

Families First Child Protection Policy and Procedure**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Families First works with vulnerable children, young people and their families, known as vulnerable service users as part of its core work through their services of:
- One-to-One Befriending (children).
 - Young People's Support (children and young people).
 - Family Support (adults).
- 1.2 Families First is committed to protecting all children and young people from any form of abusive behaviour; children and young people have a right to feel safe.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people who have contact with Families First from abuse or risk of harm either through the behaviour of others or their own behaviour.
- 1.4 This policy will provide parents and carers, children and young people, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of children and young people.
- 1.5 This policy applies to people who work directly or indirectly with children and young people, including service users, the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors, agency staff and students.
- 1.6 Families First recognise that it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to prevent the neglectful, physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and to immediately report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- 1.7 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed.
- 1.8 Families First Manager is responsible for reporting the development and review of this policy to the Board of Trustees.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 Families First will follow the [National Guidance for GIRFEC](#), see **Section 5** below. We recognise that the wellbeing and protection of all children and young people is everyone's responsibility and everyone's job.
- 2.2 Families First will also follow [Fife Council's Child Protection guidance](#) by:
- Putting the child at the heart of all that we do.
 - Building and maintaining positive relationships with the child and their family.
 - Making effective assessments and decisions about a child's wellbeing and safety.
 - Sharing relevant information with appropriate people.
 - Providing early intervention.
 - Supporting staff and volunteers through any wellbeing or safeguarding concern.
- 2.3 Families First is committed to following other related guidance such as the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) and [The Promise](#) in protecting children and young people.
- 2.4 Staff and volunteers will not condone, and will always actively challenge, the use of physical punishment, bullying, verbal abuse or threats to children and young people. This includes unacceptable behaviour used by other children and young people.

- 2.5 This policy will be used as guidance for all child protection, safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.
- 2.6 This policy will be applied when any form of abusive behaviour is observed, reported or disclosed.
- 2.7 All people acting on behalf of, working for, or having a role within Families First, whether paid or unpaid, are required to abide by the procedures contained in this policy without exception.
- 2.8 All staff who work directly with children and young people will be trained on Families First approach to child protection and are required to read this policy.
- 2.9 All children, young people or their parents and carers will be given a summary of this policy when they register with us (appendix A).
- 2.10 All volunteers will be trained on Families First approach to child protection, informed of and given a summary guidance (appendix B) on this policy.
- 2.11 Families First is committed to supporting and training those who work with us on child protection and wellbeing issues. All staff, Trustees and volunteers, whether working directly or indirectly, with children and young people will be provided with child and adult protection training as part of Families First core induction training programme.
- 2.12 The safety and wellbeing of children and young people takes precedence over any other consideration. It is essential that the child's needs are considered and placed first, over and above the needs of the adults who may themselves be service users through our Family Support Service.
- 2.13 Families First is committed to following the United Kingdom, Scottish Government, and local authority Fife Council Interagency Guidance on Child Protection and GIRFEC as outlined in this document.
- 2.14 A full copy of **Families First Child Protection policy** is made available upon request and on our website.
- 2.15 In order to protect and help children, Families First will share child protection and wellbeing concerns with other agencies, as appropriate, and in line with **Families First Data Protection and Confidentiality policies**. This will ensure positive interagency working and that children get the help they need when they need it.
- 2.16 Families First is committed to equality of opportunity (refer to **Families First Equal Opportunity and Anti-discriminatory policy**) in following practices and providing services which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. For example, this may mean that having a criminal record may not necessarily bar someone from working with Families First (refer to **Families First Recruitment policies**).
- 2.17 As part of our community, children and young people have much to give as well as receive. We will listen to them, and as we seek to nurture them in learning, recreation and community life, we will respect their wishes, feelings and human rights implicitly where it is safe to do so.

3. Definition of a child

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy a child is defined as someone under the age of 18. When considering a young person aged between 16 and 18 protective interventions will depend on the circumstances and legislation relevant to that young person.
- 3.2 Local authorities are required to establish clear links between their child and adult protection committees, and to put clear guidelines in place for the transition from child to adult services.
- 3.3 For the purposes of this policy all children and young people will be referred to as children/child who have not yet reached 18 years of age.

