



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Safeguarding Lead: Deborah Saw, Head of Operations
Safeguarding Deputy: Anna-Clare Temple, Chief Executive
Previous Updates: Jul 2019, Jul 2020, Feb 2021, Oct 2022, Apr 24
Version: 6
Date Issued: April 2025 (Approved by SafeCIC)
Date of Next Review: April 2026

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults Policy

Head Office & Registered Address: Engine Shed, Station Approach, Temple Meads, Bristol, BS1 6QH
T: 0117 9559042 E: admin@steptogether.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1038253 | Scottish Charity No: SC040616
Company Limited by Guarantee in England No. 2932195



POLICY STATEMENT

We are a small charity, established in 1994, that provides support to vulnerable and marginalised people across the United Kingdom. Whilst our Charity is non-regulated, we take our responsibilities very seriously and recognise that the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and that *all* have equal rights of protection. We have a duty of care when they are in our charge, and we will do everything we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they receive our support or attend our activities. We ensure everyone feels safe and protected from any form of harm, abuse and neglect regardless of their role.

We will:

- ✓ treat everyone with respect and celebrate their achievements,
- ✓ carefully recruit and select all staff whether paid or unpaid,
- ✓ respond to concerns and allegations appropriately.
- ✓ adopt the recommendations of the SAFEcic toolkit.

Equal Opportunities Statement

We recognise that anyone can become subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of:

- age
- culture
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Comments and actions that contribute to discrimination, harassment or victimisation are not acceptable and will be challenged. Such incidents will be recorded and shared with parents and carers, and the relevant agencies when necessary and appropriate.

When there are concerns about the welfare of any, child, young person or adult at risk, all responsible adults in our organisation are expected to share those concerns, without delay, with the Lead for Safeguarding (or the Deputy, if the Lead is unavailable).

Our policy is approved by our Senior Management Team and the Board of Trustees and is reviewed annually. We will publish and promote this policy to all staff and volunteers, paid or unpaid, through induction, training and supervision. We endeavour to disseminate, as appropriate, this policy to all who come into contact with our organisation e.g., children, young people, adults at risk, their parents, carers, families and others, such as organisational partners and fundraisers.

POLICY AIM

As members of SAFEcic, we aim at all times to attain best safeguarding practice throughout all our activities with children, young people, adults at risk, their parents, carers and/or families. We endeavour to provide a safe and friendly environment and celebrate all achievements. We will achieve this by adhering strictly to this policy, guidance and risk assessments. Our organisation holds current Public Liability Insurance which covers all our activities.

Additionally, no one should come to any harm through their contact with our organisation and, as part of that commitment, we do everything we can to ensure everyone feels safe and protected from any form of harm, abuse and neglect regardless of their role.

Our Charity supports people who face multiple disadvantage including young people (aged 16-25) and adults with multiple complex needs, including those at risk. We are mindful that some of the people we work with

may have child dependents and family members, and our commitment, working practices and procedures apply to all we come into contact with.

SAFEGUARDING PERSONNEL

Lead and Deputy for Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Lead has direct responsibility for managing the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk and this post is appointed at managerial level to ensure that matters are dealt with in a timely and appropriate fashion. Our Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are based out of the Bristol Head Office and our Trustee is based remotely.

Our Lead for Safeguarding is:

Name: Deborah Saw

Job role: Head of Operations

Contact details: deborah.saw@step-together.org.uk

Our Deputy for Safeguarding is:

Name: Anna-Clare Temple

Job role: CEO

Contact details: anna-clare.temple@step-together.org.uk

Contact Tel: 0117 955 9042

The Safeguarding Lead's role is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding policy, which includes Online Safety ([Online Safety Act 2023](#)), is fully implemented and that we attain SAFEcic standards. These details will be made available to all responsible adults, adults at risk and parents/carers by training, staff handbook and enrolment information.

This includes ensuring they and all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Their responsibilities are:

- ✓ monitoring and recording concerns
- ✓ making referrals to social care, or police, as relevant, without delay
- ✓ liaison with other agencies
- ✓ arranging training for all staff

The Deputy for Safeguarding is available to support or cover for the Lead. They will also handle any complaints or allegations against the Lead for Safeguarding if appropriate.

Line of accountability for safeguarding

The responsibility for safeguarding at board or committee level is shared between members. Safeguarding is on the organisation's risk register, and our policies and procedures are reviewed annually or when required. A Senior Member of the organisation at Board, Trustee, Governor or similar level is appointed to take strategic responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. This person is unconnected to the Lead for Safeguarding and Deputy for Safeguarding and receives up to date and relevant training with the ability to develop knowledge, skills and expertise in safeguarding.

