

# **FORT WILLIAM PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

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## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE REGARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS ATTENDING CLUB ACTIVITIES**

Contents:

- 1 Aims of this policy and background**
- 2 Club activities and safeguarding guidelines**
- 3 Disclosure**
- 4 Photography and other media**

Appendix A Definition of “vulnerable adult”

Appendix B Child and the appropriate response to disclosure of abuse by a child to a members of the club in the context of club activities

Appendix C Abuse of a vulnerable adult, and the appropriate response to disclosure of abuse by a vulnerable adult to a member of the Club in the context of Club activities, or to strong suspicions of such abuse.

Appendix D Child protection and safeguarding reporting form

Appendix E Contact details

Appendix F The procedure in detail

Appendix F references for further information

## **1 AIMS OF THIS POLICY AND BACKGROUND**

Fort William Photographic Society (“the Club”) recognises that in its activities it has a responsibility towards others, especially any child or vulnerable adult, to prevent any form of abuse.

The aims of this Policy are:

- to assist members by setting out their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
- to provide guidance to members on adopting behaviours to protect children, vulnerable adults and themselves under different circumstances that might arise in the Club
- to have a process in place for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

Fort William Photographic Society’s objectives, as set set out in the constitution, are the promotion cultivation and wider appreciation of photography in the wider community as well as the enhancement of its members’ photographic and creative skills. The Club aims to be as inclusive as possible to all members of the community, including young adults (age 16 and 17) and those who are vulnerable adults, but recognises its particular responsibility to those members.

All members, especially young adults (16 &17 year olds) and vulnerable adults, must be treated with respect and dignity, recognising any unique personal needs.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term “child” is used to mean any Club member or visitor under the age of 18. The term ‘vulnerable adult’ is defined in Appendix A.

Adherence to the Policy is a condition of all categories of membership of the Club. In the case of children, their parent or guardian must countersign a copy of this Policy as acceptance of the Policy.

This Policy is available to consult on the Club’s website and all new members will be directed to the website and asked to read this policy.

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Club’s Committee

## **2. CLUB ACTIVITIES with SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES for each.**

### **2.1 Presentations, competitions and other meetings in general open to members held in a large meeting room.**

These meetings are the main club activities. Those showing images, whether prints or projected images, must ensure that these images are not indecent nor likely to cause offence to adults or minors. If there is a likelihood of this, prior advice must be given before the meeting.

Meetings are low risk environments for minors or vulnerable adults. Committee members take responsibility for welcoming members and taking account of any special personal needs of members - for example, the siting of wheelchairs.

Young adults (16 & 17 year olds) may attend with parental consent, or be accompanied by parent or legal guardian. Vulnerable adults would be expected to be accompanied by their carer.

## **2.2 Occasional external meetings for which members arrange their own transport.**

These involve small numbers meeting, usually in public places for example for a photography walk. Members are advised not to offer lifts to young adults unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Members should not work on their own with a young adult or vulnerable adult. They should make sure they can be observed by others, and preferably that the parent, guardian or carer is present.

## **2.3 Members of the Club are sometimes invited by organisers of community events to take photographs.**

The Club encourages individual members to respond to such invitations as it supports the community and also gives members wider photographic experiences.

Community events may include ones in which minors or vulnerable adults are taking part. If members are photographing these events by invitation then it is the responsibility of the inviting organisation to get permission for the photography from parents, guardians or carers if required. Asking permission from all parents, guardians or carers may not be possible and it is sufficient to have notices at the event that photography has been arranged. These could give a contact point for people who do not want photographs taken at the event. The member dealing with the initial request should ask the organisers to ensure that such arrangements are in place. This should be done such that the request and reply are on record, for example by e-mail.

## **2.4 Mentoring or training requested by members who need help with aspects of their photography.**

Providing mentoring or training might involve visits to private homes. Informal mentoring is important to the club so that more experienced members can pass on expertise to others if requested. Mentoring of children or vulnerable adults is only allowed with the explicit agreement of their parent, guardian or carer, and should take place only if another adult, preferably the parent, guardian or carer, is present.

## **2.5 Internet discussion groups and photo-sharing.**

The Club has a website and WhatsApp page which members can elect to join. The Club's social media site (facebook) will have at least two administrators who control access and can remove material should anything unacceptable be posted, whether a photograph or comment. Members are required to treat others with respect and politeness in their comments, even if their opinions differ. For young adults the WhatsApp contact number should be that of a parent or guardian, not the young person's.

