

Together we can.

A manifesto for a
safer society for all



If you have any questions about our Manifesto or would like to work with us to endorse any of our recommendations, please contact us.

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Revised and updated September 2025.



Katy Jackson

Public Policy & Advocacy Manager, Thirtyone:eight

Our newly revised and updated Manifesto sets out Thirtyone:eight's areas of interest and activity in relation to legislative and policy change across the UK. We've developed our recommendations by drawing on published evidence and our own research to inform our calls for action.

About Thirtyone:eight

Thirtyone:eight is the UK's leading independent Christian safeguarding charity. We help individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from harm and abuse. We work with a network of thousands of organisations across the UK and internationally helping them to create safer places. We are leading experts in safeguarding, working with governments to inform legislation and promote high standards in safeguarding practice.

Our Manifesto Development Team

Katy Jackson (Public Policy and Advocacy Manager)

Justin Humphreys (Chief Executive)

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With thanks to all our staff, Trustees, and partners who contributed to the development of this Manifesto.

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Together we can create a safer society.



Justin Humphreys
Thirtyone:eight's Chief Executive

For nearly half a century Thirtyone:eight has been at the forefront of safeguarding and child protection in the UK working as a trusted champion for the rights of all children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

The charity's formation in the early 1970's coincided with significant legislative reform to the child protection systems in the UK which sought to put children's welfare at the heart of how we care for the most vulnerable in our society.

Since those early days we've witnessed the development, evolution, and more recently the devolution of the legislative landscape surrounding safeguarding, driven in part by learning from past mistakes, and changes in international law and human rights. That process continues to this day.

In working shoulder-to-shoulder with over 10,000 grassroots organisations from the faith and charity sector across the UK to implement good safeguarding practice, we see the real-life impact legislation has on the ground for those delivering activities, care and support for children, young people, and adults.

In partnership with academic bodies, legislators, policy-makers and other like-minded organisations we've been hard at work to understand the risks that remain and the areas where improvement or development in legislation could help support the creation of safer places across all settings.

Despite the many challenges, the opportunity remains for us to develop laws and guidance which continue to support and enhance the hard-won protections already in place, to reform and strengthen existing legislation, and to break new ground in areas where there is still a lack of clear and effective policy and guidance.

In our ongoing work across the UK parliaments in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England to advocate and engage governments and parliamentarians we've already seen significant success. We know it works.

As a charity, our vision is of a world where every child and adult can feel, and be, safe. Can we make significant and tangible steps toward seeing that vision become a reality in our lifetime? **We believe that together we can.**

Thank you for reading our manifesto. We look forward to engaging with parliamentarians, lawmakers, and like-minded organisations and individuals as we work together to make the most of the opportunities we have identified and outlined in this manifesto.

Together we can make our society a place where every child and adult can feel, and be, safe.



Scotland

The context

The Scottish government aim to make Scotland the 'best place in the world to grow up' for its 1.1 million¹ children and young people. Over the last decade, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has been embedded into everyday life.

This has resulted in far-reaching changes in education; children's health and social care and in how children and young people are empowered to be active and confident contributors in Scottish society. Importantly it has also changed how children and young people are kept safe. However, challenges still remain.

**Together we can create
a safer Scotland.**



What we're asking for

Strengthen the safeguards

Significant opportunities exist within Scottish legislation to tighten up safeguards that are already in place to protect children, young people, and adults at risk of harm. We are asking for the Scottish government to improve the level of protection available for vulnerable people by reviewing and updating existing legislation:

- 1 Introduce a statutory definition of **grooming**.
- 2 Close the loopholes that allow convicted **Sex Offenders to change their name** and avoid detection.
- 3 Widen the scope of existing **Position of Trust** legislation.

Grooming

The opportunity:

Criminalising grooming offers a much greater level of protection to vulnerable people from those intending to groom. When a person grooms a child intervention is needed so charges may be brought, and the victim protected from further harm.

