

# Prevention and Protection



## COMMUNITY SAFETY ENGAGEMENT

### SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

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**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**  
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# PREVENTION AND PROTECTION COMMUNITY SAFETY ENGAGEMENT

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

To report a concern about a child, please refer to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Safeguarding Procedure for the Protection of Children.

This policy details the SFRS' commitment to working in partnership with other agencies by providing support, intervention and the sharing of relevant information on those within our communities deemed to be at risk. Specifically, the policy defines SFRS responsibilities in relation to children and young people, hereafter referred to as child or children.

To fulfil its responsibilities, as defined within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) and the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014), SFRS will report to and co-operate with key partner agencies including Social Work, Police, Education and Health professionals. The aim is to ensure that concerns about the wellbeing and safety of a child are treated efficiently and professionally and to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of any child considered to be at risk of harm.

SFRS will, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that any child identified to be at risk of harm, along with those responsible for their care or welfare, receive the appropriate advice, intervention and support.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information in relation to the duties and procedures to be adopted, whenever there is a concern regarding the wellbeing of a child. If SFRS personnel have concerns regarding an Adult at Risk of harm, reference can be found within the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for the Protection of Adults.

### **3. GOVERNANCE**

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy:

- The Director of Prevention and Protection (P&P) has overall responsibility for this document;
- The Local Senior Officer (LSO)/Head of Function will have the overall responsibility for child protection within their area of responsibility and may devolve tasks, as appropriate;
- The SFRS Community Safety Engagement (CSE) team will provide advice, guidance, support, quality assurance and monitoring; and
- SFRS personnel will raise any concerns regarding the wellbeing of a child with their line manager. For the purpose of this document, 'line manager' refers to the person who has responsibility for the activity being delivered. For example, a firefighter working as part of a Watch would report their concerns to the Watch Manager; however, if the firefighter is delivering an activity separate to their station activities, such as FireSkills, then the line manager may be the Local Area Liaison Officer (LALO) or Station/Group Manager P&P.

### **4. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Establish the governance arrangements for child protection within the SFRS, including the roles and responsibilities of personnel;
- Ensure that SFRS personnel understand the need for rapid inter-agency communication, intervention and collaboration to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of a child or children; and
- Provide a rationale to ensure that the SFRS has in place robust procedures, guidance, training and audit processes for effective child protection.

## 5. DEFINITION OF A CHILD

A child can be defined differently in different legal contexts. For the general purposes of this policy, a child is anyone who has not attained the age of 16 years. Those aged 16 and over are supported by the SFRS Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Adults. However, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 makes reference to a child being a person who has not yet attained the age of 18 years. If in any doubt, always report as a child protection concern.

## 6. CHILD PROTECTION<sup>1</sup>

'Child protection' means protecting a child from abuse or neglect where those with familial responsibility fail, or are unable to do so, or are responsible for the abuse occurring. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

There are four main categories of abuse and neglect which can result in a concern about a child; these are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical neglect

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Government, National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014).

To ensure effective reporting of child protection concerns, the SFRS recognise two aspects of risk:

- Imminent Risk – If an immediate referral is required, i.e. the child is at imminent risk (threat to life) and/or where criminality is suspected, the Police will be informed without delay.
- Not at Imminent Risk – Where there is a potential risk of significant harm but the child does not appear to be in imminent danger.

If in doubt, always treat the concern as an imminent risk.

## **7. CHILD WELLBEING**

Where a child protection referral is not required, the child or family may still benefit from the intervention of support services. In these circumstances, SFRS personnel would discuss their concerns with those that have familial responsibility and, where appropriate, pass details to the Named Person Service.<sup>2</sup>

## **8. AUDIT**

The implementation of this policy will be subject to a robust audit on an annual basis with a focus on the key aspects of:

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<sup>2</sup> The arrangements for the GIRFEC Named Person may differ across local authority areas and LSOs are advised to be aware of the specific arrangements for each. These will be available from the local Child Protection Committee. For more information on the Named Person Service, see the SFRS GIRFEC Guidance sheet.

- Awareness;
- Responding and reporting;
- Data Protection;
- Training; and
- Any other aspects deemed necessary by the Director of P&P.