Safeguarding Trustee

Name: Holly Meacham

Role: Trustee (Volunteer)

Contact Email: hollymeacham1@gmail.com

Tel: 0117 955 9042

WHY DO WE NEED A SAFEGUARDING POLICY?

All organisations that work or come into contact with children, young people and/or adults at risk need to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, adults at risk, parents, carers and/or families have responsibilities for safeguarding. It is important to remember that children, young people and adults at risk can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

To undertake these responsibilities, we:

- have a team of senior managers and trustees committed to safeguarding;
- are clear about people's responsibilities and accountability;
- have a culture of listening to children, young people and adults at risk;
- undertake safer recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers working with children & young people and adults at risk;
- have procedures for safeguarding children and young people and adults at risk;
- have procedures for dealing with allegations against, and concerns about, any staff;
- make sure staff, paid and unpaid, have mandatory induction and further safeguarding training, supervision, reviews and support;
- have agreements about working with other organisations and agencies.

DEFINITIONS

Definition of a Child/Young Person

There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the UK. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, states that a child "*means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier*" (Article 1, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (16th in Scotland). In Scotland, whilst child protection procedures may be considered for a person up to the age of 18, the legal boundaries of childhood and adulthood are variously defined.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

There is no single law that defines an adult at risk across the UK but in Scotland, whilst child protection procedures may be considered for a person up to the age of 18, the legal boundaries of childhood and adulthood are variously defined. An adult at risk is a person over the age of 18 years (over 16 in Scotland) and is:

- having needs for care and support, and
- experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- as a result of those care needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

This could include people with mental health issues, physical, sensory or learning disabilities, medical conditions, dementia, brain injury, those who are elderly and frail and also those who are family carers.

Safeguarding concerns arise when an adult who has care and support needs and is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected and unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or risk of it because of those needs (see [Care and support statutory guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-and-support-statutory-guidance)). Please see references on the [SAFE website](#) for details of arrangements in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with adults at risk, families, parents and carers have responsibilities. It is important to remember that adults at risk can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

RELATED POLICIES

Data Protection

We will treat any personal information by which an individual can be identified, for example, name, address, and email, in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and will not share information with any third party, except where required by law.

Confidentiality

This policy is in line with government guidance about confidentiality and these details will be made available to all staff, children, young children, adults at risk, parents and carers. We fully endorse the principle of the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, overriding any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. No one working, or involved with our organisation can promise absolute confidentiality. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis. In cases of disclosure of abuse by adults at risk, parents or carers, we are obliged to share the information and will refer our concerns to social care services, or the police in an emergency.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern externally about a person or practice within the organisation, which will affect others in an illegal and/or harmful way. Our organisation promotes the sharing of any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk as soon as possible with the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding. If individuals reporting their concerns within our organisation do not feel they have been acted upon then we support their right to report these concerns to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) (England and Wales only) social care services, the police, and /or the relevant Regulatory Authority e.g. Charity Commission. They can also contact the [NSPCC dedicated helpline](#) and the charity [Protect](#) for advice and support.

All media enquiries will be handled by the Head of Operations or the Chief Executive.

Information Sharing

Timely and accurate written records play an essential role in safeguarding individuals, who may have suffered, are suffering or at significant risk of suffering harm. It is important that records are shared at the appropriate time when necessary. Within our organisation the decision to share written information, and with whom, will be undertaken by the Lead or the Deputy for Safeguarding.

Safer Recruitment

Our organisation is committed to safe recruitment in line with the relevant legislation and guidance from the government, Safeguarding Adults Board’s Key Standards for Recruitment, and SAFE guidelines for recruiting all staff, paid or unpaid. We do this by:

- advertising vacancies with a clear commitment required to safeguarding;
- assigning all posts detailed job descriptions;
- obtaining full personal details via an application form (not CVs) with particular relevance to previous work with children, young people and adults at risk;
- when a candidate is selected for interview the relevant criminal declaration form will be sent for completion as set out by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended;
- always taking up two written references, one from the most recent employer or education establishment;
- undertaking all interviews face to face (in person or over Teams/Zoom), based on the job description;
- ensuring at least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training, in line with the relevant safe recruitment and SafeCIC guidelines;



- having sound procedures and recording for interviewing to ensure we are satisfied and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable.

