



# **The Focolare Movement in GB**

## **Safeguarding children and adults policy**

**Revised January 2026**

## Introduction

*The Focolare Movement is an international movement which takes as its inspiration Jesus' prayer to the Father "May they all be one" (Jn 17:21). For over seventy years it has drawn together people of all Christian traditions and from many of the world's religions, alongside people with no formal faith, who share the aim of building a united world.*

The Focolare in Great Britain (GB) is committed to creating a culture of safeguarding where all adults and children are safe from harm and abuse, and which underpins and is embedded in its mission to share God's love with all.

## Key Legislation and Guidance

The Focolare in GB follows the guidance and policies of the CSSA (England and Wales) and the SCSSA (Scotland) and the policies of which are based of law and guidance that seek to protect children and adults. Links to key legislation and guidance are as follows:

### Children

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

A summary of the relevant key legislation and guidance is available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system>.

### Adults

An adult is anyone 18 years and over.

### An at risk/vulnerable adult

An at risk/vulnerable adult is any adult who is 'at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014, England). While in Scotland the definition of an at risk/vulnerable adult applies to those 16 years and over, for Focolare GB they are considered children until 18 years.

While the Focolare in GB does not specifically organise activities for adults who may be at risk/vulnerable, it is mindful that its policies and procedures need to reflect that they may be included in its programmes and activities.

Key legislation and guidance:

- England:  
[Care Act 2014](#)  
[Care and Statutory Guidance](#) (updated October 2023)
- Scotland:  
[Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)  
[Adult Support and Protection Improvement Plan 2019-2022](#) (October 2019)
- Wales:  
[Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)  
[Working together to safeguard people](#) (2018, last updated December 2022) — code of practice relating to Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

**This policy should be read alongside:**

- the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) Practice Guidance [Practice Guidance \(catholicsafeguarding.org.uk\)](#)
- the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA) document [In God's Image v2 \(scssa.org.uk\)](#)
- the Focolare in GB's [Guidelines-for-adult-leaders-and-helpers-Oct-21.pdf](#)
- the [Focolare Appropriate use of Media document](#).

## Contents

Statement of commitment.....	5
Key Principles and Values.....	6
Key terms.....	6
Organisational Structure and Key Roles.....	7
Procedure for reporting concerns.....	9
Training.....	11
Safer Recruitment.....	11
Contact details for the Focolare in GB Safeguarding Team.....	12

## Statement of commitment

Every human being has inherent value, which members of the Focolare believe comes directly from God's creation of each person in His own image and likeness. Therefore, all people - especially those who are vulnerable or at risk in any way - should be valued, supported, and protected from harm. The Focolare in GB, together with its individual members, is committed to maintaining a safe environment and safeguarding all who take part in any day or residential events. The Focolare in GB will take appropriate steps to promote the welfare and wellbeing of everyone in attendance - children, young people, and adults, including those who may be at greater risk or are more vulnerable - by:

- operating a robust procedure for checking the suitability of anyone working with children and vulnerable adults (safer recruitment)
- implementing safe working practices
- providing access to induction and training for all adult leaders and helpers
- maintaining up-to-date safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect current legislation and guidance relating to children and vulnerable/at-risk adults
- developing and sustaining a culture of effective risk management

The Focolare in GB will also promote early and effective identification of safeguarding concerns relating to children and vulnerable/at-risk adults.

All Focolare groups in GB are required to adopt this policy and to work collaboratively with other agencies in the development and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures.

This policy applies to all Focolare activities in GB, regardless of location. It covers activities taking place within GB as well as those organised in GB but held overseas and applies both on and off Focolare owned premises. This includes the use of video-conferencing platforms and social media.

The Focolare in GB is committed to providing support to all those who assist in its work with children, young people, and adults - including those who may be more vulnerable or at risk - and to ensuring a clear framework of safeguarding accountability.

The Focolare in GB will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to meet its commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable/at-risk adults, in alignment with the duties of statutory bodies and the wider public sector.

The Focolare in GB will liaise closely with statutory agencies to ensure that any concerns or allegations of abuse are promptly and properly referred to the relevant local safeguarding authorities, and that support is offered where appropriate.

## Key Principles and Values

The Focolare in GB embraces its role in supporting children and adults to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment.

All adults within the Focolare in GB have a responsibility to act and intervene when it appears that children and/or adults need to be made safe from harm, whether that risk is emotional, physical, sexual or through neglect.

The Focolare in GB will not act alone, but in an open, transparent and accountable way in partnership with social care services, the Police, health agencies, probation services and any other relevant agencies to safeguard children and adults and assist in bringing to justice anyone who has committed an offence against a child or an adult.

