

Safeguarding and Health & Safety

Welcome to Handbook 3 of the Volunteer Development Handbook/Toolkit



The aim is to provide tested resources for supporting the development of a robust and compliant volunteer management programme. These resources have been compiled to complement **Handbook 1** and we hope that they are a useful addition to the checklists.

The aim of all the handbooks is to provide a set of tools that will support the development of a volunteering programme in a sustainable, achievable and **strategic way**. This should make it easy to assess what stage your volunteering programme is currently at, as well as offering guidance towards developing a strong volunteering programme.

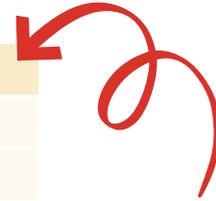
The workbooks are based on the **Cotswold Canals Connected volunteer development strategy** - a vision for volunteering along the Stroudwater Navigation Canal that can be applied to any organisation involving volunteers.

Handbook 3 continues with two sections on safeguarding and health & safety.

Please use or adapt the tables included to fit your needs.

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3.1 SAFEGUARDING

What is Safeguarding?

There are many definitions of safeguarding. A popular one is that **'safeguarding refers to measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals.'**¹

The NCVO explains:

'Creating a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued, is at the heart of safeguarding. It's about making sure your organisation is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. It's also about being ready to respond safely and well if there is a problem.'

Everyone in the organisation has a role to play in safeguarding. It should become part of your day-to-day activities. Every organisation that delivers charitable activities has a duty to safeguard volunteers, staff members, participants and donors.'²

In safeguarding we often speak about children, young people and adults at risk. However, it is essential to understand that abuse, harm and harassment **can happen to anyone**, and that safeguarding is also about the **culture** you create to keep everyone safe. It is therefore important not to assume that safeguarding does not apply to your organisation because you might not work with those groups.

According to the Charity Commission, *'protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a **governance priority for all charities**. It is a fundamental part of operating as a charity for the public benefit.'*³ However, safeguarding is a **matter for everyone** in the organisation, not just the designated role holders or trustees. It is about looking out for each other, making sure everyone contributes to a positive environment and raises concerns about undesirable behaviours and abuse.

Here is what we cover in this section:



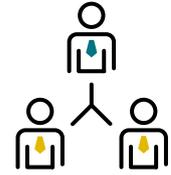
¹[What is Safeguarding? - Ann Craft Trust](#)

²[What is safeguarding? | NCVO](#)

³[Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees - GOV.UK:](#)

Roles and responsibilities

As we have already learnt, safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, not just for specific role holders - we should all look out for each other. However, it is important to appoint people in your organisation who have designated responsibilities and who have received training in order to deal with any safeguarding issues that arise.



All trustees

Trustees have responsibility for the effective governance and management of their organisation, and safeguarding plays a part in various aspects of this role.

10 actions trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance
Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities

Ensure your charity has an adequate safeguarding policy, code of conduct and any other safeguarding procedures. Regularly review and update the policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose	Identify possible risks, including risks to your beneficiaries or to anyone else connected to your charity and any emerging risks on the horizon	Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within your charity	Ensure that everyone involved with the charity knows how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern	Ensure people know how to raise a safeguarding concern
Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided, ensuring it is current and relevant	Review which posts within the charity can and must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service	Have a risk assessment process in place for posts which do not qualify for a DBS check, but which still have contact with children or adults at risk	Periodically review your safeguarding policy and procedures, learning from any serious incident or 'near miss'	If you work overseas, find out what different checks and due diligence you need to carry out in different geographical areas of operation

 **CHARITY COMMISSION**
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

For more information: [Safeguarding | NCVO](#)

Lead trustee for safeguarding

You might have a designated trustee with a specific focus on safeguarding; in a smaller organisation, they might also have the role of designated safeguarding lead. However, as stated before, safeguarding should be the responsibility of every trustee (as well as everybody else).

For more information: [Responsibilities of a lead trustee for safeguarding | NCVO](#)

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is your organisation's lead on anything to do with safeguarding, from advising the Board of Trustees, communicating your safeguarding procedures to being the point of contact for any concerns. If your organisation is working with children or adults at risk, you are required by the Charity Commission to have a DSL in place. The DSL also needs to have a good understanding of local procedures and who to contact in case of a concern or allegation; this requires keeping up-to-date with local and national safeguarding developments.

