

## CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1. Children and vulnerable adults may be served by work supported by Thrive Scotland (Thrive). Everyone whom Thrive seeks to support must be protected from harm and benefit from these programmes in a safe and healthy environment. Thrive is committed to the rights of the child in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and recognises its responsibility to ensure that those rights are upheld. Thrive does not tolerate any violation or infringement of those rights and strives to ensure that the needs, dignity and safety of all children, regardless of sex, ethnicity, faith, ability or culture, are protected in Thrive work.
- 1.2. This Policy is for use by Thrive consultants, board and volunteers (Thrive people) wherever they represent Thrive. It is also a guide for partners' staff, consultants, directors and volunteers and the public. It aims to protect from harm children, vulnerable adults, Thrive people, and Thrive itself.
- 1.3. All children, defined in the UNCRC as anyone under 18 years old, must be protected from abuse and exploitation. A vulnerable adult is afforded the same protection as a child. A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over with a condition of the following type:
  - learning or physical disability, physical or mental illness, including addiction,
  - poverty, low status due to social norms such as discrimination on grounds of sex.
- 1.4. This policy is accompanied by procedures guided by principles. It is reviewed annually and its procedures and implementation are regularly monitored. A report on incidents relating to it is made to the Board of Directors within a month of the incident. This policy is approved by Thrive's Board of Directors. Concordance with it is mandatory for all Thrive people, and staff, consultants, directors and volunteers of Thrive's partners, each of which must declare in writing that it implements a policy of similar or greater rigour.

### 2. Principles

- 2.1. All children and vulnerable adults have equal rights to development and wellbeing.
- 2.2. Children and vulnerable adults are protected from any form of sexual, physical, verbal or emotional abuse or exploitation, from anyone.
- 2.3. The health and safety of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- 2.4. Children and vulnerable adults are empowered to participate freely in decisions which affect their lives, recognising the importance of their families and other carers.
- 2.5. Children and vulnerable adults are treated respectfully and valued as equal to others.
- 2.6. Children and vulnerable adults are helped to discuss concerns, and relevant authorities listen.
- 2.7. Any allegation of abuse is treated seriously and dealt with appropriately and promptly. Victims and involved parties are supported and perpetrators are held to account.
- 2.8. Investigation of any Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection concern is conducted with reference to national law and immediately referred to relevant authorities where appropriate.
- 2.9. Thrive people are recruited, supported and trained in this Policy.

### 3. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Code of Conduct

- 3.1. Thrive people, and staff, directors and volunteers of Thrive's partners must:
  - 3.1.1. Never hit or physically abuse a child or vulnerable adult in any way.
  - 3.1.2. Never deliberately place a child or vulnerable adult in danger or at risk of abuse.
  - 3.1.3. Never have sexual contact or use sexualised language with a child or vulnerable adult.

- 3.1.4. Never develop personal relationships with a child or vulnerable adult leading to abuse.
- 3.1.5. Never fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch a child or vulnerable adult inappropriately.
- 3.1.6. Never behave in a way that frightens or intimidates a child or vulnerable adult.
- 3.1.7. Never do personal things for a child or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves.
- 3.1.8. Never single out a child or vulnerable adult for special treatment.
- 3.1.9. Never give a child or vulnerable adult gifts unless authorised by the Protection Officer.
- 3.1.10. Never see a child or vulnerable adult outside work unless Protection Officer permits.
- 3.1.11. Never stay alone overnight with a child or children or any vulnerable adult.
- 3.1.12. Never take a child or vulnerable adult with them in a car, except in exceptional cases.
- 3.1.13. Never hire a child or vulnerable adult for any service, or treat in any exploitative way.
- 3.1.14. Never use the internet to make contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- 3.1.15. Never use discriminatory or offensive language near children or vulnerable adults.
- 3.1.16. Never intentionally humiliate or degrade children or vulnerable adults.
- 3.1.17. Never smoke, use illegal drugs, drink or be drunk near children or vulnerable adults.
- 3.1.18. Always treat children and vulnerable adults with respect.
- 3.1.19. Always listen to children and vulnerable adults and their concerns.
- 3.1.20. Always use sensitive language when a child or vulnerable adult reveals a serious issue.
- 3.1.21. Always try to be with another adult when in the presence of a child or vulnerable adult.
- 3.1.22. Always deal with allegations or concerns about abuse immediately and appropriately.
- 3.1.23. Always ensure a child's or vulnerable adult's health and safety when they are in care.
- 3.1.24. Always respect rights of children and vulnerable adults; empower them to act on them.
- 3.1.25. Always challenge the mistreatment of children and vulnerable adults; report any abuse.
- 3.1.26. Always ensure that images of children and vulnerable adults are respectful; obtain their and/or their parent's/guardian's or carer's permission before using their image.