## **2.6 The Club holds occasional meetings via the Zoom platform.**

This can involve the display of digital images from members of the Club, other clubs or external presenters. Prior to such meetings, those taking part should be advised of their responsibilities under this policy.

### **3. DISCLOSURE**

If a child or vulnerable adult were to disclose abuse to a Club member in the course of Club events or activities, then the Club member should take such disclosure seriously and follow the procedures set out in Appendix B and Appendix C. A form for recording their actions is provided in Appendix D. If a member has any safeguarding concerns then they should contact a Committee member.

### **4. PHOTOGRAPHY AND OTHER MEDIA**

4.1 If a young adult or vulnerable adult is a member of the Club, then written permission must be gained from their parent/guardian or carer if photographs of them as the subject or model are to be taken.

Separate written permission has to be sought if such photographs of a child or vulnerable adult as the subject are to be published in any form, for example on the website, on social media, e-mailed to others, or used in competition.

However, if a child or vulnerable adult were to appear peripherally in photographs taken as part of a Club activity then permission would be held to have been given when the parent, guardian or carer countersigns this Policy on joining the Club.

4.2 No child should be allowed to view or take images that may be considered suggestive or indecent in nature. Although the taking or viewing of such images at normal Club meetings is unlikely, the possibility should be considered and appropriate action(s) taken. Such actions could include the exclusion of children from attending that meeting, or an insistence that they are accompanied throughout by their parent or guardian. Similarly, vulnerable adults may also be required to be accompanied by their carer.

4.3 No personal details of a member of the Club such as their address or telephone number, should be revealed without permission. In the case of a child or vulnerable adult this permission should be given by the parent, guardian or carer.

4.4 When taking photographs or video recordings at an event that involves children or vulnerable adults it is good practice, where practicable, to ask the permission of the organisers or persons in charge and for the photographer to be able to identify themselves if requested during the course of the event. It is noted that there are no legal restrictions on photographing people in public places, and often it may not be practicable to ask permission. If Club members have been invited to photograph an event, the guidance in Section 2.3 should be followed.

#### **4.5 Mobile and on-line communication**

There are many ways for people to communicate. It is recommended that Club members should not communicate with a child or vulnerable adult by text or online, other than in a general communication to all members. When using phone, they should communicate with the parent, guardian or carer, rather than the child or vulnerable adult. When using e-mail they should communicate with the parent, guardian or carer as well as the child or vulnerable adult

## 5 PREVENTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All Committee members, other club members and volunteers will be requested to read and familiarise themselves with Fort William Photographic Society Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

Where abuse to a vulnerable person is alleged, suspected, reported or concerns are raised, the Safeguarding Procedure must be followed. The confidentiality of the vulnerable person will be respected wherever possible. The vulnerable person should be made aware that committee members cannot ignore issues around abuse and that steps will be taken to deal with them in as sensitive a manner as possible. The welfare of the individual is paramount.

## 6 IMPLEMENTATION

**This policy is designed to ensure that vulnerable individuals are protected, according to Human Rights legislation, at club meetings and activities from all types of abuse as identified above and other actions and activities that may be considered harmful.**

Whilst it has, in the past, been rare for vulnerable individuals to attend club activities, the Club does not wish to avoid potentially complex issues surrounding their attendance. However the club does recognise that it does not have the skills, resources, training and a sufficient pool of members having undergone the Disclosure and Barring Service (previously CRB) check to help ensure the safety of venerable people at every Club activity.

In light of the above, the following points will be implemented within the Club:

1. When attending club activities, young adults and vulnerable individuals must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or a responsible adult appointed in writing by a parent, legal guardian or formal carer where appropriate.
2. Written permission from the parent or guardian or formal carer shall be obtained where appropriate prior to a vulnerable individual attending the club. This written permission shall include the Nomination of the responsible adult to accompany the vulnerable individual if the parent/guardian does not wish to attend.
- 3.4. Club portrait sessions shall only involve the taking of images of vulnerable individuals under the direct supervision of, and with the consent of, a parent or legal guardian.
5. Indecent or suggestive images of vulnerable individuals shall not be taken or displayed at any time.
6. Vulnerable individuals shall be treated as equals by all those present. Acceptable language shall be used in the presence of vulnerable individuals.
8. A copy of this Policy and Procedure shall be placed on the Club's website and a hardcopy will be made available for inspection at the AGM. The parents, legal guardians or carers of a vulnerable individual will be directed to this policy on our website at the time of

joining. All club members shall be asked to confirm that they have read and are familiar with this policy (and other club policies) as they renew their annual membership, or at the time of joining the club

## **SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE**

1. If you think abuse has or may have just occurred. Act immediately.

Make sure the person is safe.