For a full overview of responsibilities, skills, training and more, see:

[Responsibilities of a designated safeguarding lead | NCVO](#)



Deputy safeguarding lead

Some organisations choose to have a deputy safeguarding lead to cover for times when the DSL is unavailable. Their training should be the same as the DSL's.

Safeguarding roles and training in your organisation

Role	Name(s)	Safeguarding training	Training date	Renewal by
Trustees				
Lead trustee for safeguarding				
Designated safeguarding lead				
Deputy safeguarding lead				

Safeguarding policy and procedures

Your policy requirements depend on who you work with – children or adults. If you work with both, it is good practice to have **two separate safeguarding policies**. This is because there are differences in the underlying legislation, types of potential abuse and reporting procedures.

While your policy sets out your intentions for safeguarding, your reporting procedure outlines how to respond to raised concerns:

- who to speak to
- how issues should be reported
- where information will be stored and shared internally
- how concerns will be escalated to police, social services, or regulators if necessary ⁴

More information on storing and sharing information is here:

[Storing and sharing safeguarding information | NCVO](#)

⁴ [Policies and procedures | NCVO](#)

Sample/template safeguarding policies and procedures can be found in the next section.

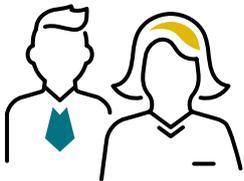
Everyone in your organisation should be aware of your safeguarding policies and procedures, and who to contact in case of safeguarding concerns; this can be done through, e.g.

- Training on induction
- Training refreshers
- Posters

Safeguarding is organised locally through Gloucestershire County Council. **Concerns need to be raised with** the [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership | Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#)

Or [Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board | Safeguarding Adults in Gloucestershire](#)

Both websites have contact details, more information and potentially also access to training.



Safeguarding adults

The Ann Craft Trust specialises in safeguarding for adults; although it has a focus on adults in sports their resources can be applied to any organisation working with adults. There is a whole suite of useful resources on their website: [Ann Craft Trust: Safeguarding Adults](#)

including sample policies and procedures [Safeguarding Resources & Guides - ACT](#)

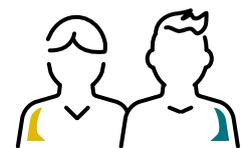


There is also the 'Safeguarding for Adults in Sports Roadmap' [The Safeguarding Adults Roadmap - Ann Craft Trust](#) which takes you step by step through the process of creating a robust culture of safeguarding adults in your organisation (not just in regards to sports).

Safeguarding children

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are the go-to organisation for resources relating to safeguarding children:

[Child protection training courses | NSPCC Learning](#)



NSPCC Safeguarding policy template:

[Example safeguarding policy statement | NSPCC Learning](#) This is just a policy and does not include a procedure.

Code of conduct

Your code of conduct sets out how you expect your volunteers to behave in order to create a culture that fosters everyone to be safe, well and healthy. What it covers very much depends on who you work with and what you do. Generally, it covers aspects like being a good ambassador for the charity, adhering to policies and procedures and observing confidentiality.

If you work with children or vulnerable adults, your code of conduct might be more comprehensive and include specific actions that you do/do not want your volunteers to do. This can include aspects like befriending on social media, giving lifts or other situations that could create additional risks to the volunteer and/or the beneficiary.

NSPCC example behaviour code for adults working with children and also for children and young people: [Behaviour management and codes of conduct | NSPCC Learning](#)



DBS checks and renewals

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) bars individuals who pose a risk to vulnerable groups from working in certain roles. DBS checks can be complex to navigate and organisations tend to ‘overcheck, just to make sure’. However, if an organisation applies for a Standard, Enhanced or Enhanced with Barred List check and the role is not eligible, it is actually breaking the law.

Have a look here for an **explanation of the four different levels** – Basic, Standard, Enhanced and Enhanced with Barred List. Go to the Gov.UK website for details: [DBS checks: detailed guidance - GOV.UK](#) and [DBS eligibility guidance - GOV.UK](#)
This is a useful flowchart for those working with adults:

Guidance for DBS Checks in Sport - Working with Adults (England and Wales) - Ann Craft Trust

This is a **chart for those working with children:**

[Disclosure and barring service \(DBS\) | NCVO](#) (Appendix A).

