



Child Protection Policy

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Fèis Rois
16-17 High Street
Dingwall
IV15 9RU
feisrois.org

Safeguarding Policy and Guidance for Staff and Volunteers

Fèis Rois is committed to the protection of vulnerable children, young people and adults. Fèis Rois considers it the duty of all those employed by, or involved with, the organisation to promote the wellbeing and safeguard from harm all children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact.

Policy aims

This policy aims to ensure that Fèis Rois:

1. Takes account of local inter-agency safeguarding guidelines for children and vulnerable adults.
2. Equips staff and volunteers with information, knowledge, support and guidance relevant to safeguarding and keeping everyone safe.
3. Operates a robust and safe staff selection and appointment process and requires full disclosure and checking in line with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act and the taking up of references from previous employers.
4. Ensures that at any event where Fèis Rois is present there will be someone from the organisation with responsibility for safeguarding participants and if there are any concerns re any participant these are reported directly to the Chief Executive.

Principles

- The welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults is always the paramount consideration.
- Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility.
- Every child young person and vulnerable adult must be treated as an individual and has a right to a positive sense of identity.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse neglect and exploitation.
- Everyone has the right to express their views on matters affecting them and for their views to be taken seriously.

To promote these principles Feis Rois will:

- Treat everyone with respect and take measures to ensure that all involved with the organisation do the same.
- Promote the rights to privacy and dignity of all participants.
- Respect confidentiality and ensure that information is only shared when it is appropriate and to those with a need to know.
- Act to stop any inappropriate physical or verbal behaviour including bullying.
- Treat all concerns and allegations seriously with care and sensitivity in line with procedures.
- Identify the Chief Executive as the designated person for safeguarding and the Chairperson of Fèis Rois as the designated Board member.
- Provide safeguarding awareness and training for staff and volunteers.
- Ensure staff know that their job is not to investigate concerns but to listen record and report to the Chief Executive

Dealing with a Child or Adult Protection Situation: Guidance for Feis Rois Staff and Volunteers

Being alert to signs and symptoms:

People who abuse others often do so in a manner that makes it difficult for children, young people and adults 'at risk' to tell someone else if they are being abused. However there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of abuse or neglect.

The child, young person or adult may:

- have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- appear afraid to go home
- be left unattended or unsupervised
- have inappropriate levels of responsibility for their age
- be acting out in a sexually inappropriate way
- be misusing drugs or alcohol

The parent/partner/carer may be:

- acting in a violent or sexual manner towards a child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself
- misusing drink or drugs whilst caring for a child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself
- verbally abusive towards a child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself

If you notice any of these signs and/or are worried, please take action to protect the child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself. Report any concerns arising from this directly to the Chief Executive.

Responding to children or adults who may have been abused:

There may be a time when a child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself approaches you as a trusted adult to discuss their life outside Fèis Rois. It is vital that you react to this in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Children, young people and vulnerable adults can find talking about abuse very difficult. It may be that they have been unable to speak about the matter for some time, sometimes months or years.

The key thing to remember is that it is not your job to decide if abuse has taken place – it is your responsibility to report concerns.

Whether you are a volunteer or a paid member of staff you must, at all times:

- Acknowledge the age group you work with.
- Allow the child, young person or adult who is less able to protect him/herself time to speak.
- Do not interrupt nor make suggestions to them.

Do not interrogate or question other than to clarify your understanding. **If the matter is to be investigated further this will be done by trained professionals.** No matter how well you know the individual, spare them having to repeat themselves over and over. Apart from anything else, the person may begin to think that you don't believe them:

- Listen to the individual - **REALLY LISTEN** - take what they say seriously. Tell them that they've done the right thing by telling you.
- Reassure the person that s/he was right to tell you what happened and that you feel privileged that they chose to confide in you.
- Be honest, tell the person that you cannot keep it a secret, you will have to talk to someone else that can help.
- Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the person – think of how hard it must be to say it. Some things are very difficult to talk about, you've been chosen because the person feels able to talk to you. If you show anger, disgust, disbelief then the person may stop talking for fear of upsetting you further or feel that your negative feelings are being directed towards them.
- Never trivialise or exaggerate abuse issues.
- As soon as practical write down everything the person told you, but remember that this is a confidential matter between you and that individual. The only person you should be discussing it with is the Chief Executive or the person designated to be responsible for child protection at the event .

If you have concern this is what you need to do.

Fèis Rois has appointed the Chief Executive to be the Designated Person for child/adult protection He/She is responsible for making decisions about where to take child/adult protection concerns. In the first instance, you should take your concerns to the Chief Executive.