## **9. TRAINING**

Training for SFRS personnel will be guided by the Scottish Government, National Child Protection Learning and Development Framework. This will consist of in-house single agency training utilising the Learning Content Management System (LCMS) or direct delivery and will be appropriate for the role. In addition, LSOs should ensure that this is complemented locally by multi-agency training delivered by local Child Protection Committees.

## **10. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS**

SFRS personnel, either paid or voluntary, with duties that include 'Regulated Work', as set out by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 ('PVG Act') must undergo appropriate checks as per the SFRS Employment and Criminal Convictions Policy.

## **11. RECORDING AND INFORMATION SHARING**

All information should be recorded utilising the attached forms and shared with partners in a secure manner, e.g. using Egress or delivered by hand. [Appendix A](#) provides a flowchart to support the sharing of information.

All Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) information and supporting actions, such as a referral to a partner agency, should be recorded in the HFSV Community Safety Engagement Toolkit (CSET) module address history. Information recorded should reflect the action taken to reduce the individual's risk.

The main purpose of the SFRS is to work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors on prevention, protection and response, to improve the safety and the wellbeing of people throughout Scotland. Sharing information between partners can improve outcomes in service delivery; however, sharing must be undertaken lawfully, respecting the rights of individuals and protecting the security of their information.

Personal/special category information must be shared securely.

If transmitting electronically, the secure email must be sent/received via Egress Switch, local Community Action Team (CAT) members will assist you as secure email users. An alternative method is to hand deliver the information securely to the intended recipient/s. Fax machines should not be used.

The flowchart ([Appendix A](#)) within this document will assist you when considering sharing. When information needs to be shared, ensure sharing complies with the law, guidance and best practice. Only the minimum information necessary for the purpose will be shared, individuals' rights will be respected, particularly confidentiality and security. Regular sharing should have an information sharing protocol (ISP) in place between partners and should be monitored and reviewed to ensure the information sharing is meeting the required objective/purpose and still fulfilling its obligations. Please contact Information Governance at [SFRSInfoGov@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:SFRSInfoGov@firescotland.gov.uk) when an ISP is required.

ISPs set out a common set of rules to be adopted by the various partners involved in an information sharing operation. These will form a contract between partners. It is good

practice to have an ISP in place and to review regularly, particularly where information is to be shared on a large scale, or on a regular basis.

An Information Sharing Protocol must, at least, document the following:

- The purpose, or purposes, of the sharing;
- The lawful basis for sharing;
- The potential recipients or types of recipient and the circumstances in which they will have access;
- Who the data controllers are and any data processors;
- The data to be shared;
- Data quality – accuracy, relevance, usability;
- Data security;
- Retention of shared data;
- Individuals' rights – procedures for dealing with access requests, queries and complaints;
- Review of effectiveness/termination of the sharing agreement and any particular obligations on all parties to the agreement, giving an assurance around the standards expected; and
- Sanctions for failure to comply with the agreement or breaches by individual staff.

All information created or received should be stored, retained and destroyed in accordance with the SFRS Records Retention Schedule. Any paper copies of information stored electronically can be destroyed securely by way of shredding.

Information Governance, along with ICT, will be providing, where necessary, electronic secure storage in the near future. In the interim period, any personal/special category information should be stored with password protection. Any papers copies of these types of information should be stored securely in a lockable cabinet and processed in accordance with the SFRS Data Protection Policy, Information Security Handbook and

associated documents. Access should be granted only to relevant staff and permissions regularly monitored.

Information Governance are available at [SFRSInfoGov@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:SFRSInfoGov@firescotland.gov.uk), if you require any further guidance/assistance.

## 12. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

- Data Protection Policy
- GIRFEC Guidance Note
- Information Security Handbook
- Records Retention Schedule
- Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Adults
- Safeguarding Procedure for the Protection of Adults
- Safeguarding Procedure for the Protection of Children
  
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Scottish Government, National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland, 2012
- Scottish Government, National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)

**APPENDIX A – INFORMATION SHARING FLOWCHART**

Does the information that you wish to share concern an adult or child that you believe to be at risk of harm? If so, please refer immediately to the SFRS Safeguarding Policy for either Children and/or Adults. If you are unsure, then seek guidance from a line manager without

For all other information sharing, please adhere to the following or, if you are unsure at any point, please speak to your line manager before sharing the information.

