

Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults

1. The Purpose

This policy, along with Operational Guidance Booklet 16, is designed to help the Forestry Commission (FC) take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults who visit our forests or with whom we come into contact in other situations.

2. The Principles

The principles of this policy are to:

- provide information on best practice for FC employees whose work brings them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults;
- allow and encourage children and vulnerable adults to enjoy their time with the FC and inform, educate and enthuse them about the work we do; and
- carry out appropriate checks before letting our employees work in roles which are likely to involve regular, substantial or unaccompanied contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

3. The Policy

FC employees, and those working on our property, will:

- take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of any child or vulnerable adult in contact with the FC;
- respect the wishes of children or vulnerable adults, as they would any adult, and not impose themselves on them;
- remember that children regard adults as role models and ensure that their behaviour, language, gestures, etc., are appropriate and above reproach;
- be aware of child protection and vulnerable adult issues in relation to the work they do and not become complacent or believe “it could never happen to me”;
- prevent other employees from putting a child or vulnerable adult in a situation in which there is significant risk to their health and safety;
- not physically, emotionally or sexually abuse any child or young or vulnerable person;
- report any evidence or reasonable suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused, whether by an adult or child, to the local Child Protection Team or the Police; and
- aim to ensure that, where possible, no adult is placed in a one-to-one situation with a child or vulnerable adult .