

Scottish Poetry Library

SAFEGUARDING 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, volunteers and freelance contractors may work in providing our services and programmes. The policy also aims to give guidance to staff, volunteers, 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.

A vulnerable adult (over age 18, or 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.

The Head Librarian is the Designated Safeguarding Lead – and will report any incidents to the Director, or the Chair where appropriate.

- 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 The SPL does not operate within a "Regulated Work" environment (such as caring for young people or giving them individual advice or supervision). 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.

1.6 **Legal framework**

This policy was drawn up based on 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.

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 For recruitment purposes, an assessment will be made on the need in the role for Disclosure.

Our Employee Handbook states that criminal charges or convictions, for sexual offences or for offences of dishonesty or violence committed during a period of employment with the SPL, whether committed during or outside normal working hours, should be reported to the Director immediately, or Chair where appropriate. A charge or conviction for any other type of offence during the period of employment should also be reported to the Director. Such charges or convictions may result in disciplinary proceedings being taken, up to and including dismissal. Failure to disclose such criminal proceedings/convictions that arise during the period of employment could also result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including summary dismissal.

3.2 SPL Job Descriptions and advertising make clear the need to obtain the appropriate level of disclosure for post holders liable to deal with children, young people or vulnerable adults, including the PVG Scheme. We will consult with partners on the

appropriate level of Disclosure required for freelance roles that might require due diligence.

- 3.3 As part of their induction, staff will be made aware of their responsibility for upholding child protection during their SPL work.
- 3.4 We will consult with delivery partners on the need for further training for staff engaging with children and vulnerable adults 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. Staff will seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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.
- 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 commissioned professionals and those representing the SPL 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 Safeguarding Lead (Head Librarian) – 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. The Head Librarian or the Director will report any notifiable events which would have a significant impact on the Library to the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

- 3.14 The Designated Safeguarding Lead 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, volunteers, 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 Head Librarian 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, during 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.
- 4.6 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.

Reviewed by: Director, Scottish Poetry Library

Date: April 2023

Review Date: March 2026 or earlier, as necessary.