4. Legislation

4.1 There are a number of Legislations and Good Practice Guidance that influence Child Protection in Scotland. Listed below are some of the key documents that have influenced this process.

4.1.1 [The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) - updated 2023 – the guidance informs the development of local multi-agency child protection procedures, processes and training, will support the care and protection of children across Scotland.

4.1.2 [The Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#) - The Act aligns Scots Law with The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The act assess a child's capability to respond any statutory process they are involved in and places a duty on Local Authorities to consider how to maintain contact between siblings should they be placed outside the family home.

4.1.3 [The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) – The Act ensures that aspects of GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) are now a statutory requirement. The Act also makes provision for many other areas of child protection and human rights.

4.1.4 [The UK General Data Protection Regulations \(GDPR\)](#) please refer to **Families First Data Protection policy**.

4.1.5 [The Human Rights Act 1998](#) - The Human Rights Act is a UK law passed in 1998. It means that you can defend your rights in the UK courts and that public organisations must treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. The Human Rights Act protects all people, young and old. Scotland has adopted these rights into their own [legislation](#).

4.1.6 [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989](#) - The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the rights of every person under 18 and how those rights should be met.

- The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life.
- It explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.
- The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on 20 November 1989, and it was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991.

4.2 Other legislation and guidance that influence child protection and wellbeing in Scotland and Fife include:

- [The Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [The Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) – updated 2023.
- [Getting It Right For Every Child](#)
- [Getting it Right in Fife](#)
- [The Promise](#)

5. GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child)

...Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is our commitment to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time. This is so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential. [Scottish Government website](#) 18 April 2024.

5.1 Child's Plan

5.1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires that a single planning framework is in place, called a Child's Plan, for children who require extra support.

This may not be available through universal services alone. The plan will be established to address a child or young person's needs and improve their wellbeing. This need not be a child protection issue.

5.2 Lead professional

5.2.1 When it has been agreed that a Child's Plan should be prepared a Lead Professional will be appointed to make sure that the Child's Plan is managed properly and to co-ordinate the support described in the plan.

5.2.2 The Lead Professional will:

- Make sure that the child and their parent/carer(s) understand what is happening at each point so that they can be involved in the decisions that affect them.
- Ensure the Child's Plan is accurate, up to date, implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Consult and work with the child's named person.

5.3 Named person

5.3.1 The named person ensures that there is someone responsible for helping children and young people from birth to 18, and their parents, get the support they need when they need it.

5.3.2 The named person is a clear point of contact whose existing role already involves providing advice and support to families. As each child grows up, their contact will change, with support usually provided by a:

- Health visitor from birth to school age.
- Head teacher or deputy during primary school years.
- Head teacher, deputy, or guidance teacher during secondary school years.

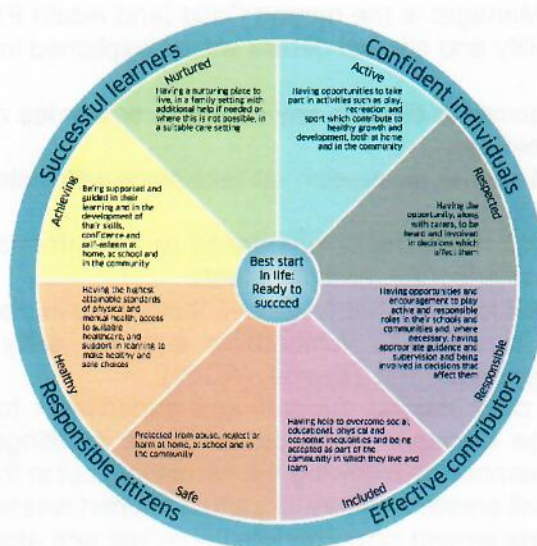
5.4 Wellbeing

5.4.1 A child or young person's wellbeing is influenced by everything around them and the different experiences and needs they have at different times in their lives.