Any appointment will only be confirmed subject to:

- ✓ a satisfactory ID and criminal records check at the appropriate level, including [Certificate of Good Conduct](#) for foreign nationals and the [International Child Protection Certificate \(ICPC\)](#) for anyone who has lived in the UK and also travelled overseas;
- ✓ a follow up of written references by telephone if relevant to the vacant post;
- ✓ a check of essential qualifications, where applicable;
- ✓ confirmation of the Right to Work in the UK for employed personnel;
- ✓ fitness to work as relevant.

Induction and Training

We have a clear induction and training strategy with clear job descriptions and responsibilities and all relevant procedures. All new staff, paid and unpaid, will receive induction training as soon as possible and sign to record they have:

- ✓ received and understood this policy
- ✓ been given any relevant resources
- ✓ understood the commitment to safeguarding training

When needed, staff will receive further safeguarding training, at the appropriate level, as soon as possible. We also agree to a probationary period of 6 months with clear goals and operate a 6-weekly line manager-led supervision and annual performance appraisal programme.

Updated safeguarding training is normally required every 2 years (online) or 3 years (face to face). Staff will undertake the free online government training for [PREVENT/Channel](#) and FGM, where applicable to their role, as well as other training pertinent to their duties such as suicide awareness, ASIST training, trauma informed approaches, and/or mental health first aid.

WORKING PRACTICES

Consent

Our support is largely provided on a personalised, 1:1 basis. However, we do not provide an outreach support service, working with people in their homes. Our support is delivered within the community, often in public locations to ensure clients are kept safe and protected. When consent is required for any care, activity or intervention we will, unless it is an emergency, obtain consent from the individual if of sufficient age and or understanding. Consent will be requested from a parent/carer or relative for a child, young person or an adult at risk. Group activities are delivered by a minimum of two personnel, i.e., an experienced/qualified member of staff and one volunteer, both of whom are fully DBS-checked and trained in Safeguarding.

Where relevant, we will ensure we fulfil our obligations under Child Care Law in terms of parental responsibility and Mental Capacity Legislation supporting, where possible, the individual's right to make their own decisions. Any decisions made should be the least restrictive and recorded.

Mental Capacity

We fully recognise and uphold the 5 key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in all aspects of our work by:

- Presuming each adult at risk has capacity.



- Supporting individuals to make their own decisions.
- Recognising the right for individuals to make their own decisions, even if they appear eccentric.
- Making sure what we do for adults at risk (without capacity) is in their best interest.
- Making sure that anything we do is the least restrictive action for the individual.

Treating Adults with Respect

We endeavour to treat all adults at risk with respect, regardless of ability or culture. We ensure that everyone signs up to the Charity's Code of Conduct, which is in line with SAFE recommendations.

We also circulate and make available to everyone by training, staff handbook and enrolment information, our confidentiality statement, complaints procedures, allegations and "whistleblowing" statements, disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Celebrating Young Peoples' and Adults' Achievements

We positively encourage all young people and adults at risk to succeed and celebrate their achievements by awarding certificates of achievement where appropriate and issuing achievement packs once adults have finished working with Step Together staff.

We are particularly sensitive to the needs of adults at risk who may achieve in smaller steps than their peers but are equally entitled to celebration.

Lone and One to One Working

We offer our beneficiaries person-centred, one to one support, which is delivered in public community settings. We do not provide an outreach service to people in their homes but recognise that an initial first meeting may involve visiting a house-bound individual and this will always be with a third-party present such as another professional agency, line manager or work colleague.

Our front-line staff are trained in Lone Working procedures (see Lone Working Policy) to ensure that no one, including themselves, is ever at risk. We conduct regular risk assessments with all our beneficiaries to ensure:

- ✓ the care or activity provided is suitable for one-to-one working
- ✓ the lone worker has been recruited, trained and supervised to undertake this particular role
- ✓ that health and safety issues have been identified and recommendations followed
- ✓ safeguards are in place to protect individual's rights to safe working practice
- ✓ safeguards are in place in relation to strategies for emergency situations
- ✓ relevant business insurance is in place for use of personal vehicles
- ✓ accurate and relevant written recording is maintained following any activity, signed and dated.

Young People who work in our Organisation

All young people who are undertaking volunteer work, apprenticeships or work experience within our organisation/group are to be included within this policy and their safeguarding as individuals given the same importance as all young people we come into contact with. Any disclosures and observations of possible harm or disturbing behaviour must be reported to the Lead or Deputy immediately. They will also require an induction program that includes their commitment to safeguarding within the remit of the safeguarding policy and in line with all staff induction.