Inform the Chairman and Club Secretary immediately. They will contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed and record details of the allegation.

2. Bringing a concern to the attention of The Chairman and Club Secretary who in turn will contact the Police or local authority referral agency.

The Chairman and or Club Secretary will contact the local authority referral agency or the police straight away.

3. The Local Authority referral agency or Police will coordinate an investigation.

If necessary they will hold a strategy discussion or meeting to decide what action to take next. You might need to give a statement to the local authority referral agency or the police. Social services or the police will decide what to do next.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Definition of a vulnerable adult**

The definition of a vulnerable adult is a person age 18 or over who:

- Is in need of / eligible for Community Care Services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness: and who is or may be unable to take care of him / herself or is unable to protect him / herself from significant harm or exploitation
- Some people are always vulnerable, such as those mentioned above who are in need of community care services, but any person may be vulnerable at times. This Policy could therefore be relevant to the treatment of any Club member.
- A vulnerable person may fall into any one of the following groups: older frail people; people with a mental health need, a learning difficulty, a physical impairment, a sensory impairment; people who are substance or alcohol dependent, or family carers who are providing assistance to another vulnerable adult.

## **APPENDIX B**

Child abuse, and the appropriate response to disclosure of abuse by a child to a member of the Club in the context of Club activities

### **B.1 INTRODUCTION**

B1 .1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm.

B1.2 Guidance published by the Government defines four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

- Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

- Sexual Abuse

This type of abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment to the child's health and development.

### **B.2 PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE**

B2.1 It is important that children are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions or abuse must be taken seriously and reported to a Committee member after following the guidance set out in this Appendix.

B2.2 Regardless of the child's view it remains the responsibility of the member to take whatever action is required to ensure the safety of that child. A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. The outline form in Appendix D shows the information which should be obtained. Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible.

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral. Responsibility for making enquiries and investigating allegations rests with children's social services along with other relevant agencies.

### **B.3 SUSPECTED ABUSE**

Abuse of a child may be suspected by a member of the Club in the context of contact through the Club, without disclosure from the child. If this were to occur then such suspicions and the evidence for these should be reported to a Committee member, who will raise the matter with the Club's Chairman and Secretary.

### **B.4 RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO A CHILD MAKING AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

- Listen to the child.
- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- Questions must be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions must be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceedings.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others. Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social services she/he must be asked his or her view.

### **B.5 REFER**

In the event of any disclosure or complaint by a child, the Club's Secretary (or the Chairman, if the Secretary is the subject of the disclosure or complaint) will contact

Highland Council Social Work Child protection Fort William:01349 781410

Out of hours: 0808 175 4646 (Mon-Fri 17:00-09:00, all day at weekends and public holidays)

## **APPENDIX C**

Abuse of a vulnerable adult, and the appropriate response to disclosure of abuse by a vulnerable adult to a member of the Club in the context of Club activities, or to strong suspicions of such abuse The Care Act 2014 imposes a duty on Local Authorities to set up Safeguarding Adults Boards. These have a duty to assess the risk to any adult referred to them.

### **C.1 Categories of Abuse**

The main forms of abuse of vulnerable adults are:

- Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions
- Sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting
- Psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
- Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- Neglect or acts of omission, including medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- Discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

### **C.2 Suspicion or disclosure of abuse**

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse in the context of Club membership must be reported to a Committee member, who will raise the matter with the Club's Chairman and Secretary. If any such abuse were to be suspected by a member of the Club in the context of their membership, or were to be disclosed to a member during Club activities, the procedure to be followed is the same as for abuse of a child, and is set out in Appendix B.

The Safeguarding Policy Form in Appendix D can be used for vulnerable adults as well as children.

## **APPENDIX D - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Form**

Please use this to record basic information required to make a referral.