Support will be made available to children and their families and to other relevant people where there have been concerns and allegations of some form of harm or maltreatment of a child or an adult.

If the safeguarding (SG) officers become aware that services and support are being provided to anyone who has acted to harm another person, they will ensure that safeguarding is put in place to manage the risk, so that that person will not harm anyone else.

The Focolare in GB supports and promotes sound risk management through robust risk assessments, to justify decisions made and actions taken.

The Focolare in GB is regulated by the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) who have statutory objectives to ensure trustees/directors comply with their legal obligations in managing and increasing public trust and confidence in charities.

The role of the Trustees/Directors is to ensure that the Focolare Movement in GB:

- has appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all trustees/directors, members, volunteers and beneficiaries
- makes sure protecting people from harm is central to its culture.

## Key terms

- **Responsible of the Focolare** – the person responsible for a Focolare community house and the people and geographical area entrusted to them. The Focolare in GB has community houses in Glasgow, Birmingham, Welwyn Garden City and London, and holds events throughout GB.
- **Leader** – An adult who plans/prepares and/or delivers Focolare in GB events whether day or residential and including those specifically for the children and young people who follow the spirituality of the Focolare.
- **Helper** – someone who supports the leaders on an occasional/non-regular basis. They may have a background role with no contact with the children/young people (e.g. setting up the venue, kitchen duties) or have some contact (e.g. speaking at an event).

## Organisational Structure and Key Roles

### General safeguarding responsibilities of everyone working in the roles listed below

- Everyone shares responsibility for promoting safe and effective practice in all Focolare in GB activities involving children, young people, and adults and for working together to improve standards and comply with national safeguarding standards and relevant international Focolare safeguarding requirements.
- Anyone involved in any of the roles below is expected to complete relevant [safeguarding training](#) annually.
- Anyone who is aware of any potential or actual safeguarding allegations/ disclosures/concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) has a responsibility to report them to the zonal delegates, who will take timely and appropriate action.

### The Focolare in GB safeguarding responsibilities of:

#### Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

The Focolare in GB has two DSOs who are appointed and approved by the zonal delegates in Brussels. See page 13 for contact details.

The role and responsibilities of the DSOs:

- General safeguarding responsibilities above.
- Work together to respond in a timely manner to any safeguarding allegations/disclosures/concerns they are made aware of, including where relevant to the appropriate authorities. See Flowchart 'What to do in your Focolare role if ...', page 10.
- Ensure the DSO email address is checked at least weekly and relevant actions taken.
- Work closely with and have the same responsibilities as the rest of the Focolare in GB safeguarding team.
- Work closely with the Focolare in GB delegates, also ensuring they are briefed on any Focolare in GB safeguarding issues.
- As relevant work with the zonal delegates in Brussels and the international centre in Rome.

#### Safeguarding Team

The Focolare in GB Safeguarding Team comprises of the two DSOs plus at least two members who are co-opted onto the team by the DSOs. The team as far as possible operates independently of any Focolare structures.

See page 13 for contact details.

- General safeguarding responsibilities above.
- Ensure awareness of current legislation and CSSA's and SCSSA's guidelines.
- Ensure the leaders of Focolare in GB events have appropriate DBS clearance.
- Offer safeguarding support and advice to those responsible for the Focolare community houses and the organisers of any Focolare events in GB.
- Review the Focolare in GB's safeguarding policy annually.
- Review the Guidelines for adults, leaders and helpers, Risk Assessments, Safety Checklist for venues and any other safeguarding documents regularly.
- Reviewing any incidents/matters arising from events held.
- Support the training needs of all relevant leaders and helpers in the Focolare GB.
- Ensure records of Focolare in GB events relevant to safeguarding are centralized (location?).
- Meet at least six times a year.
- Report quarterly to the Focolare in GB trustees and annually to the zonal delegates in Brussels.

### **Persons responsible for a Focolare community house**

- General safeguarding responsibilities above.
- Ensure safer recruitment for all Focolare in GB leaders and helpers involved in any Focolare in GB event, whether face to face or virtual.
- Support organisers of any Focolare in GB event ensuring sufficient and appropriate Leaders and Helpers are in place.
- Ensure a risk assessment has been completed for any event someone in their Focolare house/area is helping to organise.

