

COVE PARK

Cove Park Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2025 -2026

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1. Introduction

Cove Park creates year-round residencies for national and international artists, collaborative groups, and organisations. We act as a catalyst for new work by artists from all cultures, backgrounds, ages, creative disciplines, and career stages. Cove Park is located on an outstanding 50-acre rural site of great natural beauty, overlooking Loch Long on Scotland's west coast.

Cove Park's Creative Learning & Engagement Programme is a public programme of creative workshops, events, and projects for people of all ages led, in the majority of cases, by current and former residents. This work interconnects and runs in parallel with Cove Park's residencies, providing high-quality opportunities for individuals and groups in our local community to access and participate in creative activity.

2. Safeguarding Statement

Cove Park has a duty of care to those who participate in its activities, to look after them, and ensure their wellbeing, safety, and welfare. Cove Park believes that children, young people, and adults at risk should not experience abuse of any kind. As a society, we all have a responsibility to promote their welfare and to keep them safe. We are committed to providing safe spaces and activities that consider their physical and emotional wellbeing, that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, and that support their development. They will be referred to as Children and Adults at Risk throughout this document.

Cove Park aims to provide a safe and positive environment for everyone, and to actively dismantle discrimination based on age, disability, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or parental status, race including skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation¹. Additionally, we aim to dismantle discrimination based on accent, educational background, gender expression, hair texture and hairstyle, immigration status, language ability, markings and/or tattoos connected to spiritual rituals from pre-colonial cultural practices, neurodiversity, physical and mental health, size, and socio-economic status or background.

3. The purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this Policy is:

- To protect Children and Protected Adults who receive Cove Park's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people, and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding of protected adults.

¹ Legally protected characteristics by the Equality Act 2010.

4. The scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to all people working with Cove Park in whatever capacity: paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, freelance workers, agency workers or contractors, students, trustees, donors, sponsors and suppliers, interns, placements, artists, or anyone else working on behalf of Cove Park. They will be referred to as 'Cove Park Staff and Volunteers' throughout this document.

Cove Park Staff and Volunteers are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Any breach of this policy will be subject to review and may result in disciplinary action being taken and/or ceasing the opportunity to work for or represent Cove Park.

5. Definitions of children, young people, and protected adults

For the purpose of this Policy the definition of a 'child' is:

- Anyone aged under 18 years of age as supported by the Children and Young Person Act (2014) (Scotland). The fact that a child has reached 18 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018).

We define a protected adult as an adult (aged 18 years and over):

- Who by reason of Physical disability, Mental disability, Illness, Infirmary or Ageing a) has an impaired ability to protect themselves from physical or psychological harm or b) requires assistance with the activities of daily living
- Any person aged 18 or over who is homeless (within the meaning of section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987) and who is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing.
- Any person aged 18 or over who has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic abuse and who is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing

6. Definitions of a Regulated Role

A role that involves regular, unsupervised contact with children or protected adults as part of normal duties. This may include teaching, supervising, providing personal care, or having unsupervised access in settings where vulnerable groups are present. Examples within Cove Park may include workshop facilitators, residency mentors, education programme staff, and any role involving direct support to participants under 18 or vulnerable adults.

When working with children this is somebody who has Contact by either

- Physical contact
- Written communication

- Verbal communication
- Visual communication
- Exercising Power or Influence *

* For example:

- (a) assisting, facilitating, permitting or impeding progress towards a desirable objective or outcome for a particular child,
- (b) making decisions of an operational or strategic nature that could have an impact on a number of children, or
- (c) persuading or putting pressure on a particular child to behave or act in a certain manner for the financial gain or personal gratification of a person other than the child.

A regulated Activity is defined as:

- Providing advice or guidance to children in relation to career development or education
- Being in charge of or caring for children, other than acting as a foster carer
- Practising as a registered medical practitioner
- Practising as a nurse, midwife or health visitor
- Providing counselling, therapy or advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing to children, other than where such counselling, therapy, advice or guidance is provided in a prison by a prisoner to another prisoner

6. Creating a Safe Environment

The welfare of children and young people is paramount, as enshrined by the Children's Act 1989, and we acknowledge the right for all children and adults at risk to be equally protected from all types of harm regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We acknowledge that some Children and Adults at Risk may be more vulnerable than others due to their specific circumstance and experience. It is therefore vital that organisations, agencies, and individuals work together to better support and promote their welfare by following guidelines laid out by the document.