In addition, information on the young person's contacts recorded as relevant e.g. parents, carers, school representatives and any supervisors, with emergency contact numbers. We will check with the relevant local authority's education welfare team to see if an employment permit is required for any young people working with us and, in the cases of live performances, if a child performance license is required.

Codes of Conduct

We aim to provide a safe environment free from discrimination, upholding and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We undertake to:

- ✓ treat all children and young people and adults at risk with respect and dignity;
- ✓ ensure that their welfare and safety is paramount at all times;
- ✓ maintain professional boundaries both face to face and online;
- ✓ always listen to individuals and take account of their wishes and feeling;
- ✓ always act in a professional way and not accept bullying, swearing or other disruptive behaviour;
- ✓ always use the organisation's official email system, social media etc. when contacting the at risk groups we work with;
- ✓ liaise openly with parents and carers;
- ✓ only use physical contact if absolutely necessary;
- ✓ avoid being alone with children, young people and adults at risk whenever possible;
- ✓ listen to, and act upon, any disclosures, allegations, or concerns of abuse;
- ✓ participate in approved safeguarding training at appropriate levels;
- ✓ ensure restraint is only used as part of an agreed plan by staff trained in the use of the particular restraint or as an emergency action to protect from harm. All use of restraint will be reported and recorded by the member of staff concerned to the Lead or Deputy for safeguarding and to the relevant manager
- ✓ follow our safeguarding policy at all times;
- ✓ make activities FUN and enjoyable.

Please refer to our Code of Conduct policy for further information.

RECOGNISING ABUSE IN CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AT RISK

The following list is for guidance only. It is important to be observant, listen to what is being said and record. e.g. is what you are observing and being told about an injury consistent with the injury?

- Abuse related to faith or belief
- Alcohol and Substance misuse
- Breast Ironing
- Carrying offensive weapons
- Child criminal and sexual exploitation including County Lines
- Child on child abuse, including sexual violence and upskirting
- Concealed pregnancy
- Criminal exploitation
- Discriminatory
- Domestic abuse, including "honour" based abuse
- Emotional
- Exploitive use of technology
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Financial or material abuse
- Forced marriage
- Gangs
- Gambling
- Hate and "mate" crime
- Hazing and initiation rites
- Hoarding
- Modern slavery
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Online safety
- Organisational or institutional
- Psychological
- Physical
- Radicalisation
- Self-neglect
- Sexual
- Sextortion
- Trafficking

Handling Disclosures

When a disclosure is made by a child, young person or adult at risk we will remember to:

- take what you are being told seriously
- stay calm and reassure
- do not investigate
- do not delay

and always

- seek advice from the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding
- make a careful recording of anything you are told or observe, date and sign.

A disclosure may come from someone telling you:

- they have or are being abused
- they have concerns about someone else
- they are themselves abusing or likely to abuse someone else

You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Your own observations and concerns
- Being told by another person that they have concerns about an adult at risk
- The adult at risk tells you
- The abuser tells you

Also remember that you may not always be working directly with the adult at risk but become concerned because of difficulties experienced by other adults, for example:

- Domestic abuse
- Mental health issues
- Substance and alcohol abuse incidents
- Radicalisation
- FGM

Responding to Concerns (Safeguarding Referral Flowchart)

We ensure and emphasise that everyone in our organisation understands and knows how to share any concerns immediately with the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding. Everyone, including both the Lead and Deputy for Safeguarding, will deal with concerns using the following steps on the next page:

Step One:

If you are worried a child, young person or adult at risk has been abused because:

- you have seen something
- someone says they have been abused
- somebody else has told you they are concerned
- there has been an allegation against a colleague
- there has been an anonymous allegation
- an adult has disclosed that they were abused as a child
- a child, young person or adult say they are abusing someone else

Step Two:

Check our safeguarding policy for guidance. Talk to the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding without delay. If they are implicated then report to Additional Senior Lead

Step Three:

The Lead, Deputy or Additional Senior Lead should refer the concern to the relevant adult or children's social care service and/or the Police and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours.

For England and Wales in cases of allegations against a "person of trust" with a "duty of care" towards a child, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will co-ordinate the next procedural steps.

Under "whistle blowing", anyone can refer directly to the police or social care services and **all relevant Authorities**, when they are concerned the organisation is not managing safeguarding concerns appropriately.

