

Scottish Poetry Library

YOUNG PERSON AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

1 Introduction and Policy Statement

1.1 The aim of this policy is to keep safe young people and vulnerable adults with whom Scottish Poetry Library (SPL) staff and freelance contractors may work in providing our services and programmes. The policy also aims to give guidance to staff and freelancers to help them maintain an appropriate professional approach to these working relationships.

1.2 Scottish Poetry Library (SPL) upholds young people and vulnerable adults' right to be safe and protected. SPL therefore seeks to provide a safe and protected environment for young people and vulnerable adults participating in SPL's work. SPL ensures its staff are appropriately prepared to work with young people where programmes demand it and that staff in general are aware of child protection issues and know how to respond, should they become aware of or have concerns over a young person's safety. Where the policy refers to "young people" (up to 18 years of age), this also includes vulnerable or at risk young adults (18-25). Where the policy below refers to "child protection" this encompasses young people and vulnerable or at risk young adults for SPL's purposes.

1.3 All concerns over a child or young person's safety must be taken seriously and acted upon as soon as they are brought to light.

1.4 Although SPL does not operate within a "Regulated Work" environment (such as caring for young people or giving them individual advice or supervision), SPL is a Registered Body with Disclosure Scotland and as a condition of our employment contract, most SPL staff are required to secure Basic Disclosure prior to their employment commencing. Consideration is given to the need for enhanced disclosure requirements as new roles are created or the nature of our work changes.

1.5 As a rule, SPL staff do not work alone or unsupervised with young people or vulnerable adults on a regular basis or as a normal part of their work. The young people are usually in the care of a responsible adult such as a teacher, parent or carer. However, for specific programmes of work, some staff and freelance roles might involve recurring 1:1 contact with young people in schools or community settings. Contact of this nature with young people is considered 'high risk' compared to our other regular work with young people. This policy encompasses both categories of work.

2. What is the Scope in terms of the Scottish Poetry Library?

2.1 Line managers must ensure all staff, temporary and permanent, volunteers, interns, work placements, freelance workers and consultants understand and adhere to the contents of this policy while delivering SPL work which involves young people or vulnerable adults.

2.2 This policy should also be made available to the public and partner organisations, as required in the delivery of SPL work to young people.

3. How does SPL create a safe environment?

3.1 As part of staff recruitment, a Basic Disclosure clearance must be obtained prior to the commencement of employment for most roles: only purely office-based support roles which have no contact at all with young people or access to their details or related information, are exempt. This assessment will be reviewed periodically and where there is any change to the nature of a particular role.

3.2 SPL Job Descriptions and advertising make clear the need to obtain the appropriate level of disclosure.

3.3 As part of their induction, staff will be familiarised with their responsibility for upholding child protection in the course of their SPL work.

3.4 Staff with roles involving a more 'high risk' style of contact with young people will be given further training in how to conduct their roles safely and appropriately.

3.5 Through regular one to one meetings and appraisal processes, staff awareness of this policy and associated requirements will be checked and refreshed where appropriate.

3.6 Staff, contractors and volunteers are made aware of the process for dealing with any concerns they have over a young person's safety.

3.7 Line managers will keep under review the changing nature of the work of their staff with a view to highlighting any potential for additional disclosure requirements (e.g. regular unsupervised contact with young people as a normal and ongoing part of the role)

3.8 Staff working with partners and other agencies will familiarise themselves with any child protection procedures or policies of the partner organisation which must be adhered to by SPL in the provision of its services or events

3.9 Permissions will always be sought before taking any photographs/making use of digital images of young people as part of SPL work.

3.10 Line managers will monitor the work of our freelancers, volunteers and consultants to ensure any child protection issues are appropriately managed in line with this policy

3.11 Guidance will be made available to authors and illustrators working with children on SPL administered and/or funded projects offering support in dealing with child protection issues should they arise

- 3.12 SPL has clear guidance and procedures on how to safely store personal details (including those of young people we work with) in the Data Protection Policy.
- 3.13 SPL has a Designated Youth Protection worker – an individual to whom staff and all other roles can report concerns over a young person’s safety - in addition to their line manager, and to whom they can come for advice and assistance in setting up approaches to working with young people safely and in line with this policy.
- 3.14 The Designated Youth Protection worker promotes a transparent and supportive culture for SPL staff and contractors regarding child protection issues and their relationship with other SPL policy and procedures.

4. How SPL staff should deal with concerns over a young person’s safety

- 4.1 In the course of their work, staff or freelancers may come into contact with children or young people either directly face to face or occasionally by email or other electronic means but usually under the direction of a responsible adult such as a parent/carer or teacher. Staff should not be left with sole responsibility for children in the normal course of events and if staff have any concerns that this might happen, they should resolve the matter immediately with the responsible adult.
- 4.3 If a young person tells staff of something which raises safety concerns or staff observe behaviour or other signs which cause concern about the young person’s safety, they should in the first instance speak to the responsible adult accompanying the young person/people. The staff member should advise their line manager that they have taken this action.
- 4.4 If the incident or observation involves the responsible adult, the staff member should speak to their line manager by phone or in person as soon as possible to discuss the appropriate response. The line manager may consult the Director of Finance & Operations and/or the Designated Youth Protection worker on whether the incident/observation should be referred on to a higher external authority.
- 4.5 Staff should never keep their worries or concerns to themselves, it is important to discuss the matter with line managers to gauge the best course of action. However, in the course of such conversations, confidentiality should be maintained: concerns should not be shared any more widely than is required by the decision-making process. Any decision to share information related to these concerns beyond the responsible adult should be taken in conjunction with the line manager, unless the situation is urgent, an emergency, or a young person is at risk of serious harm.

Reviewed by: Director, Scottish Poetry Library

Date: September 2016

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