If the Designated Person is not available and the situation is clearly urgent, e.g. the child, young person or adult who may be in need of protection, is too frightened to go home or you have very serious doubts about that person's safety, then the information should be passed to the Social Work Service or Police without delay. You should not be afraid to contact them for advice and guidance.

REMEMBER – you may not be the only one to have concerns. All referrals are discussed thoroughly by professionals prior to any action being taken. Your concerns will be genuine and treated as such by them.

If the concerns are more general about a person's welfare, you should initially discuss these with the Chief Executive who is the Fèis Rois Designated Person. The Designated Person will be able to speak with another professional who is familiar with the child/adult and its family/carer, e.g. Health Visitor, Teacher, GP, Social Worker, and can find out whether they also have concerns. Depending on the level of concern a single agency may be able to provide additional support to assist the family or a multi-agency meeting may be called to look at more complex support needs.

Concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff/volunteer/committee member must be reported to the organisation's Designated Person without delay. If necessary s/he will seek advice from Social Work Services and/or the Police immediately and take any appropriate action to protect children/adults.

If the concerns are about the Designated Person, the matter should be reported to the Fèis Rois Chairperson. If there are concerns about the Chairperson then the concern should be taken directly to the Police or Social Work Services.

What happens next?

All information received by Social Work Services and the Police is treated seriously and will be acted upon. This will include checking agency records and gathering information from other agencies involved with the child, young person or adult who may be in need of protection.

If it is decided to investigate they will seek to speak to the child/adult and to the family/carers in order to assess the situation and to make sure that the individual is safe.

Following these enquiries one or more of the following might happen:

- No further action (either because none is necessary or, in the case of an adult with capacity to make their own decisions, refusal of help.)
- A named professional will keep regular contact with the child, young person or adult in need of protection to ensure that needs are met.
- A multi-agency meeting will be called to decide what action is best to protect the child/adult and support the family/carers.
- If an illegal act has taken place or it is felt that the only way that the child/adult can be protected is through compulsory measures, there will be a referral to the appropriate legal system.

The nature of the follow up action will depend upon a number of factors the nature of the abuse the impact it has had on the child young person or vulnerable adult, an assessment of risk and protective factors. A plan to ensure that the child is protected will if need be drawn up making clear what actions are expected from parents professionals and any other person with a significant relationship.

Appendix 1

Definitions of children, 'protected adults' or adults who may be 'at risk'.

Whilst in Scottish law a **'child'** is generally defined as under 16 years of age, for the purposes of this guidance, Section 97 of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 a 'child' is defined as an individual aged under 18 years. This brings it into line with the law covering the recruitment of adults to work or volunteer with children, and with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Section 94 of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act defines a **'protected adult'** as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service. This definition of protected adult replaces the definition of "adult at risk" used for the purposes of eligibility for enhanced disclosure and avoids labelling adults on the basis of their having a specific condition or disability.

Although Section 94 (above) replaces the old definition of 'adult at risk' that was used for enhanced disclosure, the term 'adult at risk' is now used in the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and is defined as an individual aged 16 or above who finds it difficult to keep themselves or their property safe and might be more vulnerable to harm from other people because of a disability, illness or mental disorder/infirmity. It doesn't mean that all people with learning disabilities, mental health problems or illnesses or disabled people are always 'at risk'. It means that there are certain people in this situation who find it more difficult to keep themselves or their property safe.

Appendix 2

What is Abuse and Serious Harm?

Defining Child Abuse and Neglect:

Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).

This is a broad definition which includes placing children at risk through something a person has done to them or something a person is failing to do for them. It encourages us to be open minded and think about a wide range of behaviours and actions which may be harmful to children.

Categories of Child Abuse

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect and Failure to Thrive

Defining Adult Abuse and Harm:

‘Abuse’ is the harming of another individual usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual.” (*Centre for Policy on Aging 1996*)

‘Abuse’ includes violence, harassment, threatening conduct, and any other conduct giving rise, or likely to give rise, to physical or mental injury, fear, alarm, or distress. (*Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001*) ‘Abuse’ can denote both positive actions, such as violence, physical restraint or misappropriation of state benefits and other property, and omissions such as neglect, and denial of rights.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 defines ‘harm’ as: conduct which causes physical harm, psychological harm, self-harm, and unlawful conduct which appropriates or adversely affects property, rights, or interests.

Types of abuse and harm

All of the following are types of abuse:

- Physical
- Psychological (Mental/Emotional)
- Financial
- Sexual
- Discriminatory (Including withholding information and denial of rights)
- Neglect (including self-neglect)