

Guidance for Applicants

Safeguarding Policies & Procedures

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstances are. Community groups of all sizes – however they are constituted – must be safe and trusted places. **Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding - it is everybody's business.**

If your organisation works with children or young people or with adults at-risk in vulnerable situations, even if this only happens infrequently, it must have an up to date safeguarding policy and procedure. This applies whether you are working in a building, face to face or via online platforms.

- A policy is a high-level statement about how you'll approach an important issue, setting out why it's important
- A procedure is a step by step set of instructions about exactly how the issue will be managed and by who.

General Principles

- Community activities, events and programmes should all take place in a safe and trusted environment which safeguards everyone taking part - beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.
- All organisations working with children or young people or with adults at-risk in vulnerable situations must prioritise safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns, confident that they will be handled sensitively and properly.
- All organisations should have adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people., making clear the commitment to safeguarding and clearly setting out the role that all volunteers and staff have to play in protecting people from harm. They should also set out how new staff and volunteers will be checked and give the name and contact details of the group's Safeguarding Officer.
- Policies and procedures should make it clear how incidents and allegations will be handled, including how to report and record any concerns (and how records will comply with GDPR¹ data protection requirements), and reporting to the relevant authorities.
- If you are relying on the over-arching policy of your governing body, you must still make sure that it is relevant to your individual group and circumstances and include local contact details.
- Everyone – members, volunteers, staff, parents and carers – should be familiar with the policy and know where they can find or view it.

What to think about before writing your policy and procedure

- How do you check staff and volunteers (both existing and new)?
- How should someone raise a concern?
- How will you respond to concerns or allegations?
- How does your safeguarding policy relate to other policies and procedures?

¹ The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 is an EU regulation on data protection & privacy, giving EU citizens and residents control over their personal data.

- What training do you need to offer staff and volunteers?
- What will you do to make sure everyone is aware of your policy?
- How will you ensure that any incident records are GDPR compliant?

What to include in a safeguarding policy statement

The statement should set out your organisation's clear commitment to protecting your beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff from all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

What to include in a safeguarding procedure

- Guidance on what to do if there is an allegation or incident, or if concerns are raised about the welfare of a child or person at-risk or in a vulnerable situation.
- Who people should contact if there is an incident – the name and contact details of your Safeguarding Officer and statutory authority contacts.
- Definitions of abuse (whether emotional, physical or psychological), harm and neglect – and how to spot the signs
- How concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers will be managed
- Procedures for recording allegations and incidents, and the disciplinary action that will be taken if these aren't followed
- Who is responsible for recording abuse or harm – and ensuring that records are GDPR compliant.
- Practical advice to staff and volunteers on dos and don'ts within the organisation.

This is not an exhaustive list of the areas that you should cover. Your safeguarding policy should:

- be tailored to your organisation and its activities
- include the date it was approved
- include the date it will be reviewed.

Make sure that everyone knows about and is familiar with your policy

Whatever the size of your organisation, you should make sure that staff and volunteers are familiar with your safeguarding policy. As a minimum, training should be provided for Safeguarding Officers and their deputies.

It's a good idea to cover the policy as part of their induction and training. Make a record that they've seen it – for example, you could ask them to sign a statement saying they've read and understood it.

As with other organisational procedures, review it regularly to make sure that it's still fit for purpose. Keep a record of when the policy was last checked.

Working with young people online

All standard safeguarding guidance and the need for a Safeguarding Policy still apply but in addition, you need to consider:

- The [Children's Code](#) (or Age Appropriate Design Code), came into effect on 4 September 2020 and organisations have twelve months in which to comply with the new standards. It is a statutory code of practice aimed at protecting children's privacy when they are online. The code introduces 15 standards organisations need to meet. These standards are aimed at making sure online services safeguard children's personal data focusing on principles and privacy features. For the purposes of this Code the term 'children' means anyone under the age of 18 years.

We would ask any organisation or business working with young people online to confirm compliance with Children's Code and may ask for details of your digital delivery risk assessment that should include:

- Have you completed a risk assessment for taking this service online?
- Is there clear risk threshold in place defining which group of children and young people are suitable for remote service delivery? Are any services too high-risk to deliver online?
- Do you intend to accept new children and young people onto your service? If you are, how will your pre-assessment for service suitability change?
- Are staff/ volunteers using your organisation's devices? Where possible you should use organisational devices rather than personal devices.
- If you are using social media or email platforms to communicate with children and young people, have you ensured these are all organisational accounts and not personal accounts?
- If you are using Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok or similar social media platforms have you checked they are licenced for the age group you are working with? Most social media applications have a minimum age of 14. Others, like WhatsApp, are higher at 16 years.
- Are you clear which privacy settings the children and young people should put in place to stay safe online?
- If you are using Zoom or similar, are you clear on whether the T&Cs allow children and young people to use them? For example, not all versions of Zoom are designed to provide the same level of controls, security and encryption. This means it may not be secure for working with children and young people. You may have to buy a licence for a package designed for educational use.
- Have you checked whether the delivery platform you intend to use (e.g. Zoom) is compliant with GDPR regulations for storage of children and young people's data? What information does the platform store and where is the cloud storage? This may vary depending on whether you are using free or licenced packages.
- If you are using a social media or online platform to run group chats or chat room services, do you have clear moderation arrangement in place to ensure you supervise discussion and it is appropriate?
- If you are using "closed" groups, how do you ensure that only legitimate users, e.g. the children and young people in your normal youth group, can obtain access?
- Has your professional indemnity insurer consented to you delivering this service digitally?
- Have you reviewed your core Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy to ensure there is specific provision for online delivery?
- Have you reviewed your Code of Conduct to ensure there are adequate boundaries in place to avoid inappropriate contact with children and young people online?
- Have you considered whether you need additional parental consent to deliver a service digitally?

Useful Resources

[NSPCC - Keeping Children Safe Online Training](#)

[NSPCC - Guidance on Running Safe Online Services with Children](#)

Help and Advice

Rhondda Cynon Taf

If you have any concerns or need to report an incident, contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – the single point of contact for all safeguarding issues.

CHILDREN: 01443 742928 / childrens.mash@rctcbc.gcsx.gov.uk

VULNERABLE ADULTS: 01443 742940 / adultsatrisk@rctcbc.gcsx.gov.uk

Neath Port Talbot

CHILDREN: 01639 685717 (out of hours 01639 895455)

VULNERABLE ADULTS: 01639 686802 (Out of Hours 01639 895455)

The [Western Bay Safeguarding Board](#) was formed in 2013 covering Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend areas. They have a shared responsibility to ensure adults at risk of harm in the Western Bay region are safeguarded against all forms of abuse by working together to keep adults safe.

[WCVA](#) manage a safeguarding service for the third sector organisations in Wales working with children, young people and adults at risk. The website has lots of information about policy and guidance development.

[Neath Port Talbot CVS](#) and [Interlink](#) will also be able to advise on policy development.