Safeguarding
Children & Vulnerable Adults

1. Introduction

For the purposes of this policy:

A **"Child"** is someone who has not attained the age of 18, as defined by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

A **"Vulnerable Adult"** is defined by The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 as an adult aged 16 years and over who:

- is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests
- and are at risk of harm
- and because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected
- **"Harm"** includes all harmful behaviour and in particular, includes:
- conduct which causes physical harm;
- conduct which causes psychological harm
- unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights or interests
- conduct which causes self harm

It is the decision of a Council Officer to determine if an adult meets the criteria to be considered 'vulnerable'. It is often the case that adults at some risk of harm do not mee**t the legal criteria.**

TreeLink Stirling is managed by voluntary trustees and supported by other volunteers: it has no paid staff.

TreeLink Stirling does not organise events where it takes responsibility for children in the absence of their parents or usual carers. Vulnerable adults who wish to take part should be accompanied by a carer or other adult known to them.

2. Policy

TreeLink Stirling believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or Vulnerable Adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard all children and Vulnerable Adults and promote their welfare, by a commitment to practice which protects them. In order to achieve this we will ensure that trustees and other volunteers are not left alone with unsupervised children or Vulnerable Adults.

We recognise that:

• The welfare of the child or Vulnerable Adult is paramount

• All children or Vulnerable Adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

• Working in partnership with children, Vulnerable Adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare

TreeLink will seek to safeguard children and Vulnerable Adults by:

• Valuing them, listening to, and respecting them

• Sharing information about child and adult protection and good practice with volunteers

• Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, carers and children appropriately

• Providing effective management of volunteers

3. Procedures for Referral

4.1 All action is taken in line with the following legislation/guidance:

- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Forth Valley Inter-agency Child Protection Guidance 2016

4.2 TreeLink Stirling will designate a trustee who will act as a first point-of-contact if any trustee or other volunteer receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred. This will normally be the chair and secretary.

4.3 Any trustee or other volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred, must report it immediately to one of the designated trustees. In the absence of any of the above designated trustees, the matter should be brought to the attention of the community event leader or meeting chair.

4.4 The designated trustees will immediately inform the Police (999) if a child or Vulnerable Adult is at immediate risk of harm, or 101 if they are not at immediate risk of harm.

4.5 Confidentiality must be maintained, and information relating to individual children, Vulnerable Adults, their families will be shared on a strictly need to know basis.

5. Alleged Abuse by trustees or other volunteers

If an allegation is made against a trustee or other volunteer, then the allegation must be passed to the designated trustee, or, if the allegation concerns them, direct to Stirling Council Social Work.

The designated trustee should contact Stirling Council Social Work department.

6. Record Keeping

6.1 Any trustee or other volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the

date, time and location. All records must be dated and signed.

6.2 All records relating to protecting concerns of children and Vulnerable Adults will be passed to the Secretary, who will keep the records in a secure, password-protected folder. These will remain confidential.

6.3 Records of concerns about children and Vulnerable Adults should be kept, even where there is no need to make a referral immediately.

7. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the Chair of Trustees.

Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all trustees and other volunteers within the organisation.

Approved April 12th 2021

Review October 2028