Also consider if your **trustees** need to be DBS checked: [Volunteers and the law | NCVO](#)

DBS checks can be carried out through **agencies or umbrella organisations**

[Find a DBS umbrella body company - GOV.UK](#) However it is worth bearing in mind that agencies will ask you to cover costs including an administrative fee. Note for volunteers that it is a reduced cost.

Barring referrals

In certain circumstances, you must refer an employee or volunteer to the DBS, if they have engaged in behaviour that pose a **safeguarding risk**. Not reporting these can mean breaking the law. More information on this can be found here:

[Disclosure and barring service \(DBS\) | NCVO](#) (section Reporting and the duty to refer).

Safeguarding training

Safeguarding should be covered as part of your **induction**, independent of the volunteer’s role. Any volunteer should understand the importance of safeguarding for everyone, your commitment to this and your procedures on how to raise any concerns. A **volunteer handbook** is a good place to put this information, including contact details for the designated safeguarding lead, so that it can be revisited when necessary.



As we have established, trustees are responsible for safeguarding on an organisational level, so should have a good understanding and awareness of safeguarding best practices. Therefore, **safeguarding training for trustees** might form part of your trustee induction or training for longstanding trustees.

Where volunteers **work alongside children or adults at risk**, you need to consider whether you require them to undertake safeguarding training and to what level. It is important to note that ‘off the shelf’ training usually covers types and signs of abuse as well as aspects like confidentiality but obviously does not cover any of your own procedures which would still need to be communicated.

Safeguarding training at level 1 and 2 for children and adults might be available for **free through Stroud District Council** – please speak to the CCC community engagement team or SDC community team. If this isn’t possible, it might be worth contacting Gloucestershire County Council as it may offer free training. There is a whole range of training providers online; it might be worth finding a local trainer who can deliver in person training that is bespoke to your organisation. Also consider how often training needs to be repeated; this is usually between one and three years.

Your DBS and safeguarding requirements

Role	DBS check required?	If so, to what level?	Safeguarding training essential or desired	Training course
Trustee				
Team leader				
General volunteer				

Safer recruitment practices

Carrying out DBS checks should just be one of a suite of recruitment practices to make sure that your volunteers are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. Safer recruitment encompasses:



- Safeguarding expectations outlined in role description and advert
- Application form (which could include previous employment/volunteering activities)
- Reference checks
- DBS check
- Safeguarding policy and procedures in induction

For more information about safer recruitment for those working with adults:

[**Safe Recruitment Process - ACT:**](#)

For more information about safer recruitment for those working with children:

[**Safer recruitment | NSPCC Learning**](#)

Self-disclosure

As part of the registration process for new volunteers you should give a potential volunteer the opportunity to **disclose a caution or conviction**. Here are two sample forms:

[Example self-disclosure forms | NSPCC Learning](#)

If someone makes a disclosure, it doesn't automatically mean that they can't volunteer with you. Instead, carry out a **risk assessment** to make sure that they are suitable for the role they applied for, or if any additional measures need to be put in place. The NCVO offer support should a disclosure be made:

[Employing or working with someone who has a criminal record | NCVO](#)

3.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY

According to legislation, only employers with more than five employees need to have a written health and safety policy; however, it is good practice to have one as it demonstrates your **commitment to creating a safe environment** for your volunteers and others.

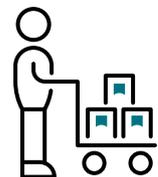
Your policy should include **who is responsible** for certain aspects of health and safety, e.g. training, first aid kits and risk assessments.

Here is a framework of what to include: [Template for a health and safety policy - CCVS](#)

Below are some more Health & Safety related aspects.

Risk assessment

Every activity you do should have a risk assessment. A risk assessment is simply thinking through all the risks associated with a task and **who might be harmed and how**, then identifying (and carrying out) **actions to minimise the risks**.



You might also need to adapt a risk assessment according to the **specific needs** of the people you work with. This could include children, young people, pregnant women and those with health issues or support needs.

