Forth Valley and Lomond Youth Local Action Group
Safeguarding Policy

Statement: The Forth Valley and Lomond Youth Local Action Group (YLAG) is committed to ensuring that all young people engaged in its activities, including applicants and participants in the Youth Impact Fund, are safe and protected from neglect, harm and abuse.

1. **Definitions** -

Abuse	*Abuse is any form of physical, emotional, or sexual mistreatment or neglect that results in actual or potential harm to a young person.* *Physical* - where young people are hurt by ill treatment, or deliberate or neglectful failure to prevent injury or harm. *Emotional* - where people are persistently or severely emotionally neglected or rejected, for example by not being given enough love or attention, being made to feel worthless, or being intimidated by threats or taunts. *Sexual* - where young people are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity. The involvement of young people in sexual activities that they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos of family roles. *Neglect* - where young people's physical and/or psychological needs are severely or persistently neglected, or failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger.
Bullying	The repetitive, intentional hurting of a young person, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.
Reporting	The formal process of passing a safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
Disclosure	A disclosure is when a young person tells someone that they are being or have been harmed.
Concern	A concern is any feeling, information or observation that makes you suspect a young person may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, even if there is no clear evidence.

2. **Scope**

This policy document sets out the position and responsibilities of the Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG in relation to safeguarding young people. The policy applies to working with any young person under the age of 18, and includes both in-person and digital activities.

This policy applies to:

- All permanent and temporary staff
- All members
- All volunteers
- Anyone engaging directly with young people through YLAG-run activities and workshops

3. **Intentional Work:**

Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG offer activities aimed at 16-35-year-olds, with young people aged 16 and 17 able to participate. In these cases, where the presence of under-18s is intentional, the activities will qualify as regulated work under the safeguarding legislation. Therefore, a person in a supervisory role / a Designated Child Protection Officer will be in place and will be PVG checked.

However, YLAG expects all staff, members, volunteers and participants to follow the safeguarding practices at all times.

4. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a safe environment for all children and young people involved in YLAG activities, workshops and projects.
- Outline roles and responsibilities for preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse, harm or neglect.
- Provide procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns or incidents.
- Ensure compliance with legal obligations in safeguarding and child protection.

5. **Legal framework and National Guidance**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely;

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Digital Economy Act 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:
Code of Conduct
Terms of Reference
Privacy and Data Protection Policy

6. **Safeguarding Commitment**

We recognise that:

- The welfare of young people is a priority, in line with the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.
- All young people, regardless of their age, ability, disability, gender identity, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, have a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse and neglect.
- Some young people may be more vulnerable due to previous trauma, their support needs, living situation, or isolation in rural areas.
- Listening to young people, valuing their voices, and involving them in decisions that affect them are essential parts of safeguarding.
- Promoting safety requires partnership with young people and their families (where applicable).

- Persons between the ages of 18-35 who are involved in YLAG activities have an inherent duty of care towards people between the ages of 16 and 17.

We seek to keep young people safe by:

- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) within the YLAG network.
- Providing clear reporting procedures for handling concerns or disclosures, and defining responsibilities for safeguarding leads.
- Maintaining secure and confidential records in compliance with GDPR. Responding to any allegations against staff, members, or volunteers in a timely and appropriate way.
- Creating bullying-free, inclusive environments, online and offline.

7. Supervision of Young People and Children

Making arrangements for the proper supervision of young people is one of the most effective ways of minimising opportunities for young people to suffer harm of any kind.

8. Incidental Work:

Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG offer activities aimed at 16-35-year-olds, with young people aged 16 and 17 able to participate. In these cases, where the presence of under-18s is incidental rather than intentional, such as at public engagement stalls at a fair, the activities do not qualify as regulated work under the safeguarding legislation. Therefore, a PVG scheme record is not required, and a Designated Child Protection Officer does not need to be in place.

However, YLAG expects all staff, members, volunteers and participants to follow the safeguarding practices at all times.

9. Diversity

Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG will respect and celebrate diversity and show sensitivity to the race, culture, religion, sexuality, gender expression, and disability of every young person we collaborate with. We will do so in the following ways: communicate with each child, ensure that they are listened to, and ensure that responses are provided to their views and concerns.

10. Safeguarding Code of Good Practice -

Confidentiality - Staff, volunteers and members must be aware that there are circumstances in which confidentiality must be broken, specifically if it is suspected that abuse has occurred and an offence has been committed.

Sensitivity - Due to the nature of child abuse, the whole matter and those involved must be dealt with the utmost sensitivity. This, however, should not be a stumbling block to making a report of an incident nor subsequent referral.

Data Protection - Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG will ensure that they follow all regulatory requirements for the storage of confidential records to comply with GDPR guidelines for everyone taking part in their activities. However, this is particularly important for young people, where information may be used to make inappropriate contact with a child.

11. Filming, Photography and Consent

The documentation of activity is an important aspect of our work to share the achievements of the YLAG and increase involvement. However, it is especially important that when young people under the age of 18 are being recorded, written consent is obtained prior to their being filmed or photographed.

No full names will be published beside visual depictions of young people unless explicit permission is granted.

We will ensure that personal information is only shared with people who have a legitimate need to have access and will not be retained any longer than necessary.

12. Code of Conduct for Adults working with Young People

Adults working with young people must:

- Treat all young people with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Be inclusive and supportive of different needs and backgrounds.
- Always report concerns or observations to the Safeguarding Officer.
- Maintain professional boundaries both in-person and online.
- Seek advice if unsure about interactions.
- Avoid being alone with young people in private settings.
- Avoid favouritism, inappropriate language or physical contact.
- Refrain from using personal social media to contact young people.
- Do not use abusive or discriminatory language.
- Do not promise confidentiality (all disclosures must be shared with the DSO).
- Do not take photos or videos without consent.
- Do not engage in any form of sexual behaviour, suggestive remarks, or physical punishment.

13. **What to do in an emergency - Responding to Concerns or Disclosures**

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of a young person, alert the emergency services by calling 999 and provide as much information as possible

Recognising Harm or Abuse: Be alert to physical signs, changes in behaviour, emotional distress, or reports from others.

Disclosure (If a Young person tells you something):

Do:	Don't:
● Listen calmly ● Take them seriously ● Explain, you must pass it on ● Record what they say in their own words ● Report to the DSO immediately	● Promise secrecy ● Ask leading questions ● Delay reporting ● Attempt to investigate yourself

Who to report to:

- DSO in the first instance.
- Emergency services if there is immediate danger.

Reporting Procedure

- Record concern on Incident Report Form (?) or equivalent.
- Submit securely to DSO.

Allegations against members, volunteers, and staff:

- Must be reported to DSO immediately.
- Permanent or Temporary removal may be required during the investigation.

Emergency Action

- If there is an immediate risk, call emergency services
- Remove the young person from danger if it is safe to do so
- Notify DSO as soon as possible

Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- Records are factual, dated, and signed
- Kept securely and only accessible by DSO

Support for the Young person

- Provide reassurance and care
- Signpost to appropriate services
- Keep them informed (age appropriately) of any action taken

14. Reporting, Review and Monitoring

As an organisation, Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of their safeguarding policy. They will keep up-to-date with child protection "best practice" as it relates to the voluntary and non-statutory sectors. This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Forth Valley and Lomond YLAG welcome feedback from all of our volunteers and collaborators so that we can keep learning. Please get in touch with us if you would like to contribute to this aim: info@fvl.org.uk