

NATIONAL POLICY
on
CHILD PROTECTION
With
Guidance and Procedures

December 2023

“Every child in Scotland has the right to be kept safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and any other kind of harm that puts them at risk” (Child Protection Committees Scotland 2023)

Relationships Scotland members are committed to keeping all children and adults who use their services safe and protected. The National Policy on Child Protection is part of the Relationships Scotland Safeguarding Policy. All Relationships Scotland policies affecting children and young people are considered within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation Scotland) Bill and aim to promote and protect GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) to give children and young people the highest level of protection possible. Relationships Scotland will review all policy and practice procedures through the application of our Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA).

1. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Relationships Scotland network is fully committed to promoting children’s rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that directly affect them. All members of Relationships Scotland shall make the safety and protection from harm of all children their highest priority.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- the welfare of children is paramount
- that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse
- that all suspicions, disclosures and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

In this document, the term:

- "child" refers to a child or young person under age 18¹
- "parent" means an adult with parental responsibilities, or other adult in “loco parentis”;
- "person" means any child or adult.

Relationships Scotland members have a duty of care to implement effective policies and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In order to achieve this, we ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. Furthermore we endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

Practitioners work to Codes of Practice for Mediators, Counsellors and Contact Centre workers and the Relationships Scotland network also respects and upholds the Codes of Practice and Ethics that our professionals work to.²

¹ [Part 1: The Context for Child Protection - National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland-2021-2023/pages/part-1-the-context-for-child-protection-in-scotland-2021-2023.aspx)

² including where relevant - COSRT, COSCA, BACP, and AFT.