CONSULT,
MONITOR
AND RECORD
Sign/Date/Time
Include name
and job role

When the concern is about the welfare of a child or adult at risk from schools, colleges, health providers, GP practices, prisons or social care settings, you should refer to that organisation's Lead for Safeguarding in the first instance. Inform the Lead or Deputy that you have referred a concern.

**Any consultations should not delay a referral.
In an emergency do not delay: dial 999**

Record Keeping

At all times when required, and especially where there is a safeguarding concern, we are committed to keeping records which are:

- recorded on a safeguarding incident form;
- of sufficient details of child, young person or adult at risk to identify individual who is subject of concern and any significant others;
- accurate and factual/based on fact, as a true record of:
 - what has been monitored/observed
 - what has been said and by whom
 - what has given cause for concern
 - what action has and/or will be taken including the reason for those actions
 - the reason stated for no action being taken and by whom
- non judgmental;
- timely within 24 hours;
- signed and dated by the writer and co- signed by the Lead or Deputy;
- shared as appropriate by the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding;
- stored safely and securely by the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding.

Handling Allegations / Dealing with Complaints / Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures

We have clear policies in line with statutory guidance and SAFE recommendations about handling allegations, dealing with complaints and our own disciplinary and grievance procedures and these details will be made available to all adults, adults at risk, parents and carers, as necessary, by training, staff handbook and enrolment information.

Where a complaint or allegation has been made with regards to any inappropriate behaviour or poor practice, the Lead or Deputy will, in all cases, discuss the situation with social care services (the LADO with regards to children England and Wales only) and / or the police before making an open decision about the best way forward.

In the case where the Lead is implicated, the Deputy should be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, the person concerned will inform the Senior Lead. If there is a belief that the concern has not been taken seriously or acted upon then any one can “whistleblow”.

With regards to disciplinary and grievance procedures, we will take no steps until we have fully discussed and agreed a strategy with social care services and / or the police, (the LADO, with regards to children England and Wales only). Any investigation will override the need to implement any such procedures. Our management is responsible for making referrals to the relevant:

- criminal records service
- regulatory authority
- professional body

Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment can take many forms and include:

- physical violence including threats, verbal assaults and taunts, the destruction of property, extortion, unwanted sexual interest or contact;
- indirect forms of bullying including ignoring a person and the withdrawal of friendship, malicious gossip and spreading rumours, abusive or oppressive graffiti, the use of social media, electronic messages and websites;
- motivation of prejudice against certain groups, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, gender and disability.

Whether directed at children, young people, adults at risk, staff, volunteers, parent and carers, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse will not be tolerated. All such behaviour will be treated as a safeguarding concern when aimed at children, young people and/or adults at risk. If children, young people and/or adults at risk are engaging in bullying, harassment or sexual harassment it is also a safeguarding concern and should be reported to the Lead or Deputy for safeguarding.

We will:

- ✓ provide a culture of equality and respect for all with zero tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment;
- ✓ report all incidents of bullying or harassment observed or disclosed, to the Lead or Deputy who will take the appropriate action;
- ✓ take immediate steps to stop the behaviour and mitigate the effects of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment;
- ✓ record all incidents with observations and witness statements, and action taken, signed, timed and dated.

Online Safety

Why do we need to include Online Safety?

Modern digital technology has made access to information and communication increasingly easy for everyone. This is especially so for those who cannot always go out to socialise and rely on websites for social networking, watching films, downloading music, buying lottery tickets, shopping etc. Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, adults at risk, families, parents and carers have responsibilities. It is also important to remember, children, young people and adults at risk can also abuse and such incidents fall into the remit of this policy

Online Safety Code of Conduct:

We expect everyone in our organisation to agree and sign up to our Online Safety code of conduct to:

- use the internet and other forms of communication in a sensible and polite way;
- only access websites, send messages or access and use other resources that will not hurt or upset anybody;
- seek permission if they want to use personal information or take photographs of other people;
- report any concerns to the Lead or Deputy;
- not maintain confidentiality if there is a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk.

What are the Risks?

There are many potential risks including:

- accessing inappropriate or illegal websites
- receiving unwanted or upsetting texts, e-mail messages or images
- being “groomed” by another with a view to meeting the child, young person or adult at risk for their own illegal purposes including sex, drugs or crime
- sharing nudes or semi nudes
- viewing or sending unacceptable material such as inciting hatred or violence
- sending bullying messages or posting malicious details about others
- ignoring copyright law by downloading e.g. music, videos, homework cheat materials etc.
- overspending on shopping and gambling sites
- being at risk of identity fraud for money transactions
- inappropriate relationships or prostitution

What else might be of concern?

