

## **2.4 Safeguarding**

### **Policy Statement**

The RSNO is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults to be of paramount concern, including protection from exploitative relationships. The RSNO considers it the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation to prevent abuse and dangerous practice including reporting concerns.

### **Who needs protection?**

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years (i.e. 0 to 17).

It could be anyone aged 18 or over who needs additional support due to physical or mental health conditions.

Or “who for any reason is unable to take care of themselves” or “protect themselves from exploitation”

### **What are they being protected from?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting, or by failing to prevent, significant harm to the child or vulnerable adult. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. (Source: The National Guidance for child Protection in Scotland 2014).

### **What to do if you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse**

Immediately report your concerns to your contact within the partner organisation i.e., the member of staff you are working with. You should also report your concerns to the RSNO’s Designated Person (see Chief Operating Officer or Staff Folder for up to date Safeguarding Important Contacts), who will deal with the information as appropriate. In a situation where a partner organisation is not involved (e.g. Junior Chorus) go directly to the RSNO’s Designated Person. You should not discuss your concerns with anyone else. Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Where possible, they should be reported on the same day they arise.

If the concerns arise because someone discloses information be supportive; listen with care but do not ask any unnecessary questions. Take it seriously and advise them that you will have to pass it on. Write down the nature of the concern, so far as possible using their words. Sign and date this.

### **Confidentiality**

An individual may tell you something which causes you to be concerned then ask you to keep what they have said a secret. You must never promise an individual that you will keep their secret. Even if a retraction is then made, the initial concerns or statement should still be recorded and reported accordingly.

If a child or young person or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with the RSNO have a responsibility to act to make sure that any child or vulnerable adult whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. Children, young people and their parents will always be told this as will vulnerable adults and their family or carers.

### **Action to be taken by the designated person**

Where the concern involves a child or young person or vulnerable adult working with the RSNO through a partner organisation, the Designated Person should in the first instance contact the partner organisation’s Designated Person.

All cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously and refer to the designated person of Chief Executive.

### **What Happens Next?**

The designated person will investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child, young person or vulnerable adult. Three agencies make up Child Protection Partnerships in Scotland - Police, Social Work and Local Authorities. Where a crime has been reported, it must be passed on to the police. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a child or vulnerable adult, the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police/Social Worker.

### **What to do in an emergency**

If you are concerned that a child is at risk of imminent injury or harm (i.e. you have reason to believe that when they leave your session they are going into an unsafe environment), contact Police immediately and the Designate person. Do not delay, as this could result in serious injury to a child or vulnerable adult.

### **What to do if you have a concern about dangerous practice**

If you have observed anyone (including non RSNO personnel) acting in a way which puts children at risk of harm you should report this to the partner organisation's or the RSNO's Designated Person as soon as possible. Your report will, as far as possible, be dealt with in confidence.

Concerns will be reviewed and an appropriate course of action will be taken. This may involve the use of the RSNO's disciplinary procedures and/or a referral to Social Work Services/Police.

### **What if the concern is about someone within the organisation?**

If you feel it would be inappropriate to report your concerns to the Designated Person you should contact the Chief Executive of the RSNO or Social Work Services/Police. If your concern relates to the Designated Person you should contact either the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Board.

### **What to do if you are unhappy with the response to your report**

If you are unhappy with the response from the Designated Person, you should contact the Chief Executive. If you are unhappy with the response from the Chief Executive, you should contact the Chair of the Board. Social Work Services Office or the Adult Protection Team may also be contact to outline your concerns and the basis for them.

### **Supporting the child, young person or vulnerable adult**

It is important that those involved with the child or young person act in a supportive manner. You should:

- Listen with care and avoid being judgmental;
- Reassure the child or young person or vulnerable adult there were right to tell;
- Affirm the child or young person's or vulnerable adult's feelings as expressed by them;
- Do not question/interrogate the child or young person or vulnerable adult;
- Do not show disbelief and avoid displaying strong emotions;
- Do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse.

### **Historical abuse**

Where a child or vulnerable adult discloses historical abuse, the RSNO's child and vulnerable adult protection reporting procedure must still be followed regardless of the length of time which has passed. A full discussion should take place with the Designated Person to agree what action is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others.

## **What to do if you have general welfare concerns about a child or vulnerable adult**

There are many circumstances that may cause harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and require a response, but fall short of a concern that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused. Nevertheless, a build-up of concerns over time may become serious enough that the child or vulnerable adult is considered to be at risk of abuse. Where you have general welfare concerns about a child or vulnerable adult you should:

- Address the incidents as they arise with the parents/carers, or the school/partner organisation;
- Discuss your concerns with the Designated Person;
- Liaise with other agencies that are working with the child or vulnerable adult;
- Record your concerns and actions. A signed, dated copy should be given to the Designated Person;
- Review general welfare concerns periodically to see whether the build-up of concerns is significant.

## **Training and Awareness**

Employees/volunteers of the RSNO will be made aware of the existence of the Safeguarding Policy and their responsibilities in relation to the child and vulnerable adult protection process. This will be done through the provision of training and through its inclusion in the HR Policies and Procedures manuals. Copies of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy are available in the Education and Community Partnerships office and online at [www.rsno.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.rsno.org.uk/safeguarding)

Staff looking for further guidance should also refer to Scottish Government National Child Protection Guidelines [National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

NSPCC also give useful legislative guidance, references and resources [Child protection system for Scotland | NSPCC Learning](#)

The existence of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy will be communicated to all parents/carers of children and vulnerable adults directly involved in RSNO activities (e.g. Junior Chorus) who can access it online and receive a copy upon request. Schools/partner organisations will be sent a copy of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy upon request.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

The RSNO uses a range of measures to ensure its employees are suitable for the role they are carrying out including:

- Completion of an application form/submission of a letter of application and a curriculum vitae;
- Obtaining up to date contact details and proof of identity;
- The provision of two suitable referees;
- Interview/audition and trial;
- Completion of a probationary period/induction.

All those carrying out 'regulated work' (as defined by the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act, 2007) will also be required to become a member of the PVG Scheme and obtain a Scheme Record. Existing members of the PVG Scheme will be required to apply for a Scheme Record Update. Anyone found to be listed or barred from regulated work will not be asked or permitted to carry out any regulated work.