We will do this by:

- Having Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO). Currently Emma Henderson, Cove Park's Curator of Engagement with responsibility for our Creative Learning & Engagement Programme.
- Having designated Executive and Trustee leads to take responsibility and oversight for safeguarding arrangements. Currently Alexia Holt, Cove Park's Director, and Nadia Sirc, Cove Park Trustee.
- Ensuring that all Cove Park staff and volunteers are aware of their safeguarding duties and have support and confidence in implementing these

approaches.

- Provide training for Cove Park staff and volunteer roles that work with children and adults at risk.
- Providing effective management and supervision for all Cove Park staff and volunteers.
- Following safe recruitment procedures for those roles that work with or come into regular contact with Children and Adults at Risk.
- Ensuring that all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and kept up to date and reflect our commitment to safeguarding.
- Having clear reporting procedures for concerns, accusations, and incidents.
- Providing policies for storing sensitive information and sharing information.
- Ensuring incidents are dealt with, recorded, and reported appropriately.
- Creating a culture in which people feel valued, safe, and heard.

7. Legal framework

The following national legislative and policy initiatives inform our practice as appropriate:

- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Getting it Right for Every Child 2005
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Care Act 2014
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Creating Safety 2019 (Creative Scotland and Children in Scotland)
- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
- The Children (Scotland) Act 2020
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

Under the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, Cove Park acknowledges that PVG Scheme membership is now mandatory for individuals undertaking regulated roles. We are committed to full compliance with this requirement, including the renewal of PVG memberships every five years.

The Act also introduces Level 1 and Level 2 disclosures, replacing previous basic, standard, and enhanced checks. Cove Park will ensure appropriate disclosure types are sought according to the level of responsibility and access to vulnerable groups involved in each role.

Individuals now have the right to request a review of certain information disclosed. Cove Park will ensure applicants are made aware of these rights, and our procedures for

managing disclosure information will respect confidentiality and the individual's right to appeal.

We also recognise the strengthened duty to refer individuals who may pose a risk to Disclosure Scotland and will act promptly in accordance with these powers where safeguarding concerns arise.

8. Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance (provided in Cove Park's Staff Handbook) including:

- Role description of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (provided in Appendix 1)
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Photography and sharing images guidance.
- Anti-bullying
- Complaints Procedure and Managing Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunities Policy and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan

9. Recruitment and Training

Basic screening of all applications and checks are in line with our recruitment and vetting requirements/procedures and will be assessed as part of the recruitment process.

Where the activity of the role falls into the category of 'regulated role' as defined by the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 the candidate will be required to be a member of the PVG scheme before work commences. In addition, all memberships will be monitored and renewed every five years.

In line with the new disclosure levels in the act, Cove Park will ensure Level 1 or Level 2 disclosures are used appropriately based on risk and access levels.

All Cove Park staff and volunteers who work with or come into regular contact with Children and Adults at Risk will:

- Receive induction training, including an overview of this Safeguarding Policy.
- Undertake training on identifying safeguarding concerns and how to report them.
- Participate in refresher training annually.

It is mandatory that all Cove Park staff and volunteers read this policy and are comfortable with its content and how to apply the policy.

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.

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 additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

10. Identifying indicators of abuse

Abuse and neglect take many forms and can lead to a violation of someone's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, verbal or psychological. It can be the result of an act or a failure to act through neglect.

In summary for children and young people there are four main categories within which abuse can fall, these are:

1. **Physical Abuse** - the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.
2. **Emotional abuse** – persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child also undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth. Witnessing domestic abuse is also child abuse and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

3. Sexual abuse – any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Harmful sexual behaviour is when children or young people develop sexual behaviour that may be harmful to themselves and others.
4. Neglect – the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child’s basic emotional or educational needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from “non-organic failure to thrive”, where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated.

In addition to the four categories above, there are a number of other areas that the Scottish Government and agencies working with children and young people consider will have an impact on the health and wellbeing of a child or young person such as:

- Organised abuse, for example, children involved in prostitution and ritual abuse
- Fabricated or induced illness in a child by a carer
- Foetal abuse, for example, through maternal abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Domestic abuse – primarily of female parents or carers but not always
- Children and young people affected by parental or carer substance abuse
- Abuse linked to identity – race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, etc
- Female genital mutilation
- Human trafficking or exploitation
- Forced marriage
- Children and young people affected by their parents’ or carers’ mental health issues
- Children and young people’s own mental health
- Young carers
- Children and young people who need protecting from harming themselves, through self-inflicted injuries or reckless behaviour
- Online safety

For adults at risk abuse can be:

- Physical Abuse - this is non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in, or

could result in bodily injury, pain or impairment.