5.4.2 Wellbeing is broader than child protection and how welfare is perceived.

5.4.3 The Scottish Government have developed a common understanding of what wellbeing means to make sure that everyone involved in a child's life has a common understanding. They are described as eight wellbeing indicators.

5.4.4 The eight wellbeing indicators are commonly referred to by their initial letters SHANARRI – Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included.



5.4.5 When considering a child's wellbeing Families First staff, sometimes in consultation with the child's volunteer or colleagues, should ask themselves the following questions to assess whether there is a genuine concern or not:

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now to help this child or young person?
- What can my organisation do to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

5.5 Information sharing

5.5.1 Sharing the right information at the right time improves outcomes for children, young people and their families and can help prevent concerns growing into problems.

5.5.2 Families First will complete the relevant sections in the single agency wellbeing assessment form.

5.5.3 Golden rules for sharing information:

- Adhere to data protection principles.
- Share information that is necessary, relevant and proportionate.
- Record why information has been requested or shared.
- Make the child, young person or family aware of why information is being shared, unless there are safeguarding concerns.

6. Safe recruitment and retention of people working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

6.1 Families First staff will follow the process outlined in Families First Recruitment policies when recruiting new people. This will ensure that all protective checks are followed and that Families First is doing all it can to protect vulnerable people.

7. Families First staff

7.1 Families First staff have a wealth of expertise and experience in all safeguarding matters.

- 7.2 Families First Manager is the named Child (and Adult) Protection Officer. The Manager's role, responsibility and contact details will be explained in all Child Protection training and literature.
- 7.3 All staff are required to discuss any concerns or worries at Family Review or Support and Supervision meetings.
- 7.4 If it is an immediate risk discussion will take place with colleagues or Families First Manager as to the next steps.
- 7.5 Families First will make their plans based on the information they have and use of tools such as the Resilience/Vulnerability Matrix.
- 7.6 Families First will look at what protective factors are in place for the child and what factors will contribute to a child's vulnerability such as early childhood trauma or [Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma](#) (ACEs).
- 7.7 Families First offer regular support and supervision to all staff and volunteers by a designated Line Manager. A record of these meetings will be kept in the staff and volunteer's personnel file following the format laid out in the **Supervision Summary form**.
- 7.8 Families First will create a culture of mutual support where staff and volunteers feel safe to explore concerns around inappropriate behaviour and attitudes. This may take the form of:
- One-to-one support and supervision.
 - Group supervision.
 - Brief and de-brief.
 - Internal and external training opportunities.
 - Team meetings.
 - Observation of the staff and volunteers at work.
- 8. Families First Child (Adult) Protection Training Overview**
- 8.1 As an organisation Families First has a duty under GIRFEC to ensure that we have a competent workforce.
- 8.2 Some staff and volunteers may not have a specific childcare role therefore it is imperative that everyone understands child protection, abuse and wellbeing; so they know what to do when they feel something is not right.
- 8.3 Families First compulsory induction training offers participants opportunities for questions and group discussions and will cover the following areas:
- Child protection overview.
 - Legal framework.
 - Families First policy and procedures.
 - Types of abuse.
 - When to break confidentiality.
 - Boundaries.
 - The importance of communication.
 - What to do if a child discloses abuse.
 - Families First role if a child discloses abuse.
 - Families First commitment to staff and volunteers.
 - Case studies and scenarios.
- 8.4 All participants will be given full access to training papers, a summary of this policy and asked to sign a statement confirming they have received Child Protection training. This statement will be kept in the participant's personnel file.

- 8.5 This training will be regularly reviewed to reflect any changes or updates in legislation as appropriate.
- 8.6 All staff and volunteers will be offered regular Continuous Professional Development external training as appropriate to their role.

9. Types of abuse, a summary of signs and indicators

9.1 It can be difficult to know when a child is experiencing abuse or whether it is part of their condition or a normal part of development. Therefore, it is really important for all staff and volunteers to share or talk through their concerns with their Line Manager or a paid member of staff.

