



VENTURE SCOTLAND

#CHANGING YOUNGLIVES

Outdoors

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS POLICY – SAFEGUARDING POLICY

DECLARATION

Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer
Implementation Date	April 2026
Review Date:	April 2027

Signed:

Date: April 2026

Name: David Brackenridge

Position: Chief Executive Officer

POINT OF CONTACT

David Brackenridge, CEO and Safeguarding Officer (Safeguarding Level 2 qualified)

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STATEMENT FROM VENTURE SCOTLAND TRUSTEE

Venture Scotland (VS) recognises that the children and adults it works with, are potentially at risk of harm.

This policy reflects VS's belief that all children and adults have the right to freedom from harm and is aimed at providing them with appropriate safety and protection whilst engaging with our services.

VS recognises that safeguarding is a shared concern across all staff and volunteers, not simply delegated to one individual. The safeguarding policy reflects this.

In addition, VS is committed to acting to protect children or adults if a situation arises external to VS, which puts themselves or others at risk of harm.

VS is committed to responding promptly and constructively to all information presented by service users or third parties regarding the safety and welfare of children and adults who they are in direct or indirect contact with.

We will also ensure that staff and volunteer recruitment practices include appropriate vetting procedures and that all staff and volunteers are aware of the risk of harm and receive training on safeguarding.

Signed:

Name: Jordan McCrae

Position: Trustee

Contact Email: admin@venturescotland.org.uk



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INTRODUCTION

1. Definitions

Definition of Harm

Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Section 53 states harm includes all harmful conduct and, in particular includes:

- conduct which causes physical harm.
- conduct which causes self-harm.
- conduct which causes psychological harm (for example by causing fear, alarm or distress),
- unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests (for example theft, fraud, embezzlement or extortion).
- Harm is not solely restricted to those listed and can depend on the effect any action has on the person.

Definition of a Child

Within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, a child is defined as anyone who has not reached the age of 18.

Definition of Child abuse

There is no universally agreed definition of child abuse, however, the formal definition from the World Health Organisation (1999) is: "Child abuse or maltreatment consists of forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm in the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship or responsibility, trust or power"

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Any form of physical, sexual or mental and emotional abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, co-habiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere.

It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality. The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.



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Rarely a one-off incident. Usually, it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their family member or partner.

2. Current Legislation

ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2007

“Adults at risk” are adults who:

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

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS ACT 2007

An Act of the Scottish Parliament to bar certain individuals from working with children or certain adults; (protected adults).

PRESCRIBED SERVICES (PROTECTED ADULTS) REGULATIONS 2010

- (a) “A protected adult is defined as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service as set out in this section.”
- (b) welfare services “any service which provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to individuals with particular needs”
- (c) services as provided by sections 2(5) and 77 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 (“the 2001 Act”) whose principal purpose is the treatment, care and support of, and provision of advice and assistance in relation to their health and well-being will also confer protected status on an adult.



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PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

1. Protection of children and adults whilst engaging in VS's services

VS aims to provide all children and adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst engaging in VS's services.

The organisation will not tolerate harm of children and adults in any of the following forms:

Physical harm: Any act to deliberately hurt or injure a child or adult

Sexual harm: Any act to force or entice someone to take part in sexual activities or other forms of sexual harm

Emotional harm: Acts such as bullying or ridiculing a child or adult

Neglect: Failing to ensure that a child or adult's basic needs of food, warmth, adequate clothing or medical attention are met or exposing a child or adult to unnecessary harm

Discriminatory harm: Racial, gender, sexual, religious harassment or any other form of harm. – see definition of harm below.

2. Raising and reporting concerns about harm

Everyone working and volunteering within VS plays an important part in promoting the protection of children and adults with whom they are working.



Recognise

It is therefore vital that staff and volunteers recognise and raise all concerns about suspected or alleged harm.

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or adult, i.e.

- i. You see or suspect harm
- ii. An allegation of harm to a third party is made
- iii. A child or adult reports harm

Record

An Incident Report Form will be used to record allegations of suspected and actual harm. This report should include where relevant:

- The nature of the suspected, alleged or actual harm that occurred
- What the child or adult has said (in their own words as far as is possible)



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- Staff/volunteer accounts of what has happened
- A description of any visible injuries
- Dates and times of events
- Details of any actions taken
- Any other factual information
- Do not disturb any evidence

Report

Report your concerns to the most senior member of staff available immediately. The Incident Report Form must be brought to the attention of the VS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at the earliest opportunity.

Respond

In a residential setting, consideration must be given to returning participants home if the police are not to be immediately involved. This may mean bringing the whole group home or the accompanied return of individuals involved in the incident separately.

Where both the alleged perpetrator and the victim are involved in the programme, VS will not automatically cease working with either but will consider the most appropriate way of managing the future involvement and support of each individual, though it may include temporary suspension on full pay. This may include referring either party or both on to other organisations.

3. What to do/not to do if a child or adult tells you that he/she/they have been or are being harmed

The following are guidelines on immediate action to be taken following a reporting of harm by a child or adult.

What to do

- React calmly so not to frighten or deter him/her/they.
- At the earliest opportunity remind the child or adult of our Confidentiality Policy and explain that you will need to share the information with other staff and volunteers where appropriate.
- Re-assure him/her/they that you are glad they have told you, and that it is not their fault.
- Listen carefully to what the child or adult says and take them seriously.
- Allow the child or adult to tell you what happened in his/her/their own words.
- If possible, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to the child or adult why you are doing this. If it is not possible to do this at the time, make notes as soon as possible afterwards e.g. what, where, when, who and retain physical evidence if you can)



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- Clarify what you have heard in order to confirm the basic facts.