- Domestic Abuse – this includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse, forced marriages, honour-based violence and female genital mutilation.
- Sexual Abuse – the direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent, it can include rape, indecent assault, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography and subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts.
- Psychological Abuse – sometimes known as emotional abuse, is behaviour that has a harmful effect on a person's emotional health, wellbeing and development.
- Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, pressure relating to an individual's financial arrangements e.g. wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions.
- Modern slavery – slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- Neglect and self-neglect – failure to provide the amount of care that a reasonable person would expect.
- Discriminatory abuse – including racist and sexist remarks or comments.
- Organisational or institutional abuse – mistreatment, abuse or neglect by a regime or individuals in a setting or service where the adult lives or that they use.
- Bullying or cyberbullying.

11. Online interactions

In order to protect children, young adults and adults at risk, Cove Park staff and volunteers should not:

- behave in a way that could suggest that you are trying to develop a personal relationship with a child.
- use your own technology to photograph or communicate with a child, young person, or Adult at Risk,
- give your personal information to service users – children / young people, their parents/ carers. This includes mobile phone numbers, social networking accounts, personal website/ blog URLs, online image storage sites, passwords, etc.
- use your personal mobile phone to communicate with children/young people/Adults at Risk. This includes phone calls, texts, emails, social networkingsites, etc.
- use the internet or web-based communication to send personal messages to children/young people/Adults at Risk
- add/allow a service user to join your contacts/friends list on personal social networking profiles.
- use your own digital camera/video for work documenting work with children, young people, and Adults at Risk. This includes integral cameras on mobile phones.
- play online games with service users.

Please read the Online Safeguarding Guidance for further detailed procedures.

12. Procedure for responding to and reporting concerns or allegations of abuse

Cove Park staff and volunteers must make a decision based on the current situation and their knowledge as to whether the child or adult at risk is at immediate risk and/or needs medical attention. If this is the case, 999 should be called immediately. Alert the emergency operator that their records may be required for evidence purposes and the child or vulnerable adult is 'at risk'

Responding to a disclosure of abuse:

- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief.
- Listen carefully.
- Tell the person disclosing the abuse or allegation of abuse that you will take it seriously.
- Record what has been said as soon as possible using the individuals' own words.
- Give them information about the steps that will be taken.
- Inform them that they will receive feedback as to the result of the concerns they have raised and from whom.

Do not:

- Promise to keep it a secret
- Press for further details asking detailed or leading questions
- Stop someone who is speaking freely
- Contact the alleged perpetrator
- Tell anyone that does not need to be informed

Cove Park staff and volunteers should feel able to make or report an allegation in good faith without fear of reprisal. Cove Park will not subject any member of staff to any detriment who makes a report or reports an allegation in good faith and in accordance with this policy.

If you have concerns that a child or adult at risk is being abused or a disclosure/allegation of abuse is made the following procedure must be followed:

1. Contact the DSO in the first instance and inform them that you have concerns or that a disclosure/allegation has been made.
2. Complete a Safeguarding Incident/Disclosure Report on the same day and email it to the DSO.
3. Keep the matter strictly confidential and do not seek to investigate or otherwise report the incident of suspicion.
4. The DSO will consider the Safeguarding Incident/Disclosure Report and determine the next steps.
5. They will seek advice from the Local Authority and follow their advice and guidance, if appropriate.

6. The DSO will confirm receipt of the Safeguarding Incident/Disclosure Report to the member of staff who submitted it and notify them whether an external report has been made. They will not discuss the incident further with the member of staff except for seeking clarification. If the member of staff is not satisfied with the action taken by the DSO then they may escalate to the Executive responsible for Safeguarding in the first instance. If they are not satisfied with the action taken by Cove Park, then they may contact the Local Authority or use the Whistleblowing policy.
7. If the allegation relates to Cove Park staff or volunteers and an investigation is carried out by the Local Authority or the police, the DSO will decide whether to re-allocate activities carried out by the person/s under investigation.
8. If an investigation concludes that abuse has taken place, the Cove Park staff will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Such a breach would constitute gross misconduct.
9. The DSO will keep all the sensitive information secure and, as appropriate, report to the Executive and Trustee responsible for safeguarding.

