

# The National Library of Scotland

## Safeguarding Policy 2021

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of the National Library of Scotland, including senior managers and the Board, paid staff, volunteers, interns, contractors and agency staff. It applies to both the Library's online environment, its physical locations in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and to Library activities carried out externally e.g. in schools, at book festivals.

### 1. Purpose

The National Library of Scotland is the country's largest library. It preserves the memory of the nation with collections that span the centuries, from earliest times to the digital age. The Library is committed to providing easy access to its physical and digital content, and to delivering services that are open and available to all. Children and vulnerable adults visit the Library to use the collections, to see exhibitions, to attend events, school study says or youth projects, or the use the café and shop. Our online engagement includes, but it not restricted to, our websites, digital and digitised collections, exhibitions, interactive learning resources, online events, and social media interaction.

While the primary responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults rests with the supervising adult, carer or helper, the Library recognises our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse. The purpose of this policy is to set out our principles that guide our approach to safeguarding, ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we engage with children and vulnerable adults, and protect children and vulnerable adults who use the Library's services from harm.

This policy should be read alongside the internal safeguarding procedures document.

### 2. Key definitions

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

A vulnerable adult (over age 18, or age 16 to 18 if married):

- Lives in residential accommodation such as a care home, residential special school or sheltered housing or is receiving domiciliary care in their own home (i.e. help with eating, washing, transport or finances)
- May be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm of exploitation.

This could be because of a short- or long-term condition.

The safeguarding procedures document details what constitutes abuse, signs of abuse, how to respond, and the Library's reporting procedure.

### **3. Policy statement**

The National Library of Scotland welcomes all members of the public and wishes to extend its facilities and services to as many people as possible. Children and vulnerable adults are able to use the Library and it is our intention that they can do so safely. The key principles that underline this policy are:

- The best interests of a child or vulnerable adult must always be a primary consideration
- All children and vulnerable adults should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from all forms of abuse
- All suspicions and disclosures of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Our staff will understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults who are visiting or undertaking any activity connected with the Library
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to express their views on matters that affect them.

### **4. Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of the following legislation. Further policies and guidance are detailed in the safeguarding procedures document.

In Scotland, the relevant legislation regarding children and young people is the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). This is supported by the [National guidance for child protection in Scotland, 2014](#).

The [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#) provides the legislation around work with children and protected adults and established the [Protecting Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\) Scheme](#) managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland.

### **5. Organisational responsibilities**

The safeguarding procedures document outlines the practical measures required to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. It gives more detail about our responsibilities and should be referred to when planning and delivering all forms of engagement with children and vulnerable adults. The safeguarding responsibilities of different groups of staff are as follows:

### 5.1 All staff, contractors, interns and volunteers

- Strictly observe this policy
- Take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse in person and online
- Understand and adhere to our procedures for admitting children and young people to the Library unaccompanied by an adult
- Take appropriate action if a physical accident occurs
- Report any incident, disclosure or suspicion of abuse to a safeguarding officer, the safeguarding lead, or line manager if neither are available
- Ensure that appropriate adult to child ratios are applied when children are accompanied
- Ensure that photographs or filming that is specifically of children or vulnerable adults are not taken without the consent of child / vulnerable adult and their parent or guardian.

### 5.2 Human Resources

- Check the identity, recent employment history and criminal conviction statement of all employees and workers
- Maintain relevant records and storage of related documentation
- Ensure that new staff are fully aware of this policy by its inclusion in the policy sign-off induction sheet
- Liaise with managers on the appropriate level of disclosure for post holders liable to deal with children, young people or vulnerable adults, including the PVG Scheme
- Arrange the delivery of general training for all staff and specialist training for Safeguarding Officers, managers and HR
- Liaise with the designated lead, managers and the Safeguarding Officer on the organisation and delivery of training to staff
- Advise and assist managers, employees and workers in dealing with any suggestion of misconduct or need for expert help
- Act as the counter signatory for Disclosure Scotland.

### 5.3 Managers

- Ensure that their team members, whether employees, contractors, interns, or volunteers, are aware of their requirements in terms of this policy and the safeguarding procedures document
- Seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer as part of the risk assessment process for any activities relating to children or vulnerable adults and take appropriate action in the event of any reports of incidents, disclosures or suspicion of abuse of children or vulnerable adults
- Consider all posts within their area of responsibility, whether employees, contractors or volunteers and appropriately designate those under the PVG Scheme
- Ensure that those posts which will have contact with children or young

people are informed of the requirement for appropriate checks and also ensure that no such person is permitted contact with children until the checking process is satisfactorily completed

- Supervise their staff's contact with children and vulnerable adults as appropriate and ensure that this policy and the procedure are adhered to.

#### 5.4 Designated safeguarding lead (Associate Director of Access)

- Act as the lead person on safeguarding and child protection matters across the Library
- Ensure that policy and procedure regarding safeguarding is regularly reviewed and that staff and safeguarding officers are appropriately trained
- Act as the named contact in relation to external enquiries regarding the Library's policy and procedure
- Report any notifiable events which would have a significant impact on the Library to the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
- Make referrals to Disclosure Scotland in relation to harmful behavior by people in the Library's employment which affects their ability to work with children or protected adults
- Report to the Chair of the Board any new cases as they arise and make annual reports to the Library's Board regarding the number of incidences and cases.

#### 5.5 Safeguarding officers (Visitor Services Manager and Head of Public Programmes)

- Advise and assist staff in dealing with any safeguarding concerns and where appropriate, refer such concerns to the HR Partner or designated lead member of Library Leadership Team
- Provide briefings as appropriate for managers in relation to the policy
- Act as the named contact for all communication relating to external Library activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Take appropriate action in the event of any reports of harm or suspected abuse of children and vulnerable adults
- Regularly review any reports of disclosed or suspected abuse of children or vulnerable adults and recommend any changes to policy and/or protocol.

#### 5.6 The Library Board

- Assume overall responsibility for the governance of this policy
- Designate a safeguarding Board member
- Be aware of their safeguarding duties under the [OSCR guidelines](#)
- Take note of the annual reports provided by the designated safeguarding lead and offer guidance as required.

## 6. Recruitment and training

6.1 All new staff are subject to pre-employment basic disclosure screening and reference checks. Staff that will come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults as part of their duties are also briefed on the contents of this policy as part of their induction

process.

6.2 Employees who will be carrying out 'regulated work' with children and vulnerable adults, as defined by the PVG Scheme, will be required to be a member of the Scheme. There are two types of regulated work – work with children and work with protected adults. Regulated work is usually jobs including:

- caring responsibilities
- teaching or supervising children and/or protected adults
- providing personal services to children and/or protected adults
- working directly with children and/or protected adults

6.3 **Under no circumstances** will an applicant be appointed to a post designated under the PVG Scheme until all clearances have been completed.

6.4 Staff are required, as a condition of employment, to disclose to HR any convictions obtained while in the Library's employment. This policy restates and emphasises this requirement. Staff whose post is designated under the PVG Scheme and who commit an offence which would preclude them for employment with children or young people, may be dismissed.

6.5 Staff with safeguarding roles will undergo appropriate training so that they are able to discharge their responsibilities under this policy. Any posts designated under the PVG Scheme will receive the associated training.

## **7. Guidance and putting the policy into practice**

This policy is available to staff on the Library's Intranet. Guidance on putting this policy in to practice, including the reporting procedure and form, is contained within the safeguarding procedures document, which can also be found on the Intranet.

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