9.2 The following are some of the areas of concern that may alert you to a child's wellbeing:

- Domestic abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.
- Non-organic failure to thrive.
- New categories continue to be considered such as human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

9.3 As staff and volunteers get to know the children they work with, and develop a caring professional relationship, they will get to know if the child's behaviour is out of character. The types of changes to look out for are usually the opposite to the way the child normally behaves:

- Unexplained or hidden injuries, unexplained bruising, lack of medical attention.
- Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, attention seeking, running away, stealing, and lying.
- Pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults, disturbed sleep, nightmares, bedwetting; secretive relationships with adults or children; tummy pains with no apparent cause.
- Looking unkempt and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, lingering injuries or health problems.
- Inappropriate relationships between the carer and the child.
- Over eating and rushing food, as if the child has not eaten in a long while.

10. Accidents and incidents in relation to safeguarding

10.1 Families First have a clear policy on how to manage accidents and incidents (refer to **Families First First Aid policy**).

10.2 If a child's actions result in an incident such as an attack on another child, bullying, or putting others at risk an incident form will be completed in the first instance so that Families First have a formal record.

11. Managing risk

11.1 Families First have a number of policies and procedures for assessing risk at venues and locations through **Families First Lone Working and Referral, Registration and Review policies**.

11.2 All types of risk assessments are reviewed to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

12. Delivering services safely online

12.1 Families First is committed to providing continuous service delivery no matter what may get in the way of this such as staff absence or lockdown of community activities due to a pandemic.

12.2 We can do this in a number of ways to ensure there is minimal disruption to service delivery such as telephone, video and messaging support (whatever the service user prefers).

12.3 Staff should adhere to the following principles:

- Staff must create Families First social media accounts, not linked to their personal accounts.
- Staff must ask volunteers to create Families First social media accounts, not linked to their personal accounts.
- Staff must only use designated IT work equipment and mobile phones to contact service users.
- Staff must ensure all new activities are risk assessed.
- Verify who else is in the room, encourage others to be present to avoid Lone Working challenges e.g., is a parent in the room with a child, or a colleague in the room with you?
- Think of the news, your family and your manager - don't say or do anything you wouldn't be comfortable with reported in the news, or your family or manager hearing, or that could compromise your career.
- Check all privacy settings on your Families First social media accounts to ensure you are only sharing information with those you want to.
- Ensure volunteers are fully briefed on the process they should follow when offering alternative support.
- Maintain the same professional boundaries as if working face-to-face with a service user.

12.4 If a child or young person, with whom you work professionally, approaches you on your personal social media account, decline any friendship or connection requests and, if appropriate, refer them to your official Families First accounts.

12.4.1 An example of appropriate wording could be: *"Thanks for getting in touch, but as this is my personal social media account it's not appropriate for us to connect. If you'd like to get involved with me at Families First and hear all our news, you can follow my Families First Twitter/Insta/Facebook account here [insert links]."*

12.5 Follow all Families First policy and procedure such as completing **Session Reports, Lone Working, Confidentiality, Data Protection, and ICT** as if you were working face-to-face with the child or young person.

12.6 Continue to record all contacts on Families First database noting what media was used.

12.7 If you are unsure about anything speak with a colleague or your Line Manager before proceeding.

13. Responding to concerns about wellbeing and abuse

13.1 A safeguarding issue may come to the notice of staff and volunteers in several ways:

- A child may disclose that they are being abused.
- There are indications that could point to abuse - a child may have bruises, marks or a change in a child's behaviour may suggest the possibility of abuse.
- The organisation has received a third party report that a child/young person is being abused.
- A child identifying they are not feeling well.

13.2 Where an allegation is made against staff or volunteers the recipient of the allegation must refer to the procedure outlined in **Section 20** of this document.

13.3 Staff and volunteers will need to be clear in their own minds what is concerning them.

13.4 If staff or volunteers are concerned, they should note the names of anyone else who witnessed the mark or behaviour that caused the concern.