13. Confidentiality and information sharing

Confidentiality and information sharing is essential to safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect. Whilst the details of the information shared will be on a case-by-case basis or whether the information is shared with or without consent the following rules apply:

1. Remember that GDPR is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. The protection of children takes precedence over legislation concerning data protection and other rights. If you share any information in an appropriate manner, in accordance with this policy and in good faith, the law will protect you.
3. For adults at risk information should be shared in an appropriate manner and when it is in the interests of the adult.
4. It is best practice to gain verbal or written consent from a child or adult before any personal contact data relating to them is shared with another organisation.
5. Be open and honest with the person from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

14. Code of conduct / Good Practice

When working or interacting with children and adults at risk you are acting in a position of trust. You are likely to be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

You will do this by:

- providing a safe environment for children and adults at risk.
- maintaining a good awareness of safeguarding and child protection following our principles, policies, and procedures on safeguarding, including raising concerns when necessary.
- making yourself familiar with and following all other policies linked to safeguarding and staying within the law at all times.
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the code of conduct to Cove Park's Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- reporting all allegations/suspicions of abuse following our reporting procedures - this includes abusive behaviour being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.
- modelling good behaviour for children and adults at risk to follow in person and online.

Whilst carrying out your role you should:

- ensure your contact with children and adults at risk is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project or work you are involved in, in an open and transparent way.
- ensure that there is more than one adult present during activities with children and adults at risk, if this isn't possible, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults.

You should:

- treat children and adults at risk fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- understand that children and adults at risk are individuals with individual needs.
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems between yourself and others, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to Cove Park.
- challenge any discrimination and prejudice.
- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust, and respect.
- avoid favouritism and be patient with others.
- use special caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children and adults at risk.
- listen to and respect children and adults at risk at all times.
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible.

15. Unacceptable behaviour

When working or interacting with children and adults at risk you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported.
- take unnecessary risks.
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances.

- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people.
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people.
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive this includes having any form of sexual contact with a child or adult at risk.
- let children and adults at risk have your personal contact details (mobile number, email, or address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- act in a way that could be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- patronise or belittle children and adults at risk, make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and adults at risk.

16. Definitions

Regulated Role: A position involving regular contact with children or protected adults in a context of trust. Examples include teaching, personal care, and supervisory roles during residencies or workshops.

Protected Adult: An adult (aged 18 years and over):

- *Who by reason of Physical disability, Mental disability, Illness, Infirmary or Ageing a) has an impaired ability to protect themselves from physical or psychological harm or b) requires assistance with the activities of daily living*
- *Any person aged 18 or over who is homeless (within the meaning of section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987) and who is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing.*
- *Any person aged 18 or over who has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic abuse and who is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing*

17. Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Officer
Emma Henderson
Curator of Engagement
emma@covepark.org

Cove Park's Executive and Trustee Lead
Nadia Sirc
nadiasirc@me.com

Cove Park's Director
Alexia Holt
alexia@covepark.org

Child Protection services Argyll and Bute

Tel: daytime **01546 605517**, evenings and weekends **01631 566 491** or **01631 569712**
Or use this form.

Adult Protection

Tel: daytime **01546 605517**, evenings and weekends **01631 566 491** or **01631 569712**.
Or use this form.

18. Safeguarding Policy 2025, Appendix 1:

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

- Be the first point of contact for all staff to raise any concerns.
- Work with Cove Park's Director and Trustees and have responsibility to review and update this policy annually.
- Advise and provide guidance to all staff about welfare, wellbeing, and protection issues across children, young people, and protected adults at risk of harm.
- Have a working knowledge of the national legislation and national guidance in protecting children, young people, and protected adults.
- To act as the first point of contact, and source of support, advice, and expertise for all staff about the safety and welfare of a child or adult.
- Manage all referrals and refer all cases of suspected abuse to the appropriate agency, either Social Care and/or Police, and ensure the appropriate information is available, confirmed in writing under confidential cover as quickly as possible.
- To ensure that Cove Park policies and procedures to protect children and adults are implemented and followed, and that all staff know where they can find these.
- To liaise with appropriate local agencies for support and advice, and know where to find local contacts.
- Advise and organise mandatory training of all staff about their responsibilities to keep children and adults safe.
- To collect monitoring data on all welfare, wellbeing, and protection activities at Cove Park and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Support staff after any incident at Cove Park.