



Writing your safeguarding policy

If your organisation has any responsibility for offering care and support to children or to adults, then you must have a relevant safeguarding policy and procedure in place. This helps to protect vulnerable people from harm.

A safeguarding policy is a statement that makes it clear what your organisation will do to keep vulnerable people safe. Your policy has to meet certain criteria and include specific information.

Each nation within the UK has different laws and governing and monitoring processes when it comes to safeguarding. This guide only applies to England however, the other nations do align to the same basic principles.

This guide includes:

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- 03 What to include in your safeguarding policy
- 04 What to include in your safeguarding procedure
- 05 Reviewing and updating your documents

Introduction

What the law says

You can find the latest guidance on safeguarding policies for children in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', statutory guidance. The guidance outlines how to safeguard and promote children's welfare, and is relevant to any organisation that may have contact with children.

So, if that describes your organisation, you need to follow these guidelines to stay compliant.

What are your responsibilities?

The Children's Act of 2004 says that organisations must make sure that their functions and services are carried out with the welfare of children in mind.

This originally used to refer to certain organisations only, like the police, local authorities, youth offending services and more. However, recent changes mean that any organisation that comes into contact with children must follow the stipulations. It's particularly focused on voluntary, charity and private sectors, as well as social enterprises and faith-based organisations.

There is minimal statutory guidance in England that relates to safeguarding adults at risk, other than the Care Act 2014, which is specific to agencies that have statutory responsibility e.g. social services. The other UK nations have different versions of safeguarding legislation, but their principles are similar.

For best practice, safeguarding policies and procedures for adults should reflect the values of the Care Act 2014, and align to the 5 key principles of the Mental Capacity Act. To be a truly effective, it is also advised that you consider the guidance directed by statutory guidance for safeguarding children i.e. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. The reason for this is that these provide a 'gold standard' for safeguarding within our communities so, if you can transfer this guidance into your adult safeguarding policy, you will be off to a great start.

It is important for all organisations to ensure they have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities. It also affects how you refer any concerns you have to children's services. Whether you are paid staff or volunteers, your responsibilities are the same and you have to follow the guidelines

There are also now specific instructions for people in positions of trust. If your organisation works with children, you must have clear processes in place for dealing with any allegations against people who come into contact with them.

In summary:

- Every organisation needs to consider safeguarding
- You should have a safeguarding policy even if you use volunteers rather than paid staff
- If your organisation works with children, you must have clear policies in place

Your responsibilities to children

If your organisation comes into contact with children, you must have:

- A clear line of accountability
- A senior, board-level lead for your safeguarding
- A culture of listening to children
- Whistleblowing procedures
- Ways for staff to escalate concerns about safeguarding
- Ways to share information
- A designated person responsible for safeguarding
- Procedure for ensuring safe recruitment
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff
- A culture of safety, equality and protection across the services you provide

Your responsibilities to your staff

Your staff must feel they can raise any concerns, so you need to make sure that:

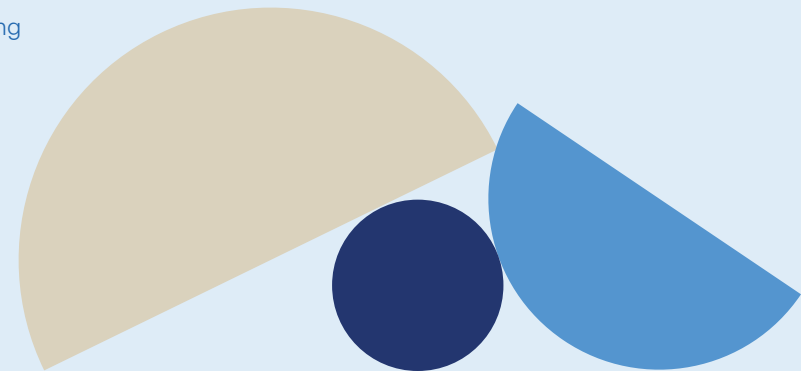
- They are confident to carry out safeguarding responsibilities
- Everyone knows about safeguarding
- Staff have regular reviews of safeguarding training and practice

Don't put people – or your organisation – at risk

These lists may seem excessive, especially if you're a small charity, for example. However, they are non-negotiable and are required by law. If you don't meet these expectations, you may be putting vulnerable people at risk.

Not only that, your organisation may be at risk too. Safeguarding is high profile and often draws attention in the media. If something happens in your organisation, it may draw lots of bad press. The best policy is to make sure you have all the processes in place.

If you are a registered charity, the charity commission will also expect you to adhere to these guidelines.



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Policy and procedure: what's the difference?

A safeguarding policy is your public commitment to how you will keep people safe.

It should only be a few pages long, providing high-level information that shows your understanding of safeguarding with relation to your exposure to any risks.

A safeguarding procedure is your internal, in-depth operational guidance and advice.

This should be thorough and include all the relevant guidance, as well as all the other policies that support your overall safeguarding processes.



What to include in your safeguarding policy

You should structure your safeguarding policy around three main sections:

- 1 A statement setting out your organisation's commitment to protecting vulnerable people
- 2 What your organisation will do to keep vulnerable people safe and respond to any concerns
- 3 A list of all the supporting procedures that accompany your policy

It is a good idea to include your safeguarding policy on your organisation's website, if you have one. This is a great way to advertise your commitment to safeguarding to anyone interested in engaging with your organisation.