**4. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures**

4.1. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm on the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. The following definitions indicate how the abuse can be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse vary from child to child. The same principles apply in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults.

Physical Abuse	Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation may be described as fabricated or induced illness by the carer.
Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse is where persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult causes severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults. It may involve causing children or vulnerable adults to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur independently of the other forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are 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 or vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or vulnerable adult or encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs of a child or vulnerable adult, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adult’s basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in a child being diagnosed as suffering from non-organic failure to thrive, where a child has significantly failed to reach normal growth and developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated.”

**5. Awareness-Raising**

- 5.1. Thrive’s Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is available to the public on its website.
- 5.2. All Thrive people must read this policy and put any questions to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee, **which is the Thrive Board**, led by the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, **who is the Thrive M&E Director**.
- 5.3. All Thrive people with regular contact with children and vulnerable adults must attend specialised training on child and vulnerable adult protection.
- 5.4. All Thrive people must follow the Thrive Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Code of Conduct.
- 5.5. Thrive engages with overseas partners on child and vulnerable adult protection, explaining commitments and requiring partners to declare in writing that they implement child and vulnerable adult protection policies and procedures relevant to their context and compatible with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**6. Prevention Measures**

**Consultants, Directors and Volunteer Recruitment**

- 6.1. Thrive practices comply with the law and Keeping Children Safe standards.
- 6.2. Work with regular contact with children and vulnerable adults is subject to Disclosure, including Self-Disclosure in the application process and, where required, Enhanced Disclosure or local checks through relevant government agencies where possible. Satisfactory verification of qualifications and work history is required, as are two references’ opinion on suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

**Communications and Media**

- 6.3. Thrive ensures that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and their interests and safety always take priority over any editorial requirement.
- 6.4. The impact and possible consequences of any material involving a child or vulnerable adult is carefully considered, before and after publication or broadcast.
- 6.5. Thrive aims to ensure that images or stories of a child or vulnerable adult cannot be misused.
- 6.6. Communications about children and vulnerable adults respect the individual’s dignity and identity and are not degrading. Thrive tries to ensure realistic and respectful portrayal.

- 6.7. All materials in Thrive publications and website are suitable for children.
- 6.8. Thrive people **always**:
- seek written consent of parent, guardian, person in loco parentis or the vulnerable adult before interviewing, photographing or recording a child or vulnerable adult,
  - seek consent of parent, guardian, person in loco parentis or the vulnerable adult, before publishing any materials in which the child and vulnerable adult appears,
  - seek a child's or vulnerable adult's consent to participation and respect any refusal,
  - do not give any financial inducement to the child, vulnerable adult or parent/guardian,
  - obtain permission from the headteacher for filming or interviewing on school premises,
  - approach data-gathering sensitively, considering the impact of retelling experiences,
  - minimise any distress that may be caused by taking part in an interview,
  - arrange extra protection for those needing it (e.g. refugees or the sick),
  - conceal the identity and location of children and vulnerable adults, withholding or changing names, if revealing identity may lead to any risk or distress,
  - in group shots from a distance, hide a child's or vulnerable adults' identity and location,
  - use images in which a child or adult is clothed by common standards of UK viewers,
  - Ensure messages about children and vulnerable adults are fair, with no discrimination.
- 6.9. Where there is any doubt on the use of images and/or stories, Thrive people seek the guidance of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

