



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Purpose

Forgan Arts Centre's safeguarding policy applies to all employees and volunteers, including the Board of Trustees. The purpose of the policy is to protect children and service users from harm and to provide all employees, workers, and volunteers with information about safeguarding. The policy is particularly important in the activity that the centre does with children and vulnerable service users.

Forgan Arts Centre has a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and service users and to keep them safe. We comply with the legal obligations placed upon it by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (Scotland). The policy covers the arrangements for safeguarding during the recruitment and selection process and safeguarding issues that arise during employment in circumstances where children or service users are placed at risk, or where they could have been placed at risk.

The policy also sets out the reporting obligations for all employees and the procedure that should be followed to report abuse if this occurs to one of the centre's service users.

Recruitment process

Advertisements for job roles at Forgan Arts Centre will specify clearly whether the work involves regulated activity/work together with the basis of that work. Offers of employment will be made conditional on the receipt of a satisfactory disclosure checks. These will be conducted by Disclosure Scotland. The check will confirm that the applicant is suitable to carry out the role and has not been barred from performing this work.

If the background check reveals that an applicant is not suitable, the offer of employment will be withdrawn by Forgan Arts Centre and the applicant will not be employed.

Existing employees

Existing employees may be required to provide a satisfactory disclosure check where their work becomes a regulated activity/work or Forgan Arts Centre requires them to start carrying out regulated activity/work. Existing employees cannot conduct any regulated activity/work until they have undertaken a satisfactory disclosure check.



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The disclosure check will be conducted by Disclosure Scotland. The check will confirm that the employee is suitable to carry out the work and has not been barred from performing this. If employees are unable to provide a satisfactory disclosure check, or refuse to undertake a disclosure check, we will consider the options for redeployment into any available job roles that do not involve regulated activity/work.

If existing employees become added to the children and adults barred lists by either disclosure body, Forgan Arts Centre will consider the options for redeployment into any available job roles that do not involve regulated activity/work. All employees who are added to the barred lists are required to inform their line manager of their inclusion on the list at the earliest opportunity. A failure to do so may be deemed a disciplinary matter to be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

In both cases, if this is not possible, Forgan Arts Centre may need to consider dismissal of the employee on the basis of the statutory ban imposed by the disclosure. We may be unable to continue to employ the employee in any capacity if the continued association with the employee cannot be maintained, causes reputational damage to the employer or other reasons that harm its position in the marketplace.

What is abuse?

Given the risk of abuse to children and service users, all employees are required to be alert at all times to the possibility of abuse towards children or service users. Abuse may be a single incident or something that occurs over a long period of time. It can take many forms including, but not limited to:

- financial or material abuse
- physical abuse
- mental abuse
- neglect and failures to act
- sexual abuse
- threats of abuse or harm
- controlling or intimidating conduct
- self-neglect
- domestic abuse
- poor practices within an organisation providing care
- modern slavery

The abuse may come from employees, personal assistants, service users, relatives, neighbours, social workers, providers of support services etc.



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Reporting and investigating abuse

Forgan Arts Centre will treat all complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse with the utmost seriousness. Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff are aware of the warning signs of abuse and the correct reporting procedure to follow if they suspect abuse is, or has, taken place.

Employees that suspect abuse is occurring should refer the matter to their line manager immediately, with as much detail as possible. The line manager will need to be informed of the names of the people involved (if known), what type of abuse is or may be occurring, and the dates and times this occurred (if known). An official written report of the alleged act may be requested at this stage as part of the evidence gathering procedure.

Employees may be asked to refrain from discussing alleged abuse with fellow colleagues, other than those specified by their line manager, to avoid the spread of potentially harmful misinformation and to protect the validity of any investigation.

The allegations will be investigated fully, and all such reports are taken seriously. The investigation will be conducted in a discrete and timely manner and will involve the collation of evidence typically derived from witness statements and surveillance footage where possible. If it is suspected that a criminal act may have been committed, Forgan Arts Centre will report the situation to the police.

Employees suspected of abuse will be suspended on full pay pending a full investigation of the complaints. It should be noted that this suspension is not an indication of the employee's guilt, but rather a necessity given the circumstances. Forgan Arts Centre appreciates the impact prolonged suspension can have on an employee's reputation, even when allegations are later found to be incorrect, and does not take the decision to suspend lightly.

Forgan Arts Centre may be under a duty to disclose allegations of abuse to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland as appropriate. The organisation may also consider it necessary to inform the police of allegations under investigation.

Maintaining records

Forgan Arts Centre will ensure that all details associated with allegation of abuse are recorded clearly and accurately. The records will be maintained securely in line with our confidential record keeping procedure.



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Disciplinary action

If the investigation reveals that abuse has happened, or is happening, Forgan Arts Centre will set up a disciplinary hearing for the employee concerned. Abuse of service users is regarded by Forgan Arts Centre as an act of gross misconduct and the allegation could result in summary dismissal, in line with our disciplinary procedure. Employees will have the chance to appeal any disciplinary action that is taken against them.

Duty of disclosure

Forgan Arts Centre is legally required to send information to Disclosure Scotland if a decision is taken to dismiss an employee or remove them from working in regulated activity/work.

Forgan Arts Centre may also be required to inform Disclosure Scotland if we suspend an employee, or an employee resigns in suspicious circumstances, as the referral duty criteria may already be met at that stage.

This policy must be read in conjunction with our Grievance, Dignity at Work, and Mental Health & Wellbeing Policies.