

Safeguarding children policy (Scotland)

VoiceAbility is committed to providing the highest possible standards to all who use our services because we are:

- **Passionate** - dedicated to strengthening voices, supporting rights and changing lives.
- **Empowering** - enabling people to live life to the full.
- **Resourceful** - proactive and finding effective ways to make things better.
- **Collaborative** - valuing partnerships and making collaborative working a positive experience.
- **Honest** - working with integrity and sticking to our principles

VoiceAbility is committed to promoting the right to be safe and secure and to be free from any form of abuse and/or neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to all people working on behalf of VoiceAbility in a paid or unpaid capacity.

In Scotland, the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), includes all children and young people up to the age of 18. Where a young person between the age of 16 and 18 requires support and protection, services will need to consider which legal framework best fits each persons' needs and circumstances. The [National guidance for child protection in Scotland](#) gives more detail about this.

The National guidance for child protection in Scotland defines child abuse and child neglect as:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use.

All staff working for and on behalf of Voiceability will be alert to the potential for abuse against children and young people.

Guidance and support

We will provide clear guidance for our staff and a dedicated [intranet site](#) to support good safeguarding practice.

Our guidance will enable our staff to:

be alert to and to know when to report allegations and suspicions of abuse.

All staff working for or on behalf of Voiceability will:

- be alert to and to know when to report allegations of abuse about children.
- know the categories of abuse and how these differ from Adults Safeguarding
- understand the wider legislation relevant to children's Safeguarding
- know how to follow local authority protocols when reporting safeguarding concerns
- know who within Voiceability to contact about an allegation of abuse if the line manager is not available.
- know how our role fits in with the wider legislation relevant to Safeguarding.
- know what to do if an allegation of abuse does not meet a safeguarding threshold
- provide escalation guidance to ensure staff know what to do if we are worried that the actions taken by the local authority are not keeping the person safe (including when a concern is rejected)
- know what will happen as a result of a Safeguarding referral
- understand the key legislation and how to use this to ensure people's rights are respected in matters relating to Safeguarding
- know what to do if they suspect abuse by a VoiceAbility staff member

Training

All staff will have Safeguarding training relevant to their roles and responsibilities. This includes:

- training for all staff in using our policy, process, guidance and intranet
- refresher training for all staff at least every two years
- training to enable managers to promote good safeguarding practice within their teams
- training for Trustees

Workforce Management

VoiceAbility will act on information provided by Disclosure Scotland and, where appropriate, ensure the appropriate DBS re-checks are undertaken in line with VoiceAbility policy.

Ensuring staff/volunteers are safe to work with Vulnerable People

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VoiceAbility is committed to its duty to make referrals to Disclosure Scotland/DBS in line with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. It is the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources to make a referral when anyone working on behalf of Voiceability has been dismissed due to abuse or removed from working with children or adults at risk (or may have been if the person had not left or resigned etc.). Referrals will be made in line with VoiceAbility policy.

Open Culture

As an organisation we recognize the importance of an open culture where staff feel confident and supported to raise any issues relating to safeguarding.

We will ensure that staff are provided with an appropriate context to discuss Safeguarding matters. This will include:

- regular 1:1 supervision
- regular team meetings with a dedicated section in each meeting for staff to provide any safeguarding related updates
- a Safeguarding Communities of Practice and Teams Forum which will encourage discussion about Safeguarding matters
- regular and thorough case audits to support good safeguarding practice
- safeguarding refresher training

In all of these contexts staff will be listened to and supported to work through Safeguarding dilemmas.

The consequences of not following this policy and the related guidance

The consequence of not following our safeguarding policy is a serious matter because it may result in avoidable harm. It is therefore of paramount importance that this policy and guidance is followed at all times. Any breach of this policy or guidance may result in disciplinary action.

Safeguarding Governance Committee

The committee will meet on a quarterly basis and include a senior external professional, trustee's, and staff with frontline and management experience.

The aim of the committee is to ensure an open culture of learning from mistakes and working proactively to embed good safeguarding knowledge and practice. They do this by having clear oversight of safeguarding processes and practice within VoiceAbility and ensuring that failings that result in avoidable harm are reported to the Charity Commission.

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Equality and Diversity Statement

VoiceAbility believes in fostering an inclusive workplace which welcomes, values and celebrates the diversity of its staff and partners, treats all on a basis of equality and encourages all to meet their maximum potential. All activities and behaviour in the workplace or associated with it should ensure that everyone is able to participate as fully as reasonably possible, and that no one is unreasonably excluded on grounds such as disability, mental health, gender/ transgender/ intersex, age, race or ethnicity, sexuality/ sexual orientation, marital/ civil partnership status, social background or any other inappropriate reason. VoiceAbility endeavours to ensure that this ethos is reflected in our practices, policies and the services provided.

GDPR and Data Protection

VoiceAbility only keeps records of individuals and their applications for as long as it is relevant to do so. For details of retention periods for personal documents and information, please see VoiceAbility Privacy Policy.

Amendment history

Date of change	Changed by (Initials)	Brief description of what was changed
January 2022	KH	First issued