13.5 If staff or volunteers are suspicious about a particular person, they must discuss their concerns with their Line Manager or a member of staff. They should not discuss their concerns with the person they are concerned about.

13.6 Staff and volunteers should not try to investigate an allegation of abuse; this responsibility lies with Police Scotland Fife Division and Fife Council Children's Services.

13.7 All concerns must be taken to one of the following people for discussion and agreement will be reached about what will happen next and by whom:

- A Line Manager.
- A paid member of staff.
- Families First named Child & Adult Protection Trustee – Jane Holmes
enquiries@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk
- Families First Manager – Morag Coleman – 07763 489302
manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk
- Families First Deputy Manager – Alison Miller – 07542 714671
yps@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk

12.7.1 Should you not have contact details for one of the above people, please contact the main office on 01334 208086 or enquiries@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk where someone will take a message and arrange for your preferred person to contact you.

12.7.2 In the interest of confidentiality you should just state you have a confidential child protection concern you wish to discuss with ...

13.8 A full risk assessment will be undertaken at the time of reporting to assess the danger or risk the child might be in.

13.9 If none of the above people are available, the person raising the concern should refer to their emergency contact cards, handed out during their Child/Adult Protection training, and inform the relevant authority, such as police or social work, of their concerns.

13.10 As soon as possible after the event a member of staff should be informed, and they will take you through the child protection process and paperwork.

13.11 Staff and volunteers should keep a record of what happened and what actions were taken (signed and dated) until they can complete Families First forms.

14. Attendance at professional meetings

14.1 During the course of their work with vulnerable children and young people Families First staff may be required to attend professional meetings.

14.2 There are a number of ways that Families First staff could be involved, as follows:

- One-to-one individual support by working in partnership with schools.
- Following the Child Wellbeing Pathway.
- Being involved in a Fife Child's Plan.
- Through a Fife Child Protection Case conference.
- Through a Looked After Child plan and review.

14.3 When staff become involved in these meetings they become part of the team around the child. Staff will work with volunteers and partners to ensure that the child is safe, their needs are being met and their goals achieved.

14.4 Staff will be required to complete forms and provide reports to the professional meetings to demonstrate what work that has been undertaken at Families First.

14.5 Staff will involve volunteers as appropriate to contribute to the meeting/plan process.

15. Emergency, physical injuries or symptoms needing medical attention

15.1 If a child has a physical injury or symptoms of neglect, the member of staff or child protection officer, if safe to do so, should:

- Speak with the parent/carer and suggest medical attention is obtained for the child. If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from Fife Council Children's Services, and, or Police Scotland Fife Division.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, the paid member of staff or child protection officer will contact the statutory authorities, following [Fife Child Protection](#) protocol.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately. Families First staff or volunteers will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- It must not be assumed that the doctor or medical assistance will contact Fife Council Children's Services. The welfare of the child is paramount, and all concerns will be followed up by staff with the relevant authority.

16. Third party information

16.1 If staff or volunteers are given information from a third party about a child that is being abused they should:

- Inform the third party that it is Families First policy to pass any concerns regarding the safety of children to Fife Council Children's Services, and, or Police Scotland Fife Division.
- Encourage the third party to contact the relevant statutory authorities themselves. If they are not willing to do this explain that as they have passed the information to Families First we are obliged to pass the information onto the relevant statutory authority.
- Write down the information and discussion as soon as possible. If practical inform the Families First child protection officer and discuss a plan forward, if not contact the relevant statutory authorities.
- It is not the responsibility of Families First to investigate, but it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that children are protected and to pass any information on to Fife Council Children's Services, and, or Police Scotland Fife Division.

- In all circumstances relating to child protection when Families First staff or Trustees cannot be contacted, the information must be passed onto the relevant statutory authorities immediately.

17. Responding to children and young people who disclose abuse

17.1 Children come to Families First services with a number of experiences and challenges, these experiences will determine if and when a child decides to make a disclosure. Full training will be given to staff and volunteers on how to respond to children and young people.