Everyone involved in a specific task should be **aware** of the risks and how to keep themselves and others safe. This is mostly done verbally at the start of a task. However, if an incident occurs, you may need to demonstrate that you have solid health and safety procedures in place and that volunteers were instructed in safe practices; some organisations ask their volunteers to **sign** the risk assessment as a confirmation.



If you have had an incident, a near miss or if an important aspects of the tasks has changed, you will need to **update** your risk assessment; you should also **review** it on a regular (e.g. yearly) basis.

For more information and a template risk assessment:

[Managing risks and risk assessment at work – Overview -HSE](#)

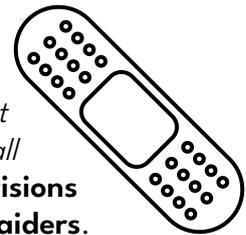


At Gloucestershire Wildlife Trusts' Youth Ranger programme, young people take it in turns to read out an item each from the risk assessment. That way, they all get a better sense of ownership and responsibility, getting involved in the process rather than just receiving the information in a passive way.

At the end of the safety briefing, all young volunteers as well as adult helpers sign the risk assessment.

First aid needs assessment

According to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), 'first aid provision must be *'adequate and appropriate in the circumstances'*. This means that you must provide sufficient first aid equipment (first aid kit), facilities and personnel at all times.'⁵ A first aid needs assessment helps you to **work out the first aid provisions** you need in your organisation, both in terms of **equipment and trained first aiders**.



Most guides around first aid needs assessments are written with employees in mind, but you can tweak these to suit your own situation.

This is a good starting point: [First aid in work: Assess your first aid needs - HSE](#)

First aid and accident procedures

In addition to your policy and risk assessment, it is good practice to think about what happens in the case of an emergency. This is very specific to your situation – where you are working, what you are doing and who you are working with. Who is going to give first aid, speak to emergency services, gather everyone together?

Aspects of this can be **incorporated into your risk assessment**, e.g. the address and/or exact location ([What3Words App](#)), nearest defibrillator, the person's GP, minor injuries unit or A&E.

Ideally, you want to involve the person in charge of a group or session in writing this; make sure they, and anyone else involved, is at least informed about the procedures.

If an accident has occurred, details need to be captured in an **accident log** which should be close to hand. Records have to be treated and stored confidentially. If your organisation has employees, certain accidents are **reportable** under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR):

[Volunteering: Guidance for employers - HSE](#)



Signing in and out procedures:

You must have a signing in and out procedures to record who is attending sessions. Consider where emergency contact (and any medical) details are kept so they are accessible if needed. Records can also be used to calculate volunteering hours.

⁵ [First aid needs assessment - First aid at work - HSE](#)

Lone working policy

If you have volunteers or staff who spend time on their own, you must have a lone working risk assessment and policy. This ensures that you have procedures in place to keep your volunteer/staff safe in case of emergency. They might, e.g., send a text or What's App message to a designated person to sign in and out, triggering a message or phone call if no correspondence was sent within a usual time frame.



For more information: [Lone working: Protect those working alone - HSE](#)



Mental health

We increasingly recognise the importance of mental health and are getting better as a society at talking about any issues surrounding this, similar to discussing physical health challenges. Through **mental health first aid training**, you can have someone in your organisation who is aware of different mental health issues and their signs and who can support someone experiencing a crisis, mainly through listening and signposting to professionals.

According to Mind⁶,

- *'1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year in England.*
- *1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem (like anxiety and depression) in any given week in England.'*

Mental health issues can affect anyone and mental health first aid courses are now readily available from many providers of physical first aid courses as well as Mental Health First Aid England, whose training also provides access to some useful resources for ongoing support:

[Transforming your workplace with expert mental health training and consultancy - MHFA England](#)

Gloucestershire County Council provides **free mental health and suicide prevention training** – check availability here: [Training | Gloucestershire County Council Policy](#)

(The information provided in this document is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered as legal advice. It is meant to give a broad overview of volunteering best practice, and we cannot guarantee the accuracy, quality, validity, completeness or suitability of the material provided for any particular purpose.)

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⁶ [Mental health facts and statistics - Mind](#)