

SAFEGUARDING POLICY



Revision History

| Date | Section(s) | Page(s) | Brief Description of Change | Author of Change | Next revision date |
|---------------|------------|---------|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| February 2016 | ALL | ALL | All | Board | Jan 2018 |
| January 2018 | ALL | ALL | ALL | Manager | Jan 2020 |
| January 2020 | All | All | Review | Manager, Depute Manager | Jan 2021 |
| April 2020 | All | All | Review and changed to Safeguarding Policy | Depute and Manager | Jan 2021 |
| June 2020 | All | All | Review | Depute, Manager, Board | Jan 2021 |
| March 2022 | All | All | Review | Depute and Manager | March 2022 |
| May 2023 | All | All | Reviewed by Team and edits made | Depute and Manager | May 2024 |

1. SCOPE

Rape Crisis Grampian's (RCG's) Safeguarding Policy shall apply to all RCG staff, volunteers, and trustees.

2. RATIONALE

RCG is committed to protecting children and vulnerable adults. As an organisation, we embrace the principles of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 as well as Adult Support and Protection Act 2007, Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. This means that every child and vulnerable adult has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; the right to have their best interests considered in any matter affecting them; and the right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting them.

For the purpose of this policy, children and young people are defined as all people under the age of 16 years and an adult at risk is a person aged 16 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may include a person who: is elderly and frail, has a mental illness including dementia, has a physical or sensory disability, has a learning disability, has a severe physical illness, is a substance user or has severe communication difficulties.

In cases where an individual has capacity to make decisions but the worker deems that there is imminent risk to their life, the safeguarding policy will be followed.

Child and Vulnerable Adult protection have two concerns: the appropriate treatment of children and vulnerable adults accessing our service and reporting suspicion of abuse, neglect or exploitation whether disclosed by a child, vulnerable adult, their relative, carer, friend, or any other concerned person.

3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language, or religious belief have the right to protection from abuse.
- All allegations and suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. They must not be ignored.
- If somebody believes that a child or vulnerable adult may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, they have a duty of care to always refer the concern to social services or the police.

4. AIMS OF POLICY

This policy aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, and trustees:

- Understand their personal responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact or about whom they have been informed.
- Are clear about roles in children and vulnerable adult protection.
- Understand good practice in recruiting employees and volunteers.
- Know the limits of confidentiality for child and adult protection.
- Can take appropriate action if there are suggestions that a child and vulnerable adult is being abused.
- Care for those for whom reports are being made to statutory organisations.
- Take steps to minimise misunderstandings.

5. DUTY OF CARE

RCG abhors all activities which endanger a child or vulnerable adult. We recognise our duty to act.

If a child or vulnerable adult's life is at imminent risk, contact Police Scotland on 999.

If we have concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk, then we will report this concern to:

| | Aberdeen City | Aberdeenshire |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Child protection | Joint Child Protection Team | Child and Families Social Work Team |
| | Office hours: 01224 306877 | Out of hours: 0800 7315520 |
| Adult Protection | ACC Duty Social Work Team/Out of Hours Social Work Team | Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Network |
| | 24 hours: 0800 7315520 | Office hours: 01467 533100 |
| Other useful numbers | Scottish Government Children and Vulnerable Adults Helpline (0800 022322) Police – 999 if imminent risk to life | |

RCG will submit a PVG application for each member of staff, volunteer and board of trustees by Disclosure Scotland to confirm their suitability for working within protected, vulnerable groups.

To ensure that all employees and volunteers within RCG are fully aware of their role, we will:

- Provide all employees, volunteers, and trustees with Safeguarding training by NSPCC and Adult Protection e-learning by Aberdeenshire council ALDO training suite as part of induction and core training requirements.
- RCG's in-house, 60-hour training for support workers will include child and adult protection, exceptions to confidentiality, and safeguarding which will be carried out by Volunteer Coordinator and Depute Manager.
- RCG trustees will be provided with a condensed version of the 60-hour support training, which will include child and adult protection, exceptions to confidentiality, and safeguarding.
- Include child and adult protection issues and practice as a key component of our induction process.
- Make sure employees, volunteers, and trustees know how to spot signs of abuse. These will be covered in detail during training, but a list is provided in our Safeguarding Appendix document.
- Ensure that all employees and volunteers have access to our policy.
- Regularly, and at least annually, refresh all employees and volunteers of the requirements for child protection and adult protection.

6. ROLES

Nominated child/adult protection lead:

- Wilma Thomson: E: wilma.thomson@rcgrampian.co.uk T: 01224 590932/07378 300807

Depute child/adult protection lead:

- Andrea Tait: E: andrea.tait@rcgrampian.co.uk T: 01224 590932/07709222803

Trustee lead for safeguarding and child/adult protection:

- Arizona Brodie: E: arizonamercedes@gmail.com T: 07850 859 399

If neither Wilma nor Andrea are available, the employee or volunteer involved must take over her role.

If there are any concerns about the **nominated child protection lead (Wilma)**, all reports must be made to the **trustee lead (Arizona)**.