17.2 If a child discloses abuse:

- Listen.
- Reassure.
- Be honest.
- Do not interrupt.
- Do not prompt.
- Do not put words into a child's mouth.
- Do not deal with it alone.
- Act promptly.
- Make notes, date and sign.

17.3 It is not Families First's role to investigate a child protection disclosure, but Families First will support all staff and volunteers through any child protection process.

18. Safe storage and use of personal information, data protection

18.1 Families First hold a hard copy file and electronic data on each service user which contains information such as registration forms, personal contact details, session notes, child and adult protection concerns, wellbeing details, meeting notes, and correspondence. All data is stored securely as outlined in Families First Data Protection policy.

19. Keeping records

19.1 At the point of registration all children will be informed about Families First Child Protection policy with an age-appropriate explanation and summary.

19.2 All concerns regarding children must be recorded on the appropriate paperwork and a copy retained in the child's file. The forms that Families First use include:

- Child Chronology (saved electronically on the database).
- Incident form.
- Single Agency Wellbeing Assessment form.
- Families First Risk Assessment form.

19.3 As well as any formal documentation it is advisable to keep all informal notes, signed and dated.

19.4 All correspondence, notes of meetings, incident and accident forms, chronology and risk assessment forms in relation to safeguarding will be filed under the safeguarding tab in the child's file.

20. What to do if an allegation is made against staff or volunteers

- 20.1** Should an allegation of abuse be made against staff or volunteers Families First needs to act in a professional and unbiased manner.
- 20.2** Families First may seek legal advice on how to proceed through their insurers.
- 20.3** Families First recognises that this may prove a challenge to all staff and volunteers involved but the needs of the child are paramount. The following procedure should be used as a guide following an allegation:
- 20.3.1** Keep focused on the needs of the child.
- 20.3.2** Decide who will be in the investigating team. Under normal circumstances this would be Families First Manager and a nominated member from the Board of Trustees.
- 20.3.3** If the allegation is against Families First Manager consideration should be given to an external independent panel such as the manager of another voluntary sector agency, Fife Voluntary Action, or Families First Fife Council Link Officer.
- 20.3.4** Consultation with other agencies may be necessary for support and advice such as Fife Children's Services or Police.
- 20.3.5** An allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Try not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation.
- 20.3.6** As much information as possible must be obtained from the informant including - the name of the alleged abuser, the nature of the alleged abuse, when it is thought to have occurred, how often, and how the informant knows of the incident(s). The date, time and nature of the allegation should be recorded.
- 20.3.7** If other staff members and volunteers have witnessed or have concerns about their peers' suitability to work with a child this information must be passed to Families First Manager, with the nature of the concerns, when it occurred, how often, and the date, time and nature of the allegation recorded on **Families First Concern Regarding Staff or Volunteers form**.
- 20.3.8** The law protects staff and volunteers from the actions of those individuals who have been implicated in the abuse, if the report was not malicious or vexatious.
- 20.3.9** Where the child makes an allegation of abuse (relating to now or in the past, such as historical abuse) by a staff member or volunteer, the recipient of the allegation should follow the procedure at **Section 17** above.
- 20.3.10** Make an accurate record of the conversation and be honest about what will happen next.
- 20.3.11** If the allegation has been received in the form of a complaint from a child, and it has been established that a child may have been harmed or placed in danger due to a failure to put safeguarding measures in place, the complaints procedure is no longer appropriate, and the Child Protection policy must be followed.
- 20.3.12** During investigations a number of options may be considered in relation to managing the work load of the staff member involved, such as:
- Suspending the staff member or volunteer.
 - Implementing **Families First Disciplinary policy and procedure**.
 - Provide alternative working arrangements.
 - Appointing an independent person to support and assist the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- 20.4** If the child is considered to be in immediate danger the police should be notified instantly.

- 20.5 Following informal investigations and if the allegations are found to be true, Families First will make a referral to Fife Children's Services and Police Scotland Fife Division.
- 20.6 Where the grounds for referral have been met the staff member or volunteer will be referred to the [Disqualified from Working with Children List](#) held by Scottish Ministers, taking legal advice where appropriate or necessary.