What NOT to do

- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Display adverse reaction to the information.
- Investigate – only establish context or basic facts.
- Discuss the report with the alleged perpetrator.
- Disturb any evidence.

4. Support to deal with the aftermath of a report of harm

Consideration will be given about what support may be appropriate to children and adults, volunteers and members of staff.

Employees and volunteers will be supported in accessing counselling services, where appropriate and should they require this.

Consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrators or victims of the harm.

If a staff member is accused or is a victim of harm, but is subsequently permitted to return to work, they will attend a back to work interview in order to address anxieties, re-entry into the workplace and ongoing support in the workplace.

VS recognises the very challenging job employees do. Employees have access to specialist support through the 360 Wellbeing's Personal Support Programme (PSP).

This support is accessible through helplines and the 360 Wellbeing PSP App.

5. Protection of children and adults from significant harm in their external lives

VS is committed to acting, with the knowledge of the child or adult, to protect them if a situation arises external to VS, which puts themselves or others at risk of harm.

In exceptional circumstances, information about a child or adult may be given to appropriate persons or authorities (e.g. emergency services, social services, referral agency) outside of VS without the permission of the child or adult. This must be with the prior permission of the CEO and where possible would normally involve informing the child or adult of that decision prior to any break in confidentiality.

Exceptional circumstances may include, but not exclusive to:



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- When a child or adult is so harmed (physically or psychologically) that immediate medical attention is required.
- When there is good reason to believe that someone else may cause harm to a child or adult.
- When there is good reason to believe that a child or adult may cause harm to others.
- When there is good reason to believe that a child or adult may cause harm to himself/herself/their self.

6. Digital Safeguarding

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, and volunteers using social media (or any other digital facility or tool), both for professional and personal accounts.

Everyone should read and understand the Digital Policy.

All communication with participants must occur on official, monitored platforms. Personal messaging between staff/volunteers and participants is forbidden.

Our aim is to protect our participants from harm, and we apply the same safeguarding principles to offline and online activities.

- Do not post or share content that is harmful, abusive, or inconsistent with the charity's values.
- Photographs or videos of beneficiaries will not be posted without written parental/individual consent and will not be tagged to identify individuals.
- Any suspicions of online grooming, bullying, or abuse must be reported in accordance with this policy as soon as possible.



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PROCEDURES RELATING TO SELECTION OF STAFF / VOLUNTEERS TO CARRY OUT REGULATED WORK

For the purpose of this policy, Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme records, PVG scheme record updates, Standard and Enhanced disclosures will be referred to as Disclosure Records.

This policy applies to regulated work with [children/protected adults] as defined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (see page 4).

VS aims to ensure that all children and protected adults are kept safe from harm while they are with staff or volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this, we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

1. Selection - Staff

- All staff applicants to our organisation will provide CV and covering letter.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to attend an initial interview, staff group presentation and final interview.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to provide references, and these will always be taken up prior to confirmation of an appointment.

2. Selection - Volunteers

- All volunteer applicants to our organisation will complete an application form.
- Short listed applicants will be asked to attend an interview.

3. Screening

The successful staff / volunteer applicant will be asked to complete a Disclosure Record (relevant to the position applied for) prior to taking up the post.

4. Training

The successful staff / volunteer applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation to ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure. Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for work. Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers and will be regularly reviewed.

5. Supervision - Staff

All staff will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support. Every member of staff will attend bi-monthly Support and Supervision meetings, where their



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performance, skills, motivation and expectations will be discussed. These will be minuted and copies made available to the member of staff.

6. Supervision - Volunteers

All volunteers are supervised by Outdoor Delivery Staff and our Volunteer Co-ordinator who will provide regular feedback and support. Any issues or support needs will be minuted and copies made available to the volunteer.

7. Recruitment

VS will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.

8. Legal Issues

It is an offence for an individual who is barred to undertake the type of regulated work from which they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation to offer regulated work to someone who is barred or fail to remove a person from regulated work if they have been notified that they are barred.

It is an offence for an organisation not to refer an individual to Disclosure Scotland where the grounds have been met.

9. Awareness Training

VS will ensure that all its staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and receive safeguarding training, recognising that a proper awareness and understanding of these issues is crucial for all its paid staff and volunteers. This will be done on an on-going/updating basis, appropriate to role and with written material that can serve as a reference. All staff will need to re-read and review this policy on a three-year basis.

10. Updating of PVGs

VS require previously PVG'd staff and volunteers to apply for an update to their PVGs every 5 years and when they change role within the organisation. We reserve the right to ask staff or volunteers to apply for an update. Failure to comply would be considered a disciplinary issue.



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EQUALITY STATEMENT

VS are committed to its core organisational values of Respect, Trust, Compassion, Empowering and Belonging and believe these values extend to everyone including staff, volunteers and those participants we seek to support.

We operate a policy of providing equal opportunities to everyone who comes into contact with our organisation without regard to:

- Age
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity/paternity/adoption leave
- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

VS is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

VS is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and to ensure that the abilities, talent, and skills of everyone are seen and appreciated. VS's policy is to treat everyone with respect and dignity and to ensure that decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. VS will take every possible step to ensure that all decisions are justifiable and based solely on objective criteria.

There may be circumstances where VS has a legal duty to take protected characteristics into account (such as to ensure that a job holder is of a specified gender or where health and safety requirements apply). In these instances, VS will follow the provisions in the legislation.

VS requires everyone, no matter their role, to ensure equal opportunities is extended to all stakeholders. Failure to comply with this will be considered a disciplinary issue and will be dealt with under the provisions of our Disciplinary or Grievance Policy.