

Safeguarding Policy

Vivid Roots Collective

August 2025



Company Statement

Vivid Roots Collective is a highland based theatre company, which creates opportunities for and supports the professional development of emerging and Highland-based theatre-makers. We do this by producing new work, creating space for emerging artists to meet and support each other, up-skilling artists through events and professional development on projects, and by engaging with organisations to deliver workshops to young people and their local artists.

On occasion, Vivid Roots will work with children (young people under the age of 18) in our activities as volunteers, for work experience, and on projects. This policy is in relation to these circumstances.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Vivid Roots' services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Vivid Roots, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidance. This review should always be done in consultation with young people, such as board members, focus groups, or feedback from projects.

Where safeguarding pertains to safety and work and the wellbeing of adults employed to work with us, see our Procedure for Performance, Conduct, and Dismissal.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in Scotland. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- Recruitment policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Company handbook
- & Safeguarding procedures [Included as an appendix], including:
 - role description for the designated safeguarding officer
 - dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
 - managing allegations against staff and volunteers
 - recording and storing concerns and information sharing
 - whistleblowing

Safeguarding principles

Our safeguarding principles are informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), see more on the UNCRC here: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/>. The UNCRC is an important part of our approach to working with young people, ensuring that their experience, learning, and welfare is the focus of their engagement with Vivid Roots.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them
- children and young people have the right to access arts and cultural activities and to feel safe and respected in these environments, regardless of their background or characteristics
- children and young people have the right to autonomy to choose and express their views, opinions, and beliefs
- children and young people are experts in the issues that matter to them and should be heard on these matters
- and children and young people have the right to access any information that is relevant to their experiences, beliefs, and well-being

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are particularly vulnerable safe from abuse

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to, and respecting them and their views, experiences, opinions, and beliefs

- ensuring that young people are involved in decision-making processes in relation to policies and recruitment that affects them or other young people who engage with the organisation
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers by staying current with legislation and guidance
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures where they are engaging with young people, ensuring that they are aware of policies and are equipped to follow through on our procedures and commitments
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely where they are engaging with young people, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families whenever we engage young people on our projects through information packs and one-to-ones where appropriate
- ensuring that children, young people and their families understand our policies and procedures, and where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead

Name: Sophie Wink

Email: sophie@vividrootscollective.co.uk

Deputy child protection lead(s)

Name(s): Laura Walker

Email: laura@vividrootscollective.co.uk

Trustee senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Keira Smith

Email: keirasmith.theatre@gmail.com

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Procedures

Safeguarding Officer

Purpose of the role

To take the lead in ensuring that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are in place during Vivid Roots' projects.

To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in Vivid Roots' activities at all times.

Duties and responsibilities

1. Take a lead role in developing and reviewing Vivid Roots' safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
2. Take a lead role in implementing Vivid Roots' safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures: ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning children and young people who take part in Vivid Roots' activities are responded to appropriately.
3. Ensure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children and young people at Vivid Roots, including the board of trustees, understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
4. Make sure children and young people who are involved in activities at Vivid Roots and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.
5. Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Vivid Roots' activities in accordance with our procedures.
6. Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Vivid Roots may present a risk to children or young people. This includes:
 - assessing and clarifying the information
 - making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate
 - consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management
 - following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
7. Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as the local authority child protection services, and/or the police. This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.
8. Consult the NSPCC Helpline when support is needed, by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.
9. Store and retain child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
10. Work closely with the board of trustees and senior safeguarding lead to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.

11. Report regularly to the board of trustees on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of the organisation.
12. Be familiar with and work within inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local child protection agencies.
13. Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse, and keep up to date with new developments in this area.
14. Attend regular training in issues relevant to child protection and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at Vivid Roots.

Training

The nominated safeguarding officer will receive annual training as a minimum requirement of their work. Where it appears that further training is needed due to emergent issues/concerns, this should also be arranged in a timely manner. The safeguarding officer should bring any relevant training to the attention of their line management and the board of trustees.

Concerns about a young person

We recognise that there may be times where children or young people pose a risk to other children and young people through abusive or bullying behaviours. Here, we outline how we manage concerns around peer-on-peer or child-on-child abuse.

We recognise that bullying and abuse may take many forms, such as:

- bullying or cyberbullying
- emotional abuse
- online abuse
- physical abuse
- sexting
- sexual abuse.

There are a range of ways concerns might be raised:

- A child or adult might make a direct allegation of abuse by a child or young person.
- A child or adult might tell you they're uncomfortable with a child or young person's behaviour. They may not realise the behaviour is abusive.
- A member of staff or volunteer might observe behaviour that gives cause for concern and make a report following your organisation's safeguarding procedures.
- The organisation may be informed that a child or young person is the subject of an investigation.
- A child or young person might tell you they have harmed someone else or are at risk of doing so.

When a concern has been raised, you should do follow these guidelines:

- The person making the allegation should always be taken seriously. The staff member receiving the allegation should remain calm and listen, reassuring them that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Inform them that you will need to take a note of what has happened (see below).
- Speak to the nominated safeguarding lead who will advise you on how to respond to the complaint.