A checklist for writing your safeguarding policy

The ideal policy will include all of these pieces of information. Use the checklist to think about what you might include in your own policy.

✓ The purpose and aim of the policy:

This should be at the beginning of the policy. It should:

- Introduce your organisation and what it does
- Explain the purpose of the safeguarding policy and who it applies to
- Set out your commitment to keeping vulnerable people safe and how, in broad terms, your organisation will meet this commitment

✓ Your equality statement:

The Equality Act 2010 stipulates that your organisation should carry out an equality impact assessment. Your equality statement should show how every vulnerable person in your organisation has the same protection, regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.

Ideally, your policy should:

- State your organisation's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice
- Refer to the relevant legislation i.e. the Equality Act 2010

- Make sure to recognise the additional needs of vulnerable people from minority groups and the barriers that they may face
- Refer to any particularly vulnerable client groups, for example, children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or elderly adults at risk who may also suffer with significant cognitive impairment or dementia

✓ The scope of the policy

Your safeguarding policy should:

- Explain and clarify who the policy is about, outlining who it aims to protect, for example children or adults at risk
- Give general direction to all staff and others who may come into contact with the vulnerable people
- Be inclusive and involve people from different parts of your organisation to make sure that it is relevant for everyone

✔ Links to relevant guidance

There should be:

- A brief explanation about the main relevant laws and statutory guidance that support the policy
- The laws and guidance that apply will depend on the type and sector of your organisation and who you are safeguarding
- A description of or links to specific arrangements for managing particular areas of concern, which if not handled or dealt with appropriately may lead to a potential safeguarding issue

These arrangements shouldn't be included within the main policy itself, but can form part of your safeguarding procedures. For example:

- Safe recruitment
- Anti-bullying (including cyber)
- Whistleblowing
- Code of conduct
- Disciplinary procedures
- Acceptable behaviour
- Restraint
- Intimate care
- Dispensing of medicines
- Record keeping
- Digital Technology (photos, videos, social media etc)

There are also specific risks that the government feels are so concerning within our communities that it has issued specific guidance. Some of this may be statutory and required by law.

Think about what your organisation does and whether any of its activities may lead to exposure to these risks. If there is any potential risk, it's best practice to create a separate policy focussing on these specific areas. You may want to cross-reference these with your general safeguarding policy.

The types of guidance include:

- Positions of trust
- Online harm and social media
- Forced marriage
- Counter terrorism, radicalisation and extremism
- Sexual exploitation / child sexual exploitation / harmful sexual behaviour
- Modern slavery and trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Practices linked to culture, faith and beliefs
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- County lines

✔ Dates

Your policy should include:

- The date when the policy comes into force
- The date when the policy was last reviewed or revised
- The date of the next review of the policy
- It is also best practice for the safeguarding policy to be signed by a senior member of your management team, showing that the policy has been approved and is supported by the organisation



What to include in your safeguarding procedure



A safeguarding procedure lets your staff know how they should perform their safeguarding duties. The procedure should be easily accessible and easy to read for everyone, whether they are paid staff or volunteers. They need to be able to understand the instructions that the procedure contains, and what they need to do. So, it needs to be available to all your employees.

A checklist for writing your safeguarding procedure

✓ Awareness

- Explain to staff what 'safeguarding' and 'abuse' are
- Let them know their responsibilities and duties in terms of safeguarding
- Explain how they can identify signs of abuse

✓ What to do

This section lets staff know what they should do if they receive any information about abuse. It should give them instructions about:

1. What they should and should not do or say
2. Where they can get support
3. Local and national sources of support
4. How to refer to other agencies
5. How to escalate issues if they aren't dealt with appropriately

- How to share information – this section is very important because experience tells us that the majority of safeguarding failures occur when relevant information is not shared with the right organisations. This section should include guidance on when staff should and should not share information about safeguarding and where to go if they need more advice on the matter
- Guidance and protocols for communicating with a vulnerable person's family or next of kin (NOK) – this should include signposting for these people should they have concerns
- Instructions on record keeping – this should include:
 1. How staff should record a concern and a disclosure
 2. How these records will be kept i.e. securely and separately from general records

✓ How to respond

This section should cover how to respond to allegations against staff. Make sure to include:

1. Instructions on what staff should do if they are concerned about a colleague's behaviour, including whistleblowing procedures
2. The name and contact details of the relevant local authority designated officer (LADO) or safeguarding adults manager (if appropriate)
3. A reference to the relevant local authority procedures

- How to respond to bullying or 'peer-on-peer abuse'. This section should include:

1. Guidance on how to identify peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying, cyber-bullying, gender-based violence, sexual assaults and sexting
2. What the procedures are for reporting this abuse

✓ Appendices

- Include any operational forms that are relevant, such as:
 1. Forms for recording concerns or disclosures
 2. Guidance on how to complete these forms – including helpful prompts and tips
 3. Risk assessment forms
- The appendix should also include links to any guidance and further information from statutory bodies, covering issues such as: cyber-bullying, sexting, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, radicalisation and extremism, child sexual exploitation (CSE), domestic abuse, modern slavery, practices linked to culture, faith and beliefs.

Reviewing and updating your documents

You should update your safeguarding policy and procedures regularly, and have a procedure in place to make sure you do so. Although this is a necessity, many organisations often fall down in this area.

As a general rule, it is best practice to review and update your policy and procedures annually and include:

- The date the policy comes into force
- The date when the policy was last reviewed/ revised
- The date of the next review of the policy



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