



# BALANCED HORIZON

SC052496

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Working with Children, Young People, Adults at Risk, Volunteers and Community Participants

**Policy Owner:** Board of Trustees

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Stuart McKill, Chair

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):** [Name, role]

**Approved By:** Board of Trustees

**Original Adoption Date:** March 2025

**Last Reviewed and Updated:** June 2026

**Next Review Date:** June 2027

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Balanced Horizon is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for everyone who engages with our activities, projects, services and events. Safeguarding is fundamental to our values and forms part of our wider commitment to environmental stewardship, community engagement and responsible governance.

We recognise that children, young people, adults at risk, volunteers, staff and members of the public all have the right to participate in our activities free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, discrimination, bullying or avoidable harm. We are committed to creating a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and where concerns can be raised openly and acted upon appropriately.

This policy applies to all trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, project partners and anyone acting on behalf of Balanced Horizon.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply throughout this policy. They are intended as a guide and are not exhaustive.

**Safeguarding:** the policies, practices and actions taken to prevent harm, abuse or exploitation of anyone who comes into contact with the organisation.

**Child:** anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, regardless of the age of majority or consent in any given setting.

**Adult at risk (vulnerable adult):** a person aged 18 or over who may be at greater risk of harm because of age, disability, additional support needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment, or their life circumstances.

**Abuse:** harm caused to a person, which can take many forms and may vary between contexts. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical harm: physical contact that results in discomfort, pain or injury.
- Sexual harm: coercion or force to take part in sexual activity of any kind.
- Emotional or psychological harm: action or inaction that causes mental distress.
- Exploitation: misuse of power over another person for financial, social, sexual or other benefit.
- Bullying and harassment: unwanted behaviour that intimidates, humiliates or degrades.
- Sexual harassment: unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

## 3. LEGISLATIVE AND BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by current Scottish legislation and guidance, including:

- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated guidance in force June 2026)
- Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and subsequent amendments

- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Scottish Charity Governance Code

Balanced Horizon will comply with all applicable safeguarding legislation and recognised good practice standards.

## **4. OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT**

Balanced Horizon will:

- Promote the welfare and wellbeing of all participants.
- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously.
- Operate safer recruitment practices.
- Provide appropriate safeguarding training and awareness.
- Maintain clear reporting procedures.
- Ensure safeguarding considerations form part of project planning and risk assessments.
- Foster a culture of dignity, inclusion and respect.
- Work collaboratively with statutory agencies where required.
- Maintain secure safeguarding records and information.

## **5. SAFEGUARDING IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR WORK**

Our activities include:

- Coastal and beach clean events
- Marine restoration projects

- Environmental education programmes
- School engagement activities
- Volunteer programmes
- Community events
- Hatchery visits and placements
- Digital communications and content creation
- Public engagement and outreach

Safeguarding considerations are embedded into all activities, particularly where children, young people, adults at risk or vulnerable participants may be present.

Risk assessments must consider:

- Physical safety
- Environmental hazards
- Transport arrangements
- Lone working
- Volunteer supervision
- Online engagement
- Photography and filming
- Behavioural expectations
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Mental wellbeing
- Emergency procedures

## **6. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns.
- Assessing risk and taking appropriate action.
- Liaising with Police Scotland, local authority services and statutory agencies.

- Maintaining safeguarding records.
- Advising trustees on safeguarding matters.
- Supporting staff and volunteers.
- Monitoring safeguarding compliance.

If concerns relate to the DSL, reports should be made directly to the Deputy DSL or another Trustee.

To ensure concerns can always be raised promptly, Balanced Horizon maintains a named Deputy DSL who can act when the DSL is unavailable or where a concern relates to the DSL. The current contacts are:

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Stuart McKill, Chair — [email] / [telephone]

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:** [Name, role] — [email] / [telephone]

Concerns should normally be reported to the DSL (or Deputy DSL) within one working day, and sooner where there is an immediate risk to a person's safety.

## 7. REPORTING A CONCERN

Anyone who has concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person, adult at risk or participant must report the concern immediately.

All concerns will be taken seriously.

Those reporting concerns should:

- Ensure immediate safety where possible.
- Contact emergency services if there is immediate danger.
- Report concerns to the DSL as soon as practicable.
- Record factual observations.
- Avoid investigating the matter themselves.
- Maintain confidentiality.

No individual will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine safeguarding concern.

If anyone believes a concern has not been acted upon appropriately, or is worried about how safeguarding is being handled, they may raise this through Balanced Horizon's Whistleblowing Policy.