### **Leaders**

- General safeguarding responsibilities above.
- Understand and follow the Focolare in GB's Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour [Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare in GB](#), pages 16-19.
- Ensure a risk assessment (Part A) has been completed before the event, that Part B is completed after the event and the whole completed risk assessment (Parts A and B) is sent to [safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk) and stored centrally. See the risk assessment form for details.
- Nominate a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the event.
- Ensure a register has been completed and sent to [safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk), from where it will be stored securely.
- Ensure any other Leaders and Helpers have been briefed in their role and understand and follow the Focolare in GB's Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour; [Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare Movement in GB](#).
- Ensure that any contact (which will at most only ever be occasional) at an event between Helpers and children/young people will be supervised by the Leaders.

- Recognise and ensure any potential or actual safeguarding allegations/ disclosures/concerns they are aware of are reported in a timely manner to the appropriate authorities. See Flowchart 'What to do in your Focolare role if ...', page 10.
- Brief the two Focolare in GB DSOs of any safeguarding allegations/disclosures/concerns in a timely manner [safeguarding@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@focolare.org.uk).
- As relevant brief the person/s responsible for the relevant Focolare house/s of any safeguarding allegations/disclosures/concerns in a timely manner.

## Helpers

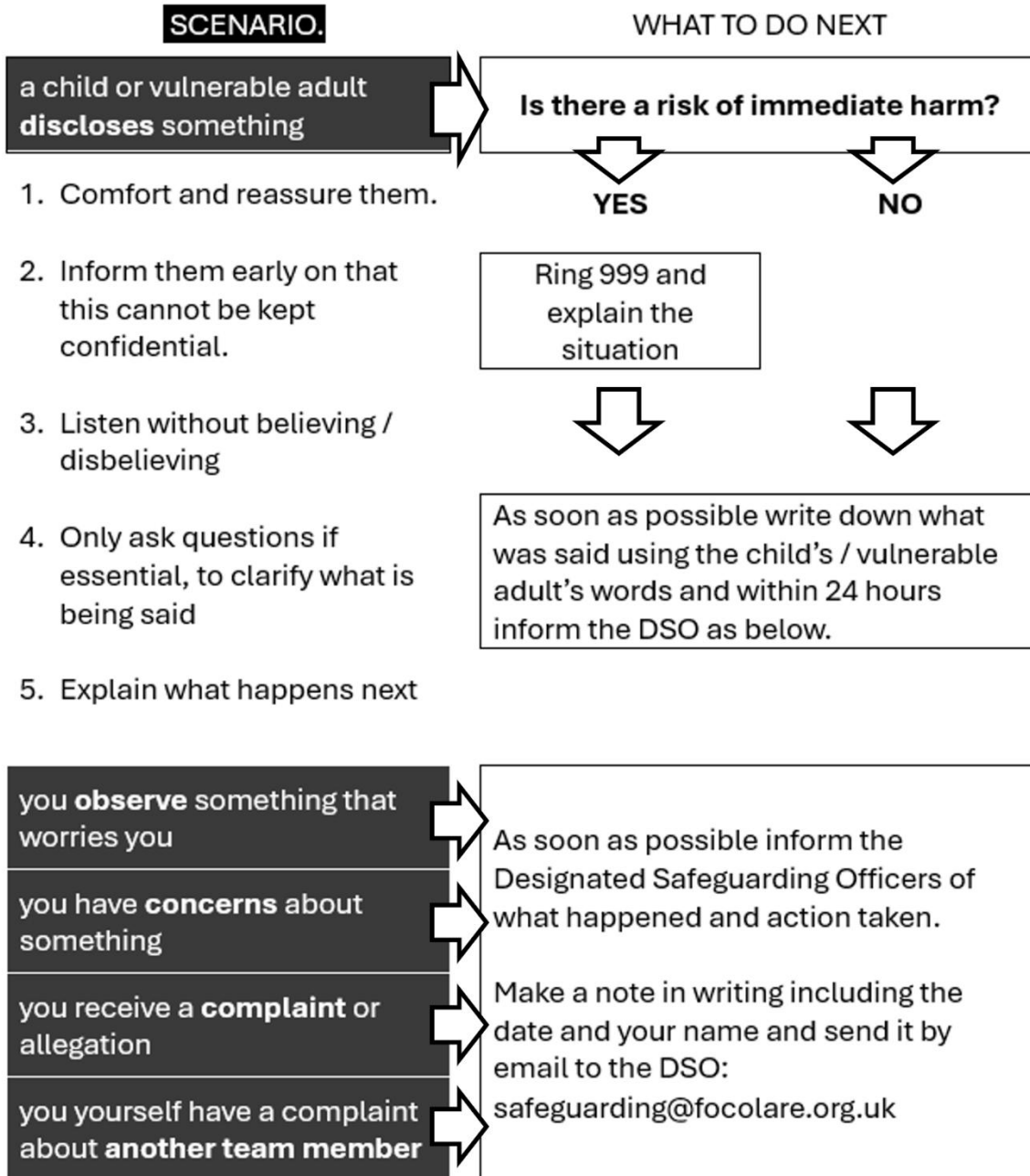
- General safeguarding responsibilities above.
- Understand and follow the Focolare in GB's Safeguarding Policy and code of behaviour [Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare in GB](#), pages 16-19.
- Recognise and ensure any potential or actual safeguarding allegations/ disclosures/concerns they are aware of are reported in a timely manner to the Leaders of the event. See Flowchart 'What to do in your Focolare role if ...', page 10.
- Recognise and ensure that any potential or actual safeguarding allegations/ disclosures/concerns they are aware of concerning the event's Leaders are reported in a timely manner to the DSOs. [safeguarding@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@focolare.org.uk).