#### **Thrive Partners**

- 6.10. Thrive project agreements specify that all partners must have child and vulnerable adult protection measures in place and must produce and implement their own child and vulnerable protection policy. Partners must abide by the Thrive Policy and Code of Conduct.

### **7. Reporting**

- 7.1. Thrive people must ensure that the Thrive code of conduct is adhered to throughout Thrive.
- 7.2. A Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Concern Report form is available to all Thrive people.
- 7.3. Thrive people must respond sensitively to any Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection problem that they witness or is disclosed to them and treat it confidentially. If a child or vulnerable adult discloses that they are being abused, Thrive people should:
- stay calm, listen carefully, take the allegation seriously, only ask questions for clarity,
  - not promise to keep it secret but explain that they need to tell someone else,
  - stress that the person was right to tell them, they take it seriously and they understand,
  - reassure that they will help and tell them what will happen next.
- 7.4. The disclosure of a serious allegation will not affect anyone's position or reputation in Thrive.
- 7.5. Any Thrive person who witnesses or is informed of a potential breach of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Code of Conduct must complete the Report Form and tell the Directors or Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer of the concern as soon as possible.
- 7.6. Thrive people must inform the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer of any allegation or concern immediately. If this is not possible, they must ensure that the matter is referred to another Director.
- 7.7. The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer is responsible for managing the investigation of any concern. Thrive people should not conduct their own investigation or discuss the issue with any other parties.
- 7.8. The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer is responsible for ensuring that all records of a breach of the code of conduct are full, detailed, treated confidentially and stored securely.

**Thrive Partners**

- 7.9. Partners must inform Thrive of any child and vulnerable adult protection concern in Thrive-associated work as soon as possible.
- 7.10. Any child and vulnerable adult protection concern about Partners must be recorded and raised with the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, who will manage the response.

**8. Responding to Concerns**

- 8.1. The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer (CVAPO) is responsible for ensuring a thorough investigation of any concern, either by the CVAPO or by an appropriate Director, as soon as possible if there has been a suspected or alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by a Thrive person. The CVAPO should always refer any reported concern to the Board of Directors.
- 8.2. In some instances it may be necessary for the CVAPO to ensure that the concern is immediately referred to relevant authorities (Police or Child Welfare Authority). In this case the CVAPO should refer any reported concern to the Board of Directors.
- 8.3. It may be necessary for a Thrive person to be suspended while an investigation takes place.
- 8.4. Thrive aims to ensure that any child, vulnerable adult or other party affected by any breach of the code of conduct is given immediate and appropriate support and care.
- 8.5. Thrive will try to ensure that any Thrive person suspended while an investigation takes place is given appropriate support. If no breach has taken place, records of any investigation will be destroyed within one year of the investigation.
- 8.6. The CVAPO will ensure that a full investigation report is produced, reviewed by the Board of Directors. Any investigation will be conducted according to national law, and if any concern could constitute a criminal act, details will be immediately referred to relevant authorities.
- 8.7. After full investigation, Thrive may implement disciplinary action and end the relationship.

**Thrive Partners**

- 8.8. Partners should report the outcome of any internal investigation regarding a Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection concern to Thrive as soon as possible. Thrive expects partners to take appropriate action in relation to any concern and report this to Thrive. If Thrive judges that insufficient actions have been taken, Thrive may end a partner relationship.