Date:

Time:

Name of individual cause for concern is about:

Age (if known):

Address (if known):

Describe your concern and action taken:

Observations to support cause for concern:

Description and location of any visible marks, bruising etc:

Name of alleged abuser, relationship with child (if known):

Name of person completing form: Signature:

Date:

Name of Committee member: Signature:

Date:

## **Appendix E : CONTACT DETAILS**

Referrals should be made to:

Highland Council Social Work Child protection Fort William:01349 781410

Out of hours: 0808 175 4646 (Mon-Fri 17:00-09:00, all day at weekends and public holidays)

Contact Children's Services immediately if a child is also at risk –via the above contact details

Vulnerable adults: 01349 886606

Vulnerable adults out of hours: 0808 175 4646 to report concern about a vulnerable adult in Lochaber :01397 703892 or [nhsh.lochabersw@nhs.scot](mailto:nhsh.lochabersw@nhs.scot)

Contact The police if you think a crime may have been committed

## **APPENDIX F: THE PROCEDURE IN DETAIL**

### **Recognise**

You think abuse has or may have occurred. Act immediately.

It is the responsibility of the person first becoming aware of a situation where there may be a vulnerable adult subject to, or at risk of, abuse to:

### **Respond**

#### **Make Safe**

- Deal with the immediate needs of the person. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the adult is in no immediate danger and seeking medical treatment if required as a matter of urgency.
- Do NOT discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator.
- Do NOT disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash or bathe the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm.
- If the allegation is about a club or committee member, ensure that the allegation is properly managed. This may include suspending the member(s) or volunteer. The member or volunteer is also entitled to support at this stage but this will be the responsibility of the local authority referral agency or the police to source.

### **Report**

Tell another Committee member if the Chairman or Club Secretary is unavailable or is implicated in the allegation. Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed.

### **Record**

Record details of the allegation as soon as possible somewhere that can be kept secure. Include:

- a. The allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident, what the vulnerable adult said about the abuse and how it occurred or what has been reported to you.
- b. The appearance and behaviour of the victim.
- c. Any injuries observed.

### **Refer**

It is the responsibility of the Chairman and/ or the Club Secretary to:

1. Decide without delay on the most appropriate course of action once the allegation or suspicion of abuse has been raised.
2. Deal with any immediate needs:
  - a. Ensure that the victim of the alleged abuse is safe
  - b. Ensure that any necessary emergency medical treatment is arranged
  - c. Ensure that no forensic evidence is lost
  - d. If the alleged perpetrator is also a vulnerable adult, ensure that a committee member is allocated to attend to their needs and ensure that other members are not put at risk.

3. Clarify the facts stated by the member but do NOT in any circumstances discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator or, if possible, the victim.

4. Check that the circumstances fall within the safeguarding adults procedures i.e. meeting the definition of abuse as defined in this Policy and Procedures. If at all uncertain a referral should be made to the local authority referral agency or police.

5. Address issues of consent and confidentiality.

6. A formal referral must be made on the same day as the alert is raised wherever:

- A crime has been, could have been, or yet could be committed.
- There is a suspicion that an abuse has taken place.
- The allegation involves a member of staff or paid carer.
- Other vulnerable adults are at risk.
- The alleged perpetrator is a vulnerable adult.
- They are unsure if abuse has taken place

7. Where a decision is made NOT to refer, the alert must be recorded, with the reasons for the decision not to refer to the Local Authority referral agency and it must be recorded that an alert has been considered.

Bringing the concern to the attention of the Local Authority referral agency

The referral stage involves bringing the concern regarding alleged abuse or potential abuse formally to the attention of the local authority referral agency. Any individual who has been alerted to the possibility of abuse having occurred or being likely to occur should make a referral.

The person making the referral should ideally have the following information available; however, the lack of any of this information should not delay the referral:

- The name of the vulnerable person
- Date of birth and age
- Address and telephone number
- Why the person is considered vulnerable
- Whether consent has been obtained for the referral, and if not the reasons e.g. the vulnerable person lacks mental capacity or there is an over-riding public interest (e.g. where other vulnerable adults are at risk)
- Whether there are any concerns or doubts about the mental capacity of the vulnerable adult
- Whether the police are aware of the allegation, and whether a police investigation is underway

## **Appendix G; references for further information**

Scottish Photographic Federation guidance on safeguarding: [https://www.scottish-photographic-federation.org/sites/default/files/downloads/pagb\\_child\\_protection.pdf](https://www.scottish-photographic-federation.org/sites/default/files/downloads/pagb_child_protection.pdf) (accessed 10/03/2025)

Principles of safeguarding; <https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/what-are-the-6-principles-of-safeguarding#:~:text=There are 6 main principles,, proportionality, partnerships and accountability.> (accessed 10/03/2025)