

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Protected Adults

Introduction

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to outline the commitment and procedures of Soirbheas in safeguarding children and protected adults. This policy is in accordance with relevant Scottish legislation, including the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It applies to all individuals and organisations affiliated with Soirbheas involved in activities concerning children and protected adults.

Definitions

- a) Children: Refers to individuals under the age of 18 years.
- b) Protected Adults: Refers to adults who are at risk of harm due to disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity and are unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Policy Statement

Soirbheas is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for children and protected adults in all areas of our operations. We firmly reject any form of abuse, neglect, or harm towards children or protected adults.

Responsibilities

- a) Chair of the Board: The Chair holds overall oversight of safeguarding at Soirbheas and ensures appropriate resources, training and support are available.
- b) Befriending Coordinator: The Coordinator is the Designated Safeguarding Officer for the adult befriending service. They receive concerns, record them, arrange appropriate referrals and coordinate follow-up.
- c) Community Grants Manager: The Manager is the safeguarding lead for all Soirbheas activities and the safeguarding deputy for the befriending service. They respond to concerns involving children or adults and handle befriending concerns when the Coordinator is unavailable or involved in the allegation.
- d) Staff, directors and volunteers: Everyone must understand the safeguarding guidance relevant to their role, attend appropriate training and report concerns promptly. They must not investigate suspected abuse themselves or promise to keep a disclosure secret.
- e) Conflicts of interest: Nobody should handle an allegation about themselves. Concerns involving the Community Grants Manager go to the Chair. Where a concern involves the Chair, an uninvolved director will arrange an independent route.

Safeguarding contacts

Befriending Coordinator: befriender@soirbheas.org | 07748 575330
Community Grants Manager: karascott@soirbheas.org | 07842 781986
Chair of the Board: chair@soirbheas.org

Recruitment and Selection

- a) All individuals engaging in regulated work involving children and protected adults must undergo thorough recruitment procedures, including Disclosure Scotland checks, in line with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

b) References will be sought and diligently verified for all prospective staff and volunteers involved in activities concerning children and protected adults.

Code of Conduct

a) Soirbheas expects all staff, volunteers, and relevant personnel to adhere to a code of conduct that clearly outlines acceptable behaviour when interacting with children and protected adults.

b) This code of conduct will include guidelines on appropriate language, physical contact, confidentiality, and maintaining professional boundaries.

Reporting and Responding to Concerns

a) Take immediate action to protect anyone at risk. Call 999 if there is immediate danger or urgent emergency assistance is needed.

b) Report concerns promptly to the Befriending Coordinator for adult befriending, or the Community Grants Manager for other activities. Use the alternative contacts above where someone is unavailable or involved in the concern.

c) If a safeguarding contact is unavailable, including outside working hours, do not delay necessary action. Contact the appropriate social work, health or police service directly. Concerns about a child must be referred through the Children and Families social work or police route.

d) Listen calmly, take the concern seriously and avoid leading questions. Do not promise secrecy, confront the person accused or investigate the allegation yourself.

e) Make a factual, dated record as soon as possible, using the Accident and Incident Form. Record what happened, the person's own words where possible, who was informed and what action was taken. Do not delay reporting while completing the form

f) The safeguarding contact will consider immediate protective measures, make appropriate referrals and record decisions and follow-up. Allegations involving staff or volunteers follow the same safeguarding reporting process. An internal complaints or conduct procedure must not delay safeguarding action or interfere with an external investigation.

g) Soirbheas will cooperate with statutory agencies. The Community Grants Manager, or an uninvolved senior contact, will arrange insurer notification where required and check whether any referral to Disclosure Scotland is required.

