

Changing Faces

Safeguarding Children Policy

1. Policy Commitment

Changing Faces believes that all children have the right to protection from abuse and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people engaged in the breadth of its activities. A child is defined as anyone under 18 years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and under 16 years old in Scotland.

All staff and volunteers at Changing Faces have a responsibility for safeguarding, including promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and a duty of care to identify and respond to potential risks and disclosures of abuse or harm, including self-harm, suicide and self-neglect. All Changing Faces staff and volunteers accept and understand their responsibilities, according to their role.

Other policies and procedures to refer to when safeguarding children:

- [Safeguarding Flowchart and Reporting Protocols](#)
- [Safeguarding Children's Procedures](#)
- [Suicide and Self-harm Procedures](#)
- [Incident and Notifiable Event Policy](#) and [Procedure](#)

This policy outlines Changing Faces' responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people in line with government and multi-agency safeguarding procedures and markers of good practice at both strategic and operational levels and supports the ethos that 'safeguarding is everyone's business'.

Changing Faces also recognises that children and young people are at particular risk of abuse within society and is committed to ensuring that they are protected whilst in receipt of our services or participating in our work.

We seek to work alongside children and young people in a way that has a positive impact on their lives. The wishes of clients will be sought and considered in all safeguarding activity and all action taken will have the interests of clients at its centre. We seek to respond to children and young people in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

Any suspicions or allegations of abuse or risk will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately in collaboration with the child or young person themselves.

There are occasions when fulfilling our duty of care means breaching confidentiality to prevent harm or intervene on behalf of a child or young person. This decision will

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be taken, with the involvement of the child or young person concerned and potentially their parent/guardian (unless a risk) by the Safeguarding Team to contact an appropriate third party authority.

Many of our staff and volunteers have contact with children and young people who may be distressed or anxious. The charity undertakes to provide a safe environment for its staff, volunteers and the children and young people we work with.

2. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Incident

To report a safeguarding concern, for a quick guide, refer to the **Safeguarding Flowchart & Reporting Protocols** (see link above)

Full details of the procedures are in the **Safeguarding Adult Procedures** and **Suicide, Self-Harm and Self-Neglect Procedures** (see links above)

In any life-threatening situation, an ambulance (and the police if necessary) should be called immediately. Then inform the Safeguarding Lead and CEO of the action taken as soon as possible.

3. Policy Scope

Safeguarding covers any concern about possible abuse, self-harm or suicidal behaviour.

This document outlines the statutory guidelines and the principles underpinning our Safeguarding Adults Policy, including reference to the appropriate legislation. Additionally, this document references the processes for recruiting.

Safeguarding incorporates **prevention, empowerment and protection** to enable children and young people who are in circumstances that place them at risk of abuse and harm to retain independence, wellbeing and choice, and to access their right to a life free from abuse and neglect.

4. Key Concepts and Legislation

In **England** a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

In **Wales**, Section 3 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 states that a child is a person who is aged under 18.

In **Northern Ireland** the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 defines a 'child' as a person under the age of 18.

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In **Scotland**, a child legally becomes an adult when they turn 16, but statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

These may also include young people up to the age of 25 who are identified under the Children & Families Act as care leavers or as having special educational needs or disabilities.

The key legislation is as follows:

In **England**, the *Children Act 1989*, the *Children Act 2004* and the *Children and Social Work Act 2017* provide the legislative framework for child protection. Agencies work together as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department for Education, 2018)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*

In **Wales**, the *Children Act 1989*, the *Children Act 2004*, *Working together to safeguarding people (2021)* is the statutory guidance in relation to Part 7 of the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*, the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023* provide the legislative framework for child protection. Agencies work together as defined in the *Wales Safeguarding Procedures and Practice Guides (Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019)*. This provides a common set of child and adult protection procedures and practice guides for every safeguarding board in Wales.

In **England and Wales**, there is also legislation for *Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation (FGM) (Home Office, 2016)* dictating that health professionals must report any knowledge of this in under 18's.

In **Northern Ireland**, the legislative framework for the child protection system is set out in *The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*, the *Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011*, the *Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015* and *Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967*. Agencies work together as defined in the *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young people in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2017)* and the *Revised regional core child protection policies and procedures for Northern Ireland (Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, 2018)*.

In **Scotland**, the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995* outlines the legislative framework for Scotland's child protection. This is amended by the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Agencies work together as defined in revisions in 2021, *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2021a)* and the *National guidance for child protection in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021b)*

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Statutory responsibility:

Each local authority holds the lead responsibility for the coordination of all safeguarding concerns. The contact information for how to report a safeguarding concern can be found easily online on the local authority's website.

Local authorities work together with NHS services and trusts, the police, probation services and young offender institutions to protect children and adults from abuse and neglect and fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

5. Staff and Volunteer Safer Recruitment

Changing Faces has procedures in place to ensure that all reasonable checks are made before appointing an individual to a position of trust, or where they are likely to come into contact with children or adults at risk. Changing Faces fully complies with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice and Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice. This is in line with The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

It is a requirement that those seeking employment or to volunteer with or around vulnerable groups will need to disclose any current involvement with protection agencies (such as the Police) before taking up a position with Changing Faces.

Similarly, if any existing member of staff or a volunteer is charged with a criminal offence or becomes aware that they are being investigated by a protection agency, then it must be disclosed immediately to the Safeguarding Lead and the Chief Executive, who will inform the Safeguarding Trustee.

To prevent abuse by staff and volunteers (People in Positions of Trust):

- All staff and volunteers responsible for delivering care or working alone with children are required to have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scotland (PVG) check carried out on behalf of Changing Faces.
- All staff and volunteers are required to read all Changing Faces Policies and Procedures and sign the Safeguarding Policy Sign Off Sheet to say they have read, understood and will comply with these. All staff and volunteers are required to refresh this each year.
- All staff and volunteers will receive Safeguarding Training appropriate to their role.
- Changing Faces Safeguarding Team are qualified and experienced in working with children and vulnerable adults and are required to maintain an up-to-date understanding of the issues as part of their professional role.
- The Safeguarding Lead of the Board of Trustees has received safeguarding training and regularly updates their knowledge with latest best practice.

To report a suspicion of abuse by a staff member or volunteer – please refer to the Safeguarding Children's Procedures.

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6. Policy Review

Changing Faces is committed to reviewing safeguarding policy and practice at regular intervals, especially in light of any changes in legislation affecting or updating the law. Any substantive changes are presented for approval by the Board of Trustees.

Last reviewed: November 2024

Next review: November 2025