**Review**

Policy owner	Partnerships Director
Reviewed annually	Board of Directors
Policy date	October 2017, reviewed July 2021
Next policy review date	July 2022

**Additional Documents**

1. Communication Policy
2. Code of Conduct Agreement Form
3. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Self-Disclosure Form
4. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Concern Report Form
5. Photograph Consent Form

## 9. Appendix 1: COMMUNICATION POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Thrive is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

### 2. Use of images and Stories

- Thrive's communications on children and vulnerable adults respect their dignity:
  - Portray children and vulnerable adults realistically, without being sensational or overly positive or portraying them as victims;
  - Show different types of children and vulnerable adults give their perspectives;
  - Be aware that some children and vulnerable adults need extra protection;
  - Inform children, vulnerable adults and guardians of risks of sharing their story;
  - Ensure that participants see how their story is used in Thrive materials.

### 3. Consent

Thrive must acquire written consent from the child or vulnerable adult plus parent or whoever is acting in loco parentis to use images and stories.

No payment or reward shall be given to gain consent. No payment may be made to minors for information on the welfare of children or vulnerable adults, or to parents, guardians or carers for information about their children or wards. It must be made clear to all that support from Thrive work does not oblige anyone to participate in communications, and support will not be withdrawn if they do not participate.

Thrive may decide not to publish a story if it may damage the child's interest.

### 4. Confidentiality

Thrive strives to protect the identity of children and vulnerable adults in order:

1. To avoid exploitation of images and stories by those who may wish to misuse them; and
  2. To protect children and vulnerable adults from stigma or mistreatment in their communities.
- Therefore, Thrive will not use the name of a child or vulnerable adult in external communications or reports to donors.

### Sensitive Cases

Identities should be protected where people have particularly sensitive stories to tell, e.g.:

- Sexual abuse, domestic violence, court cases, child labour, living with HIV/AIDS,
- Fostered children, anyone prostituted for sex,
- Other economic or political factors threatening the safety of a child or vulnerable adult.

Children's and vulnerable adults' identities will be protected with a pseudonym, with the footnote "Names have been changed to protect identities." The name change must be noted for future use of the same story and photographs.

### Exception:

Family and school names may be used for transparency to illustrate non-sensitive stories.

### 5. Interviewing Children and Vulnerable Adults

All interviews with children and vulnerable adults must be conducted with extra care, sensitive to the welfare and safety of the individual. Cultural values and interests must be honoured and child-friendly language used. Information must be shared with interviewees transparently. Children and vulnerable adults should not be interrogated about private family matters nor asked their opinion on matters likely to be beyond their judgement.

The Thrive Child And Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy shall be adhered to at all times when interviewing, photographing, filming or recording a child or vulnerable adult.

10. Appendix 2:

**Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Code of Conduct Agreement Form**

**I agree to abide by the following code of conduct and to:**

- Never hit or physically abuse a child or vulnerable adult in any way.
- Never deliberately place a child or vulnerable adult in danger or at risk of abuse.
- Never have sexual contact or use sexualised language with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Never develop a personal relationship with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Never fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch a child or vulnerable adult inappropriately.
- Never intentionally behave such that I frighten or intimidate a child or vulnerable adult.
- Never do personal things for a child or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves.
- Never single out a child or vulnerable adult for special treatment.
- Never give a child or vulnerable adult presents unless authorised by a Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.
- Never arrange to see a child or vulnerable adult outside project activities.
- Never stay alone overnight with a child, children or vulnerable adult.
- Never take a child or vulnerable adult in my car, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Never hire a child or vulnerable adult for any service or treat a child exploitatively.
- Never use social networks to make inappropriate contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Never use discriminatory, abusive or offensive language near a child or vulnerable adult.
- Never intentionally humiliate or degrade children or vulnerable adults.
- Never smoke, use illegal drugs or be drunk around children or vulnerable adults.
- Always treat children and vulnerable adults with respect.
- Always listen to children and vulnerable adults and their concerns.
- Always use sensitive language in discussing serious issues with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Always be accompanied by another adult in the presence of a child or vulnerable adult.
- Always deal with allegations or concerns relating to abuse immediately and appropriately.
- Always be aware of the health and safety of children and vulnerable adults and ensure that they are protected from harm when in the care of Thrive.
- Always respect a child's or vulnerable adult's rights and empower them to act on these.
- Always challenge mistreatment of children and vulnerable adults and report abuse.
- Always ensure respectful images of children and vulnerable adults; obtain permission.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Appendix 3: Thrive Self-Disclosure Form**