Training and Support

a) Soirbheas will provide comprehensive safeguarding training to all staff, volunteers, and relevant personnel, ensuring that it is regularly updated to reflect current legislation, best practices, and the identification of safeguarding concerns.

b) Support mechanisms will be in place to assist staff, volunteers, and relevant personnel in dealing with safeguarding issues, including access to counselling and debriefing services.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

a) Safeguarding records will be stored in a designated secure records area, with access restricted to those who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities.

b) Information will be shared appropriately to protect people and respond to concerns. Confidentiality must not prevent a necessary safeguarding referral. Consent will be sought where appropriate, but a refusal of consent must not automatically prevent protective action.

c) Records must distinguish facts, allegations and decisions, and include referrals, actions and follow-up.

d) Records of abuse allegations and safeguarding concerns will be retained securely for 25 years after the concern or case is closed. Relevant records must not be destroyed while a

claim, investigation or related proceedings remain ongoing. Other records follow the Data Protection and Privacy Policy retention schedule.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following an incident, a relevant change in legislation or changes to Soirbheas's activities. The review will check that contacts, reporting arrangements, training and recordkeeping remain appropriate.

Updated: 13 October 2026

Next review: 13 October 2027

Dissemination of the Policy

This policy will be readily available to all staff, volunteers, member organisations, service users, and relevant stakeholders. It will be communicated through training sessions, staff inductions, and prominently displayed within Soirbheas premises and digital platforms.

Code of Conduct for safeguarding at Soirbheas

Respect and Dignity

- a) Treat all children and protected adults with respect, dignity, and fairness, regardless of their background, abilities, or characteristics.
- b) Uphold their rights and promote their well-being, ensuring their views are considered and valued in decisions that affect them.

Professionalism and Integrity

- a) Maintain professionalism at all times, acting in the best interests of children and protected adults and avoiding any actions that may compromise their safety or well-being.
- b) Conduct all activities within the boundaries of your role and responsibilities, adhering to legal and ethical standards.

Boundaries and Relationships

- a) Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with children and protected adults, ensuring interactions are professional, respectful, and without any form of exploitation or abuse.
- b) Avoid engaging in any behaviour that may be misinterpreted, inappropriate, or harmful.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- a) Respect the confidentiality of personal information relating to children and protected adults, sharing it only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with legal requirements and data protection regulations.
- b) Report any concerns or disclosures promptly to the designated person within Soirbheas maintaining confidentiality while ensuring appropriate action is taken.

Communication and Language

- a) Use clear, appropriate, and respectful language when communicating with children and protected adults, ensuring they can understand the information provided.
- b) Avoid using language or engaging in conversations that may be offensive, discriminatory, or harmful.

Supervision and Monitoring

- a) Provide appropriate supervision and monitoring to ensure the safety and well-being of children and protected adults during activities and interactions.
- b) Report any concerns

regarding the behaviour or actions of colleagues, volunteers, or third-party individuals promptly to the designated person within Soirbheas.

Reporting and Response to Concerns

- a) Report any safeguarding concerns or incidents in accordance with Soirbheas' Safeguarding Policy, ensuring prompt action is taken to protect the safety and well-being of children and protected adults.
- b) Cooperate fully with any investigations or inquiries by relevant authorities or agencies.

Training and Professional Development

- a) Engage in regular training and professional development opportunities related to safeguarding, child protection, and the well-being of protected adults.
- b) Stay informed about current legislation, policies, and best practices in order to fulfil your role effectively.

Compliance with Policies and Procedures

- a) Familiarise yourself with and adhere to Soirbheas' Safeguarding Policy and all relevant policies and procedures pertaining to the safety and well-being of children and protected adults.
- b) Follow all statutory requirements and local guidelines applicable to your role and the activities you are involved in.

Breach of Code of Conduct

- a) Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or termination of volunteer engagement.

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, we create a safe and respectful environment for children and protected adults, promoting their well-being and safeguarding their rights.

Version number	Change or update	Author or owner	Date
4.0	Changed	L Treasure	30/1/26
5.0	Updated safeguarding roles, reporting procedure, record retention and review arrangements	K Scott	13/10/2026