- If you notice a minor instance of bullying or abuse and decide to respond immediately, you should remain calm and explain why their behaviour is unacceptable with reference to our company values.

If a child tells you that they have behaved abusively towards another child, you should follow the guidelines here:

- Reassure the child that they've done the right thing by telling you about it.
- Listen carefully to the child and let them tell their whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure you understand what they're saying.
- Use non-judgmental language.
- Tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them and the other children involved safe.
- Never promise to keep what a child tells you a secret. Explain that you will need to speak to other people who can help.
- Explain that there are others who can help them change their behaviour and signpost them to relevant groups or agencies.
- Record the incident in accordance with company policies and procedures.

When recording incidents, you should include the following information:

- the child's details (name, age)
- the date and time of the incident
- what was happening before the incident took place
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (write down their exact words if possible)
- whether the behaviour appeared spontaneous or premeditated.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

We recognise that there may be circumstances where concerns regarding abuse or bullying are raised about members of staff or volunteers with Vivid Roots. It is vital that all such circumstances are taken seriously and handled appropriately, here we outline how we manage concerns around adults working with the company.

In any instance where someone has raised concerns about abuse or bullying by an adult working with the company towards a young person, you should always inform the safeguarding officer. You should never investigate the matter yourself, but should record any information you are given.

When someone raises a concern, or if you see something yourself, you must record the following information:

- the name of alleged abuser and, if appropriate, the details of any young people they have harmed
- the date and time of the incident
- what exactly has been reported/seen and, if appropriate, by whom

This should then be raised with the safeguarding officer immediately who should seek advice from and/or report this to relevant organisations, such as the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk, local child protection services, or the police.

The safeguarding officer should keep a record of:

- all allegations that have been made
- details of how allegations have been followed up and investigated
- decisions made about the allegation and actions taken.

Recording and storing concerns

In all cases, it is important to ask for consent when recording or sharing personal information. When seeking consent, you should be clear about what is being recorded / shared, why, and to whom, and try to get written consent where possible. If you are only given verbal consent, make sure to record this. Ensure that they know they can withdraw their consent at any time.

In some cases, it is acceptable to share information without a person's consent if it is in the public's interest, specifically if it includes protecting children from significant harm. You should always consider whether sharing data without consent is within the public's interest and if it outweighs the need to maintain confidentiality. If you are unsure, you should contact the NSPCC Helpline, or local services for advice. You should also keep a record of the following if you are sharing information without consent:

- what steps you took to get consent
- the person's reasons for not giving consent (if known)
- why you felt it was necessary to share information without consent.

If you are seeking consent from a child, you can use these guidelines to assess whether they are able to give consent themselves, or if you should seek consent from a guardian where this doesn't pose undue risk to the child: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/gillick-competence-fraser-guidelines/>

All records of allegations and concerns should be shared with the safeguarding officer who will store them electronically in a password protected file. Only safeguarding leads will have access to this information and it is stored in a separate folder from any other personal information (i.e. onboarding). All records about individuals will be kept in separate files. Any paper or electronic notes where allegations have been recorded must be destroyed after being stored appropriately, and this must be done immediately following the conversation/exchange.

Records relating to children and young people should be stored until they reach the age of 25; records relating to adults should be kept until they reach state pension age, or for 10 years – whichever is longer. After this time, all records should be purged with a witness. This should be checked annually with the revision of the safeguarding policy.

Individuals to whom the records apply must always be allowed access to the information kept about them, and they can request this via the safeguarding officer.

All records should be kept and managed in accordance with NSPCC guidelines, advice from any local services, and GDPR.

Whistleblowing

If you have concerns about safeguarding, you should always talk to the safeguarding officer, trustee safeguarding lead, or CEO. If you feel that a concern about how we or another organisation manage safeguarding hasn't been acted on even after following up with the relevant members of the organisation, you can share your concerns by whistleblowing.

Whistleblowing is when someone reports wrongdoing on the basis that it is in the public interest for the wrongdoing to be brought to light. This is usually something they've seen at work but not always. The wrongdoing might have happened in the past, be happening now, or be something the whistleblower is concerned may happen in the near future (Gov.uk)

We recommend contacting the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk

Further information

NSPCC Links

Information on signs of abuse and early intervention signs – <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/early-help-and-early-intervention>

Signpost to information about safeguarding children with protected characteristics:

- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/deaf-and-disabled-children>.
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/children-from-black-asian-minoritised-ethnic-communities>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/lgbtq-children-young-people>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/safeguarding-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>

Local Agencies

Highland Council: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare_and_family_care/438/child_protection

- If you are worried that a child is at immediate risk of harm, phone the Police on 999 without delay
- If you are worried that a child may be at risk of harm, please visit <http://hcpc.scot/professionals> for local contact numbers
- If you are worried that a child may be at risk of harm and it is outwith office hours, phone 0808 175 3646

Highland Child Protection Committee: <https://hcpc.scot/>