## Procedure for reporting concerns

See flowchart 'What to do in your Focolare role if ...', page 10.

See also page 22 of [Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare Movement in GB](#).

## What to do, in your Focolare role, if...



If you are unsure, contact the NSPCC Helpline for advice and guidance: 0808 800 5000 (Mon-Fri 9am-4pm) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

If you have a concern about a child/at risk/vulnerable adult outside of your Focolare role, you can call either the NSPCC Helpline or your local children's social care services.



## Training

It is expected that all Focolare members in GB involved with working with children and adults must undergo online safeguarding training annually provided by the [CSSA](#) or in Scotland within local Dioceses. Records will be kept of certificates.

Certificates relating to proof of training and DBS/PVG certificates should be sent to [safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk).

It is expected that all people involved in the event will read the [Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare Movement in GB](#).

Leaders of any national event are to liaise with the Focolare in GB's Safeguarding Team regarding completion of the risk assessments and register.

At the beginning of an event the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of the event will conduct a face-to-face briefing with participants ensuring they are aware of the event's DSL and any other relevant safeguarding information.

The Focolare in GB Safeguarding Team will keep a list of all adults involved in regulated activities/regular contact with children/young people noting when their DBS/PVG was received/renewed and training completed.

## Safer Recruitment

Within the Focolare in GB, people are normally approached to ask them to help with programmes/activities for children and young people as Gen Assistant, leaders or helpers. These people are usually already known well and are invited to help in a specific role, for example with the children under 8, or 8-12, 13-15, etc.

The person responsible for the safe and effective appointment of helpers is the person responsible for the local Focolare community house in GB.

The person responsible for the Focolare community house in GB or to whoever they delegate the task to must ensure:

- a face-to-face discussion with the applicant to discuss what their role involves
- the applicant is legally entitled to volunteer in the UK
- if the role is eligible for criminal records checks, the applicant contacts one of the ID Verifiers to have their DBS/PVG application processed and completes all relevant paperwork, including Focolare in GB Volunteers Application form

- the applicant will be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information <sup>1</sup>. Relevant convictions will not need to be disclosed in advance or during the formal discussion about the role but must be discussed with the volunteer applicant before a decision is made about an appointment
- two references will be sought and provided
- the applicant receives the [Guidelines for adult leaders and helpers within the Focolare Movement in GB](#)
- the applicant receives access to safeguarding training and completes the relevant module(s) for their role
- the applicant receives support as relevant to enable them to undertake their role.

## **Criminal record checks: Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG)**

The Safeguarding Team will assess volunteer roles for eligibility for – and type of – DBS/PVG Disclosure, and where eligible the Disclosure Certificate must be obtained before the person commences in role.

Different roles are eligible for different types of criminal record checks. Eligibility is determined by the nature of the activity undertaken by the person.

In England, Scotland and Wales, the application for a DBS/PVG check is through the local Roman Catholic Dioceses or other appropriate bodies.

The Focolare GB promotes equality of opportunity for all, including people with criminal records. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a person from volunteering within Focolare activities. Appointment to any role will depend on the nature of the position, the nature of the offence(s) and the circumstances and context of the offending behaviour.

The Focolare GB follows CSSA policies for the recruitment of ex- offenders<sup>2</sup>.

## **Contact details for the Focolare in GB Safeguarding Team**

### **Contact details for the Focolare in GB Designated Safeguarding Officers**

[safeguarding@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@focolare.org.uk)

### **Contact details for the other members of the Focolare in GB Safeguarding Team**

[safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.admin@focolare.org.uk)

<sup>1</sup> This is a DBS/PVG Code of Practice requirement and applies to anyone being asked to have an Enhanced Disclosure.

<sup>2</sup> <https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/national-safeguarding-policy/>