The challenge:

Despite current laws in Scotland addressing grooming behaviours, a lack of a recognised legal definition and statutory guidance as to what grooming is, means cases of grooming remain high particularly online, leaving children and young people at risk. Police data shows that in the last ten years the number of online grooming crimes has soared by 60%² in Scotland.

Our recommendations:

- Introduce a full statutory definition of Grooming with accompanying guidance.
- Measures and provision for the online element of grooming to be specifically added to legislation.
- Provision under legislation to be extended for young people aged between 16-18.
- An offense to be created which focuses on the preceding grooming behaviour.



Sex offender name change

The opportunity:

Laws allowing relevant criminal information about a person to be disclosed and shared in certain situations offer significant protections to children and adults at risk of harm. This includes schemes such as Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks, the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAD), and the Scottish Community Disclosure Scheme.

The challenge:

The registration and management of convicted sex offenders relies on offenders proactively notifying police and complying with the law. If an offender changes their name and fails to notify police, this presents an increased risk to children and adults as it obscures any conviction information that would normally be shared on a formal disclosure. This legal loophole undermines the effectiveness of safer recruitment practices and means offenders who change their name are unable to be properly monitored within the post-conviction system.

Our recommendations:

- **Close the legal loophole which allows convicted Sex Offenders to change their name to avoid detection.**
- **Change legislation so that an offender's name is tied to their NHS number and National Insurance number which don't change.**
- **Increase communication between government departments so offenders cannot acquire identity documents such as a passport or driving licence in a new name, without their criminal conviction following them.**
- **Align legislation to the other UK nations so that Scottish children are not disproportionately affected by Sex Offender name change.**

Positions of Trust

The opportunity:

Children and young people receive care or support services from adults in various settings. These adults are in a unique and important relationship with the children they interact with. Existing Positions of Trust legislation gives children and young people a level of protection by acting as a powerful deterrent and holding these adults accountable if they exploit their position towards a child to sexually abuse them. For this to be effective it needs to apply to any role that holds a similar level of trust and responsibility across all sectors and settings.

The challenge:

The existing scope of Positions of Trust legislation in Scotland is very limited, primarily centered on a list of roles within statutory services. It doesn't currently include other key areas where children engage with adults regularly leaving them without statutory protection across similar settings. Scotland remains an outlier in the UK in its approach to Position of

Trust. However, there is opportunity to extend the definition further to include other settings such as faith and sport.

Our recommendations:

- **Update Abuse of Positions of Trust legislation to consider all environments where young people aged 16 and 17 engage with adults in roles that are responsible for caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of them.**
- **Align legislation with the amended position in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, to incorporate sport and faith roles within Positions of Trust law.**
- **Supplement the current list of potential settings and roles by making the purpose, nature and context of the relationship between the adult and child the factor which brings a role under the scope of law.**



What we're asking for

Better protect victims and survivors

A significant opportunity exists to better protect victims and survivors of abuse in Scotland through the implementation of legislation that would make the reporting of any concerns about abuse or disclosures of abuse mandatory.

4 Introduce **mandatory reporting legislation**.

Mandatory reporting

The opportunity:

Reporting abuse when it happens should be an absolute obligation with no exceptions. Making failure to report child sexual abuse a criminal offence gives greater protection to children and young people who report any concerns or disclose abuse. Evidence from other countries who already have mandatory reporting laws in place show it works.

The challenge:

Under current legislative and policy framework in Scotland a general expectation to report exists, but this is not mandatory. In practice this means many cases of child abuse remain unreported leaving children at risk and denying them access to justice.

Our recommendations:

- Introduce mandatory reporting legislation, following consultation with relevant agencies, organisations, and the public.
- Make the legislation applicable to those in regulated activities and roles that fall within a wider definition of Positions of Trust.



Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable

Proverbs 31:8 (CEB)

If you have any questions about
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recommendations, please contact us.

Call us **0303 003 1111**
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Creating safer places. Together.