



## HIGHLANDS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

### Protected Adult Safeguarding Policy

#### 1. Policy Statement

The Highlands Astronomical Society (HAS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all individuals, including adults who may be at risk. HAS supports the principles of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, and the national Adult Support and Protection Guidance issued by the Scottish Government.

This policy applies to all HAS members, volunteers, and visitors involved in Society activities where adults at risk may be present.

HAS is not a care provider but will refer to relevant authorities.

#### 2. Who is a Protected Adult?

For the purposes of this policy, a protected adult (also referred to as an "adult at risk") is someone aged 16 or over who:

- is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
- is at risk of harm; and
- because of disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than others who are not so affected.

#### 3. Safeguarding Responsibilities

##### 3.1 Membership & PVG Scheme

- Any HAS member engaging in regulated work with protected adults must be a member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme for adults.
- The club will ensure that all individuals in such roles complete the necessary PVG checks before taking part in activities involving protected adults.
- Volunteers will receive guidance or training on safeguarding where appropriate.

##### 3.2 Reporting Concerns

If any HAS member, volunteer, or attendee has concerns about the wellbeing or safety of a protected adult, they must:

- Immediately report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- If unavailable, report to a HAS Committee Member



- Not promise confidentiality. Explain that concerns may need to be shared to protect the individual.
- In urgent cases where the adult appears to be at immediate risk of harm or abuse, contact:
  - Police Scotland: 101 (or 999 in an emergency)
  - Adult Protection Team (Highland Health & Social Care Partnership): 01349 781 700
  - Out-of-Hours Social Work Emergencies: 03457 697284

All concerns should be documented and submitted to the Safeguarding Lead.

## 4. Safeguarding at HAS Events

HAS recognises that protected adults may participate in a variety of its public and member-focused activities. To reduce risk and promote wellbeing:

### 4.1 Inclusivity and Dignity

- Members must treat all protected adults with dignity, respect, and sensitivity.
- Volunteers should be aware of any specific needs (e.g., mobility, communication) and make reasonable adjustments to promote access and inclusion.

### 4.2 One-to-One Contact

- Where possible, one-to-one interactions should be avoided unless essential and agreed upon in advance.
- Meetings or discussions with protected adults should take place in open or public settings where possible.

### 4.3 Consent and Autonomy

- Adults have the right to make choices, even if these may appear risky. Intervention is only appropriate where there is concern about capacity or undue influence.
- Always seek explicit and informed consent from the adult before taking any action, unless they are in immediate danger or unable to consent.

### 4.4 Online and Digital Safety

- HAS members must not engage in private online conversations with protected adults in a personal capacity.
- Communications through HAS digital channels should be professional and transparent.
- Any concerns about online behaviour must be reported as above.



## 5. Recognising Harm and Abuse

Types of harm may include:

- Physical harm
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Sexual abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Exploitation

Volunteers should be alert to changes in behaviour, signs of distress, or sudden withdrawal.

## 6. Policy Compliance & Review

- All HAS members working with protected adults are required to read and acknowledge this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if national guidance or legislation changes.
- Copies of this policy are available on the Society's website: [www.spacegazer.com](http://www.spacegazer.com)

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