

Riverside Community Council

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adult Policy

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

1. A **"Child"** is someone who has not attained the age of 18, as defined by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
2. 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

This criteria is known as **"the three point test"**.

3. **"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 three point test **not** the person making the referral. It is often the case that adults at risk of harm do not meet this test however, there remains a duty on the Council to consider the need for support irrespective of the qualifying criteria.

1 Policy Statement

Riverside Community Council consists of between six and nine community councillors, all of whom are volunteers. Community councillors also engage other community volunteers to assist with the organisation and running of community events and meetings throughout the year. The community council has no paid staff.

For the purpose of this policy, community councillors will be referred to as "community councillors" and other volunteers will be referred to as "community volunteers".

Riverside Community Council 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 community councillors and community 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

Riverside Community Council

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adult Policy

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for a child or Vulnerable Adult who are present at community council-led meetings and events, including the children of community councillors and community volunteers
- To provide community councillors with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or Vulnerable Adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm

This policy applies to all community councillors, and community volunteers engaged at community council-led meetings and events, or anyone working on behalf of Riverside Community Council.

We will seek to safeguard children and Vulnerable Adults by:

- Valuing them, listening to, and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for community councillors and community volunteers
- Sharing information about child and adult protection and good practice with community councillors, children (as appropriate), parents, and community volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, carers and children appropriately
- Providing effective management of community councillors and community volunteers through supervision, support and training

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

2 Procedures for Referral / Disclosure Scotland

2.1 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

2.2 The community council will designate four community councillors - Alison Swanson, Fiona Berrow, Joan Murphy, and Sue Dumbleton, who will act as a first point-of-contact if any community councillor or community volunteer receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred.

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

2.4 The designated community councillors 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. The designated community councillor for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults will telephone:

Riverside Community Council

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adult Policy

Daytime: Stirling Council Social Work Intake Team on 01786 471177.

Out-of-hours (after 5 pm and at weekends): Stirling Council Social Work on 01786 470500.

2.5 Confidentiality must be maintained, and information relating to individual children, Vulnerable Adults, their families will be shared with other community councillors and community volunteers on a strictly need to know basis.

3 Alleged Abuse by community councillors or community volunteers

3.1 When an allegation is made against a community councillor or community volunteer, then the allegation must be passed to the designated community councillors, or, if the allegation concerns them, direct to Stirling Council Social Work Intake Team on 01786 471177.

Local Authority Designated Officers

3.2 The designated community councillors should contact one of the Local Authority designated officers for consultation:

Local Authority Designated Officer - Anne Salter, Stirling Council Lead Officer Child Protection, saltera@stirling.gov.uk.

Local Authority Adult Protection Co-ordinator - Graeme Hendry, Clackmannanshire Council, GHendry@clacks.gov.uk.

The Local Authority Designated Officer contacted will record a note of the consultation and will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken.

4 Record Keeping

4.1 Any community councillor or community 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.

4.2 All records relating to protecting concerns of children and Vulnerable Adults will be passed to the community council Secretary, who will keep the records in a secure, password-protected folder in the community council's Dropbox account. These will remain confidential.

4.3 Only the community council's Chair and Secretary will have the password to the PCVA folder in the Dropbox account.

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

5 Parental Involvement

5.0 Riverside Community Council is committed to helping parents/carers understand their responsibility for the welfare of all children and Vulnerable Adults.

5.1 Parents/carers will be given information about the organisation's children and Vulnerable Adult protection procedures.

5.2 Where possible, concerns should be discussed with parents/carers and the designated community councillors should seek agreement to make a referral, unless to do so would place the children or Vulnerable Adult at increased risk of significant harm.

Riverside Community Council

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adult Policy

6 Training

6.0 The designated community councillors must receive training every three years in the protection of children and Vulnerable Adults. Training will be arranged with Stirling Council's Community Engagement Team.

6.1 All community councillors shall have access to induction training on commencing and appropriate refresher training on a regular basis, at least every three years.

7 Review

7.0 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, and up-dated where appropriate.

Author: Diane Alderdice, Riverside Community Council

8 April 2020

Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adult Policy

Appendix 1 - Code of Behaviour

You must:

- Treat all children and Vulnerable Adults with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities which involve children and Vulnerable Adults, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a child or Vulnerable Adult's right to privacy
- Encourage children and Vulnerable Adults to be comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children and Vulnerable Adults
- Operate within the organisation's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse

You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or Vulnerable Adults
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or Vulnerable Adults
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child or Vulnerable Adults abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of the community council to protect you
- Believe "it could never happen to me"
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach
- You should give guidance and support to inexperienced helpers