazards arise.
- Keep completed forms securely in accordance with SWI data protection policy.