21. In summary

- 21.1 It is not the responsibility of Families First, its staff or volunteers to carry out any formal investigations.
- 21.2 It is the duty of Families First to keep children safe and to keep accurate records for any formal investigations that may follow.
- 21.3 Families First will follow the protocol outlined on Fife Child Protection Website to refer a child onto Fife Children's Services.
- 21.4 Families First will seek legal advice where necessary and appropriate.
- 21.5 A full investigation may be carried out by Police Scotland Fife Division and Fife Children's Services.
- 21.6 Families First will induct all new staff and volunteers on the policies and procedures of the organisation relevant to their role.
- 21.7 Families First will provide training relevant to their role on child protection issues.
- 21.8 Families First will provide full support to staff and volunteers who are involved in a child protection investigation. This support could be in the form of:

- Support and Supervision.
- Brief and debrief sessions.
- Transport to professional meetings.
- A companion at meetings.
- Legal representation.

21.9 Families First Contact details:

- Families First Manager – Morag Coleman – 07763 489302
manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk
- Families First named Child & Adult Protection Trustee – Jane Holmes
enquiries@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk
- Families First Deputy Manager – Alison Miller – 07542 714671
yps@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk
- Main office - 01334 208086 or enquiries@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk where someone will take a message and arrange for your preferred person to contact you.

Signed Families First Manager: M. E. Coleman

Signed Families First Trustee: J. Holmes

Date: 1/05/2024

APPENDIX A**Families First Child Protection Policy and Procedure****Child protection policy summary for children, young people and their families**

Families First is committed to protecting children and young people from all forms of abuse. We will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure children and young people receive the support, help and protection that they need as soon as we become aware that something is not right in their lives. The protection and wellbeing of children will come before any other consideration when Families First is working with other family members.

There have been a number of Acts, Legislation and Good Practice Guidance that influence Child Protection in Scotland. These acts from central government through to local authorities ensure that individuals and organisations can protect children from harm. All this information helps organisations, such as Families First, to develop their child protection policies and procedures. Families First can receive additional support from statutory and voluntary sector agencies when needed, either for advice and information or for support when going through a child protection inquiry.

Families First is committed to providing the best possible services for children, young people and their families. All people acting on behalf of or working for Families First whether staff or volunteers are required to abide by the procedures contained in Families First Child Protection policy and procedure without exception. This includes people who work directly or indirectly with children and young people. Children and young people are recognised as those who are under the age of 18 years.

Families First have a legal obligation to follow safe recruitment practices to ensure all people working for them are safe to work with children. To ensure we do this, we require staff and volunteers to complete application forms, attend interviews and we follow up with reference requests and police checks. We also ensure staff and volunteers are supported in their role by providing regular training and supervision.

Families First also has an obligation to inform all staff and volunteers about the types and signs of abuse and how we respond to the abuse. We do this through induction, child protection training and on-going support. The Manager of Families First is the named Child/Adult Protection Officer and will support all staff and volunteers through any child protection concern or investigation. The manager can be contacted directly at the Rose Lane Centre, or on 01334 208086, 07763 489302, or emailed manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk

Families First have a number of forms and protocols that need to be followed when a child protection concern is raised. Families First recognise that it can be difficult to remember everything, especially when people are not using these protocols every day. All paid staff working in children's services will have a knowledge and understanding of the procedure to follow. The most important things to remember are:

- We all have a duty to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse.
- Families First staff will support everyone involved; you do not have to deal with it alone.
- Any worries, concerns or niggles will be treated seriously and listened to.

APPENDIX B**Families First Child Protection Policy and Procedure****Child protection policy summary for volunteers**

Families First is committed to protecting children and young people from all forms of abuse. We will work with other agencies and professionals to ensure children and young people receive the support, help and protection that they need as soon as we become aware that something is not right in their lives. The protection and wellbeing of children will come before any other consideration when Families First is working with other family members.