The responsibility of the nominated child and adult protection officer is:

- To know and to follow the children and vulnerable adults safeguarding policy.
- To ensure that all staff, volunteers, and trustees are subject to Disclosures Scotland procedures before they are appointed.
- To be alert for concerns about the welfare of children/young people and vulnerable adults.
- To take decisions as to the safety of the children and vulnerable adults involved.
- To make no decisions as to whether abuse or neglect is taking place – that is the responsibility of the social work department and/or police.
- To act on concerns and make reports, if necessary, to the social work department or if there is immediate danger/threat to life, to the police.
- To ensure that careful records are kept.
- To support employees and volunteers who have reported concerns.
- To make decisions about informing parents and/or carers of any referral.

- To consider how best the person who has made the allegation should be supported and ensure that the plan to do so is followed through.
- To develop good working relationships with the social work department.

In coming to a decision about action the children and vulnerable adults' officer will take the following into account:

- The best interests of the child or vulnerable adult.
- The nature and context of the alleged abuse.
- The safety of the child or vulnerable adult concerned.
- The safety of the child or vulnerable adult who has made the disclosure.
- The effect upon the child or vulnerable adult of acting or if not acting following the disclosure.
- The relationship between the child or vulnerable adult and the abuser.

The responsibility of all staff, volunteers and trustees is:

- To know and to follow RCG children and vulnerable adults' policy.
- To be alert for concerns about the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- To report such concerns to the children and vulnerable adults' officer.
- Report any suspicion of misconduct within the organisation about child or adult protection.

7. RECRUITMENT

All staff, volunteers and trustees must complete an application and attend an interview to assess their suitability as part of the recruitment process. If successful, they are subject to Disclosure Scotland procedure and two references are requested prior to appointment. For more details, please see our Recruitment Policy.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Abuse thrives in secret, for this reason RCG limits levels of confidentiality. Our policy is that everything survivors say remains totally confidential within the organisation, except for concern about child and vulnerable adult welfare and concerns about harming someone else or themselves. No staff, volunteer and trustees may agree to personal confidentiality (that is, promise to keep information to themselves). This leaves the staff, volunteer, trustee unprotected and may allow an abusive situation with a children and vulnerable adults to continue unchecked. Furthermore, if a survivor believes they have personal confidentiality they may feel betrayed if this is broken. Be alert for statements like: "I want to tell you something very important but only if you promise to keep it secret." It must be made clear that all matters are confidential within the organisation unless a child or vulnerable adult is at risk. It is then the choice of the survivor requiring support if they want to continue with reporting the concern.

9. DEALING WITH AND REPORTING ALLEGATIONS

Allegations may come in a variety of forms; an adult may allude to or make direct allegation concerning children and vulnerable adults at risk; children and vulnerable adults may make a direct allegation; a number of comments made by a Survivor requiring support may raise concerns. If allegations are made against any employees/volunteers/trustees, the concerns must be reported to the nominated child/adult protection lead.

Guidance on responding to allegations

- Be clear about why you know or strongly suspect the Safeguarding Policy should be applied.
- Be calm and reassuring, listen fully and ask open questions
- Do not make promises e.g. telling the survivor you won't tell anyone else or that everything will be alright.
- Outline confidentiality, its limitations and the relevance this bears upon our policy/procedures.
- Take what the survivor is saying seriously.
- Only ask questions to clarify your understanding of the disclosure. Ensure there is no interrogation at any time.
- In conversation with the person involved, be careful that there is no interrogation. It is not your responsibility to come to a decision about the truth of the allegation or concern.
- Let the survivor know you understand them and that you will act upon the information shared in line with policy i.e. reporting to the appropriate agency.
- In conjunction with the Child/Adult Protection Lead, plan any necessary support the survivor may require following the disclosure.

Guidance on reporting Adult or Child Protection

- Follow the safeguarding policy.
- Keep as exact a record as possible made immediately after the conversation. Include any questions clarifying information shared, along with answers and at the very least include a statement such as: "In line with the Safeguarding policy I ensured that I asked no leading questions but invited the survivor to clarify their concerns." (The reason for this is that you may be asked to speak in court and your mode of questioning may come under scrutiny. It is important that you do not 'lead' the individual when asking questions).
- Contact RCG's Child and Adult Protection Officer or Depute in her absence, to discuss the allegations and your concerns. In the absence of either Officers, you follow the procedures they would ordinarily take i.e. contact either Social work or Adult Protection Network to report the allegation/concern or police if the child or vulnerable adult's life is at risk.

10. MINIMISING MISUNDERSTANDING

- Staff, volunteers, and trustees should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding when touching a child or vulnerable adult. It may be appropriate at some point to offer comfort by touching; be aware of any signal that the child or vulnerable adult does not welcome your touch and ask permission first.
- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult for a long time.
- Unless in emergency, do not take children or vulnerable adults in a car.
- Report any concerns that you may have about other staff, volunteers or trustees to Child and Adult Protection Officer. If the concern is about the Child and Adult Protection Officer, report to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead.

11. RECORDING CONCERNS AND REPORTS

- Child/Adult protection officer will keep a record of all concerns and reports.
- Access to this record will be limited to Manager, Depute Manager, and the Chairperson of RCG’s Board of Trustees.

This policy statement came into force on ...

April 2020.....(date)

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed on...

May 2023.....(date)

Signed: ...Wilma Thomson.....

[to be signed by the Trustee Lead for safeguarding and child/adult protection].



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Ms A Brodie

Date: ...