



visible fictions

**Children and Vulnerable Groups
Protection Policy**

Policy Aims & Objectives

Visible Fictions Theatre Company will strive to safeguard the welfare of the children and vulnerable individuals with whom it works. It is the duty of all those employed by the company or involved in any way with the organisation to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children and vulnerable individuals with whom they come into contact.

To fulfil these aims and objectives Visible Fictions has agreed the following principles and practices:

To minimise situations where abuse could occur

Visible Fictions will organise its work so as to reduce to the minimum, situations where it is possible that children or vulnerable individuals might be abused. We endeavour to ensure that all activities with children and vulnerable individuals are supervised or observed by several adults. In practice, the nature of our work is such that groups of children or vulnerable individuals are seldom asked to work alone with an adult unsupervised; teachers and carers are encouraged to participate in workshops and must be in attendance at any performance, discussion, workshop or other event organised by the company. If there is any possibility a Visible Fictions employee could be working alone with a child or vulnerable person, Visible Fictions will enroll them in the PVG scheme in advance of their contract.

To ensure children and vulnerable individuals are able to voice any concerns to an independent person

Visible Fictions works with children and vulnerable individuals in partnership with other organisations e.g. schools, day centres, voluntary groups and venues. We will ask these organisations to provide any children or vulnerable individuals with a named adult to whom they can voice any concerns they may have relating to their experiences with Visible Fictions. This person should be independent of Visible Fictions but will normally be a member of the relevant organisation.

Visible Fictions seeks, through drama, to empower children and young adults to express themselves more freely. Should any child or vulnerable individual with whom we are working, express concerns about any kind of abuse directly to a Visible Fictions employee, that employee will encourage the child to speak to their organisation's named person or another trusted adult there.

To ensure paid staff and volunteers follow agreed procedures and have clear roles when working with children or vulnerable individuals

Visible Fictions seeks to maintain methods of describing, monitoring and supervising the tasks and responsibilities of any paid staff or volunteers who work with children or vulnerable individuals. This may take the form of a written statement to be agreed by the worker/volunteer involved, containing a description of the work concerned, the lines of accountability to be followed and a statement of the duty of the worker/volunteer to prevent the abuse of all children and vulnerable individuals in contact with the company.

We will schedule regular meetings and reporting sessions between our employees/volunteers and the Project Co-ordinator.

To select the right paid staff and volunteers in order to protect children and vulnerable individuals

Our main aim is to create and perform theatre for children and young people and our normal recruitment criteria relate to ability and experience in these areas. We also operate an equal opportunities policy which guards against unfair discrimination in recruitment. However where our live performances are accompanied by an education programme this often creates situations where specialist knowledge and experience is required to lead drama based workshop sessions. In such cases the company will ensure that all employees are subject to Scottish Criminal Record Office checks.

Applicants for such positions will be informed that the employment is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and all convictions, however old, must be declared. Applicants will be assured that any disclosures will be treated with total confidentiality and will not be used to discriminate unfairly against them. To this end we operate a strict handling and storage policy and recruitment of ex-offenders policy.

References

We will insist that references from the most previous employer are provided. These references should be written rather than verbal and should include comment on the individual's ability to work with children and vulnerable individuals. Visible Fictions retain the right to ask new staff/volunteers to undergo a probationary period to our satisfaction.

To deal effectively with abuse that has been disclosed or is suspected

This is covered in detail in the Protection of Children and Young People - Guidelines for Visible Fictions staff and volunteers.

Implementing and reviewing this policy

Visible Fictions recognises that the effective implementation of this policy may require staff and volunteers to receive training. Training is reviewed regularly for all staff and volunteers.

Visible Fictions will endeavour to keep up to date with any changes in legislation on access to criminal record checks and other relevant developments.

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Visible Fictions Theatre Company is a Scottish Charity (SCO21724) and a Company Ltd by Guarantee (Scotland 144133).