There have been a number of Acts, Legislation and Good Practice Guidance that influence Child Protection in Scotland. These acts from central government through to local authorities ensure that individuals and organisations protect children from harm. All this information helps organisations, such as Families First, to develop their child protection policies and procedures. Families First can receive additional support from statutory and voluntary sector agencies when needed, either for advice and information or for support when going through a child protection inquiry.

Families First is committed to providing the best possible services for children, young people and their families. All people acting on behalf of or working for Families First whether staff or volunteers are required to abide by the procedures contained in Families First Child Protection policy and procedure without exception. This includes people who work directly or indirectly with children and young people. Children and young people are recognised as those who are under the age of 18 years.

Families First have a legal obligation to follow safe recruitment practices to ensure all people working for them are safe to work with children. To ensure we do this, we require staff and volunteers to complete application forms, attend interviews and we will follow up with reference requests and police checks. We also ensure staff and volunteers are supported in their role by providing regular training and supervision.

Families First also has an obligation to inform all staff and volunteers about the types and signs of abuse and how we respond to the abuse. We do this through induction, child protection training and on-going support. The Manager of Families First is the named Child/Adult Protection Officer and will support all staff and volunteers through any child protection concern or investigation. The manager can be contacted directly at the Rose Lane Centre, or on 01334 208086, 07763 489302 or emailed manager@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk

Families First have a number of forms and protocols that need to be followed when a child protection concern is raised. Families First recognise that it can be difficult to remember everything, especially when people are not using these protocols every day. All paid staff working in children's services will have a knowledge and understanding of the procedure to follow. The most important things to remember are:

- We all have a duty to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse.
- Families First staff will support everyone involved; you do not have to deal with it alone.
- Any worries, concerns or niggles will be treated seriously and listened to.

Guidance for volunteers

Volunteers must be supportive and reassure the child by listening carefully. Putting into practice good listening skills as outlined below:

- Remind the child of Families First Child Protection policy and let them know that you may not be able to keep what they tell you to yourself.
- Always listen to what the child has to say and take them seriously. Remember they may not have the vocabulary to express themselves. Avoid interrupting them wherever possible.
- Try not to show you are shocked by a child's disclosure (no matter what you are feeling inside).
- Offer reassurance. Tell the child that they are very brave in disclosing the information and that you will try and help them in the best way you can.
- Always inform the child who you are going to share what they have told you with or inform the relevant statutory authorities if you feel that they are at risk. Parents or carers will be informed of the situation if they are not implicated in the disclosure.
- If a child does not wish their parent, guardian or carer to be informed of their disclosure, a risk assessment will be made by a member of staff and the named child protection officer as to how to proceed with the child's disclosure.
- Never prompt or lead the child who is disclosing information. Allow them to express themselves in their own time.
- Never try to question the child who has made an allegation about a specific individual. Where this relates to another member of staff or volunteer, refer to the procedure outlined in **Section 20 of the main policy**.
- Never make false promises to a child. This can be extremely detrimental to any trust that might have been developed between staff, volunteers and the child.
- Clarify with the child that they understand what you are saying to them.
- Be objective in your recording of events. Record any information in a factual way, including dates, names and places that have been mentioned.
- Never make subjective statements about what a child discloses. This is not helpful and will not be regarded as valid evidence. All notes and information will be held in the child's file and signed and dated.
- Reassure the child that they will be given full support to help them to deal with the situation.
- Inform the child that you will let them know what is going to happen next.
- Never manage the situation on your own. Speak with your Line Manager or a paid member of staff for support and guidance.
- It is not your duty to investigate abuse, leave that to the statutory agencies.
- Respect the child's confidence. You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in this policy and procedure.

If a child discloses abuse:

- Listen.
- Reassure.
- Be honest.
- Do not interrupt.
- Do not interpret.
- Do not prompt.
- Do not put words into a child's mouth.
- Do not deal with it alone.

- Act promptly.
- Make notes, date and sign.

It is not Families First's role to investigate a child protection disclosure, but Families First **will** support all volunteers through any child protection process.