# 8. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Once a concern has been reported, the DSL (or Deputy DSL) will decide on the appropriate response, working with the Board of Trustees where necessary. In deciding how to respond, they will consider:

- Whether immediate action is needed to protect anyone at risk, and what support should be offered to those affected.
- Whether further information is needed, and who will gather it.
- Whether the concern should be referred to Police Scotland, the local authority or another statutory agency.
- Whether Balanced Horizon should carry out its own internal review, alongside supporting any statutory process.
- Where the concern relates to a member of staff, volunteer or trustee, whether action is required under the organisation's disciplinary, grievance or related procedures.

The DSL will keep a confidential record of all concerns and the actions taken. Access to these records will be restricted to the DSL, Deputy DSL and the Board of Trustees on a need-to-know basis.

The Board of Trustees will receive an overview of safeguarding concerns, actions and outcomes, and will assure itself that appropriate steps have been taken to manage risk and prevent recurrence.

## **Serious incidents and notifiable events**

Some concerns must be escalated to the full Board of Trustees immediately and may need to be reported to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) as a notifiable event. These include any concern where:

- there is an ongoing risk to people, staff or the organisation's operations;
- the incident has resulted in involvement by the police, government or a regulatory body;
- the incident has attracted, or is likely to attract, negative attention in the community or in the media, including social media; or
- there is a serious allegation of harm, abuse or exploitation by anyone representing Balanced Horizon.

The Board will decide, taking advice where needed, whether an incident is reportable to OSCR and will ensure any required report is made promptly.

### **Related policies and documents**

This policy should be read alongside Balanced Horizon's related policies, which together support a safe organisation. These include the Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, and grievance and disciplinary procedures.

## **9. CODE OF CONDUCT**

Everyone representing Balanced Horizon must:

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Act as positive role models.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality.
- Promote inclusion and equality.
- Never abuse a position of trust.
- Never use a position of trust to exchange money, employment, goods, services or support for sexual favours or any other benefit.
- Never engage in sexual activity with a child (anyone under the age of 18). This is prohibited regardless of the local age of consent, and a mistaken belief about a person's age is not a defence.
- Never use organisational equipment, devices or accounts to view, download, create or share inappropriate or illegal material.
- Handle personal and confidential information securely, and avoid disclosures that could harm an individual or the organisation.

Private communication with children or young people through personal social media, messaging applications or personal devices is prohibited unless specifically authorised and appropriately supervised.

## **10. ONLINE SAFETY, PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Balanced Horizon recognises that safeguarding extends to digital environments.

We will:

- Obtain appropriate consent for photography and filming.
- Protect personal information.
- Moderate online platforms where appropriate.
- Ensure digital engagement is appropriately supervised.
- Avoid publishing unnecessary personal information.
- Maintain clear procedures for digital content creation and social media use.

All digital content involving children or vulnerable individuals must be approved in accordance with organisational procedures.

## **11. RECRUITMENT, DISCLOSURE AND TRAINING**

Balanced Horizon is committed to safer recruitment practices.

Where roles involve regulated work, appropriate PVG membership and disclosure requirements will be applied.

Safeguarding awareness will be included in:

- Staff induction
- Volunteer induction
- Trustee training
- Contractor onboarding where relevant

Refresher training and policy reviews will be undertaken regularly.

# 12. EVENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Many Balanced Horizon activities involve large-scale public participation, including coastal clean-ups, environmental events and community engagement activities.

For such events we will:

- Undertake appropriate risk assessments.
- Provide event briefings.
- Establish clear reporting arrangements.
- Ensure appropriate supervision.
- Consider accessibility requirements.
- Maintain emergency procedures.
- Manage photography and media activity responsibly.
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are clearly allocated.

## **Visitors, guests and event participants**

We make visitors, donors, partners, guests and event participants aware of our safeguarding expectations, either verbally at the start of an event or visit, or in writing beforehand. Anyone taking part in our activities is expected to:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, and not engage in any form of harassment, intimidation, abuse or exploitation.
- Not share personal contact details with any child or adult at risk taking part in an activity.
- Not give money, gifts, employment, goods or services to children, adults at risk or other participants.
- Take photographs or film only with the prior approval of Balanced Horizon and the people involved.
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during a project visit, and drink responsibly where alcohol is available at an event.

If anyone breaches these expectations, their visit or participation may be ended, and the matter will be referred to the DSL to decide what further action is needed.

# 13. RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Safeguarding information will be recorded accurately, stored securely and accessed only by those with a legitimate need to know.

Information will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding obligations.

# 14. REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Balanced Horizon is committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding practice.

This policy was formally reviewed and updated in June 2026 to reflect current Scottish safeguarding legislation, guidance and best practice.

The Board of Trustees will review this policy annually, following any significant incident, legislative change or organisational development.

## **Approved by the Board of Trustees**

Balanced Horizon

Scottish Charity No. SC052496

**Policy Review Date:** June 2026

**Next Scheduled Review:** June 2027

## **Balanced Horizon**

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