

Safeguarding Governance Guidance

Guidance

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About This Guidance

The aim of this guidance assists you to ensure your organisation proactively and effectively oversees the application of safeguarding.

Safeguarding involves all actions taken to promote and protect the welfare of children and adults, prevent harm and ensure safety. This includes health and safety, risky behaviours, and disclosure procedures, while also educating children, young people and vulnerable adults on these practices to minimise risks and make informed choices.

This guidance is primarily for anyone in the Voluntary Sector but is applicable to anyone providing youth work services to children and young people. This could include but is not limited to a charity, community interest company, social enterprise or unincorporated charitable organisations.

Due to this diverse audience, we will not refer to any one legislative or governing framework but highlight ways to ensure active and comprehensive governance. For the details of any legal or best practice guidance for your organisation, please see the relevant governing body.

Safeguarding Governance Lead (SGL)

Who is the Safeguarding Governance Lead?

Depending on your organisation different persons will have responsibility for safeguarding and ensuring its effective governance e.g. Governor, Director, Trustee or Committee Member. For the purposes of this guidance this person will be referred to as the Safeguarding Governance Lead (SGL).

The SGL is typically different to the person who has operational responsibility for safeguarding on a day to day basis. However, in small organisations they could be the same person. In some organisations it is expected that whilst there is a lead to drive forward the safeguarding agenda, all board members have equal responsibility for safeguarding.

Responsibilities of a Safeguarding Governance Lead

Any organisation working with or on behalf of Children, Young People and Young Adults up to age 25 has the responsibility to ensure safeguarding is reflected in organisational culture, strategy, policy and practice.

The five categories of safeguarding governance under Leadership and Accountability help you to understand more about the breadth of your governance responsibilities. For more detail on your individual legal requirements, see your regulatory body.

Safeguarding Commitment

Safeguarding is a commitment to the protection and welfare of Children, Young People and Young Adults up to age upto the age of 25 and adults at risk irrespective of the size or legal status of your organisation. Safeguarding is everyone's business and a way of working that gives anyone who comes into contact with your organisation opportunities and a safe environment to thrive.

Categories of Safeguarding Governance

Background

The following categories offer considerations about how to govern safeguarding. Due to the diversity of youth settings this guidance applies to the categories and are curated from more than one piece of guidance or legislation.

This includes:

- Children's Act (1989 & 2004)
- Working Together To Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe In Education (2025)
- Charity Commission Principles
- Online safety act (2023)
- Out of school Settings Safeguarding Guidance (2025)

For details of any specific legal or best practice guidance for your organisation, please see your relevant governing body.

Leadership and Accountability

Safeguarding should be a priority in any organisation. Prioritising appropriate leadership and accountability ensures safeguarding is given a high level of importance. This may include but is not limited to:

- senior board or management level lead with the required knowledge, skills and expertise or are sufficiently qualified and experienced to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements
- promote appropriate representation and discussion about safeguarding at a senior level, ensuring it's a standing agenda item for board meetings
- a designated practitioner for safeguarding who supports other practitioners in their organisation and/or agencies to recognise the needs of children, including protection from possible abuse or neglect
- giving sufficient time, and where possible funding, supervision and support to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- clear line of accountability for the provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Culture

Your organisation's culture defines the expectations of acceptable behaviour. This is often underpinned by a set of values, vision and mission. This culture is established and modelled by leaders and communicated and embodied through the work of the organisation.

Creating a culture in relation to safeguarding is one that:

- listens to Children, Young People and Young Adults up to age 25, taking account of their wishes and feelings
- makes staff feel comfortable and supported to raise concerns
- ensures openness and accountability, enabling issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children, Young People and Young Adults up to age 25 to be addressed
- enables anyone to challenge decisions which adversely affect anyone's wellbeing
- strives for an environment of safety, equality and protection both within the organisation and the services it provides
- identifies, assesses and reduces risks to individual and the organisation
- seeks to continually improve

Managing and Escalating Disclosures and Concerns

Children, Young People and Young Adults up to age 25 often disclose to the person they feel most comfortable with and therefore it is important to:

- ensure that anyone representing your organisation knows how to raise and respond to a safeguarding concern
- clearly outline the processes for sharing information with other practitioners and with safeguarding partners
- investigate issues that are raised correctly and thoroughly, reporting serious incidents as necessary
- manage and investigate allegations of abuse against someone involved in the organisation
- ensure escalation and whistleblowing policies are in place for anyone who feels as though their concerns are not being addressed within their organisation

Recruitment, Training and Support

It is important that anyone delivering a service is not a risk to Children, Young People and Young Adults up to age 25, as well as ensuring service users feel safe and supported.

Therefore, at all stages of a staff or volunteer journey with the organisation there are safeguarding considerations. This may include:

- safe recruitment and ongoing safe working practices for individuals whom the organisation permits to work regularly with children. These include but are not limited to:
 - reviewing which posts within the charity can and must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service
 - ensuring a risk assessment process is in place for posts which do not qualify for a DBS check, but which still have contact with children or adults at risk
 - references, proof of identification, copies of qualifications
- safeguarding training to ensure everyone is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and the relevant policy and procedures to make sure they are competent to carry out their safeguarding and welfare responsibilities
- regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided, ensuring it is current and relevant
- appropriate supervision and support for safeguarding leads to review their own practice and ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that continuously improve

Policies and Procedures

To ensure a framework for consistent and comprehensive application of safeguarding, ensure your safeguarding policies, procedures and measures are fit for purpose and up-to-date. This may include but is not limited to:

- ensuring you have a safeguarding policy, code of conduct and any other safeguarding procedures
- if you work overseas, find out what different checks and due diligence you need to carry out in different geographical areas of operation
- make sure the right policies are in place for raising issues and encouraging speaking up and create a culture of continuous improvement
- clearly outlining the processes for sharing information, with other practitioners and with safeguarding partners

Review your policy and procedures at regular intervals, in line with any key legislative or guidance updates or based on any learnings, including those from serious incidents.

Further Support

If you need further safeguarding support, you can contact any of the following:

- Safeguarding leads or practitioners outside your organisation (for example partner or neighbouring organisations)
- NSPCC
- Your local Safeguarding Partnerships and relevant roles within them, e.g. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team
- Relevant agencies for instance Child Exploitation and Online Protection Agency (CEOP) The police – 101 for your local team or 999 if you feel it's an emergency