Anyone working for Thrive whose work involves contact with children or vulnerable adults must disclose all charges and convictions. If you are provisionally offered a post involving work with children or vulnerable adults, we may seek Enhanced Disclosure, to include information considered relevant by the police. Any information you provide is confidential.

Full name:	Previous Surnames:
Date of Birth:	Female/Male:
Position Applied for:	
Current address:	

Have you any previous convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings?	Yes/No
If Yes, please give details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):	

Are you subject to any pending prosecutions?	Yes/No
If Yes, please give details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):	

Are you facing disciplinary action, complaints or investigations relating to children?	Yes/No
If yes, please give details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):	

Has an employer ever taken disciplinary action against you in relation to children?	Yes/No
If yes, please give details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):	

Has any child or adult that you have been responsible for been placed on a child protection register or been the subject of a court order?	Yes/No
If yes, please give details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):	

<b>Declaration</b>	
I consent to Thrive Scotland (Thrive) obtaining, keeping, using and producing information relating to my application in line with requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. I understand that this form will be kept for the duration of recruitment, after which it will be destroyed. If I am appointed, any information that may bear on my future employment by Thrive will be kept in a sealed envelope until any convictions declared are spent or 6 years following termination of my employment by Thrive, whichever is sooner. I am committed to Thrive's aim to ensure that its work with children and vulnerable adults promotes their welfare and recognise my duty to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm whilst in the Thrive's care. I understand that to give false information or omit information will be considered a breach of trust and could result in disqualification from selection or my dismissal. I understand that if I am subsequently convicted of any criminal offence, I must declare this to Thrive. I declare the information I have given on this form is true and complete and that I am aware of no reason why I would be considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.	
Signed:	Date:

12. Appendix 4: Thrive Scotland Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Concern Report Form

**Details of person completing the form**

Name	
Address	
Relationship to Thrive	
Relationship to child or vulnerable adult	

**Details of child or vulnerable adult and guardian**

Name	
Address	
Female/Male	
Age	
Name of parent/guardian/self	
Address of parent/guardian/self	
Phone number of parent/guardian/self	

**Details of concern**

How did you come to have a concern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was abuse observed or suspected?</li> <li>• Was an allegation made?</li> <li>• Did a child or vulnerable adult disclose abuse?</li> </ul>	
Nature of concern/allegation	
Date, time and place of any incident(s)	
Observations made by you	
What the child/vulnerable adult told you; what you said: (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	
Where child or vulnerable adult is now; who is caring for them	
Any immediate health or protection issues for child or vulnerable adult	
Any other children or vulnerable adults involved	
Any other relevant information	
If reported to parents, carers or authorities, provide name, address, relationship to child or vulnerable adult.	
Advice given	
Action taken/status of any actions taken	
Time and date of reporting	
Signed	

**THRIVE SCOTLAND**

13. Appendix 5: Consent Form for Use of Images of Children or Vulnerable Adults

I.....myself or parent/guardian/carer of:

(full name).....

(full name).....

(full name).....

hereby give **Thrive Scotland** permission to use any image, being video footage, photographs, frames or audio footage depicting people named above, taken by (name of photographer) .....

on behalf of **Thrive Scotland**, on (date).....

at (place).....

for any of the following uses:

- Advertisements, marketing, leaflets, or any other use such as for training, educational or publicity purposes.

The above consents will apply throughout the world and be for an indefinite period / expire on (date).....delete as appropriate

Signed.....Date.....

Signed.....Date.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....