A child, young person or adult at risk who:

- is becoming secretive about where they are going to or who they are meeting
- will not let you see what they are accessing online
- is using a webcam in a closed area, away from other people
- is accessing the web or using a mobile for long periods and at all hours
- clears the computer history every time they use it
- receives unexpected money or gifts from people you don't know
- does not appear to have the money they should have

A person who:

- befriends a child, young person or adult at risk on the internet or by text messaging
- has links to children, young people and/or adults at risk on their social media pages especially if they work in a position of care such as a sports coach or care worker
- is secretive about what they are doing and who they are meeting

Social Media

The [Online Safety Act 2023](#) and associated government guidance [A Guide to the Online Safety Bill](#) now makes social media companies more responsible for their users' safety on their platforms. This means children and adults will be protected online by making social media platforms:

- remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place. This includes removing content promoting self-harm
- prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content
- enforce age limits and age-checking measures
- ensure the risks and dangers posed to children on the largest social media platforms are more transparent, including by publishing risk assessments
- **provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise**

Such content should be reported to the service provider and if they do not respond appropriately the matter can be reported to [Ofcom](#).


What do I do if I am concerned?

If you have any concerns, speak to the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding.

Remember:

- do not delay
- do not investigate
- seek advice from the Lead or Deputy
- make careful recording of anything you observe or are told

Online Safety Referral Flowchart – Child and Adult

Is a crime in progress or is anyone in immediate danger? **Yes** →  **Dial 999 Immediately**

14

Inform the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding who will take the following steps, if not available, you must take action:

Is the concern about child sexual content anywhere in the world?

Yes


Contact the IWF
(Internet Watch Foundation)
www.iwf.org.uk

No

Is the concern about a person communicating with a child or adult for sexual reasons?

Yes, Child


Contact CEOP
(Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
www.ceop.police.uk

Yes, Adult

No

Is the concern about a known person, non-sexual harassment or other potential crime?

Yes


Contact the local police

Record the concern and the Lead/Deputy for Safeguarding will liaise, await response, advise you and review Online Safety arrangements as necessary.

V3.1

Minimising the Risks

We will:

- talk to children, young people and adults at risk about what they are accessing online;
- ensure everyone uses PCs, iPads and other technology in a general space where we can monitor what is going on;
- explain the risks of giving out personal details online;
- talk about how people can be anyone they want to be online, e.g. by using misleading emails, photographs of other people, telling lies about their age, hobbies, school;
- encourage children, young people and adults at risk to think carefully about what photographs or videos they use online. They can be used and tampered with by other people, or they may not be appropriate;
- advise children, young people and adults at risk to only text, chat or webcam to people they know in real life;
- talk about how to identify SPAM messages or junk mail and how to delete them. This also applies to messages from people they do not know, or opening attachments;
- discuss how people hide their identities online and the importance of never meeting new online “friends” in real life;
- make sure children, young people and adults at risk understand they can always talk to us, or their parents and/or carers, about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable;
- look on the internet together for information about how to deal with or report problems. e.g. [The National Crime Agency's CEOP Education](#);
- talk about how/when information or images get on to the internet, they can never be erased.

Other useful resources can be found at [Ofcom](#).

SAFEGUARDING PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Photography & Filming Guidance

Both still and moving images are key to recording the successes and achievements of children, young people and adults at risk in their lives and activities. However, it is vital to remember that images (especially digital images) can be used, shared, stored and/or distributed inappropriately, and that their storage and use must comply with the UK GDPR. It is therefore important to be clear about:

- explaining to parents and carers why caution is necessary;
- the purpose of photos e.g. parent's and carer's own record, media and publicity etc.;
- the content required when using a professional photographer;
- informing parents and seeking their consent for any publication or media use;
- publishing only limited details alongside individual's photos in newspapers etc.;
- taking photographs openly and away from changing areas;
- the suitability of clothing e.g. swimsuits;
- any group photos being taken only during the activity or on the premises;
- all those taking photos signing a registration form, which includes the reason, use and storage of all photographs and films;
- ensuring secure storage of all images;
- identifying how long unused images will be retained;
- identifying how long copies of published images will be retained.

The above guidance applies to all still and moving images, however they are created (mobile phone, still camera, video camera etc.). The type of equipment and the equipment's owner should also be recorded on the registration form.

Activities, Events and Visiting Speakers/Activity Leaders

We will always ensure visitors and activities undertaken are risk assessed, and we are committed to:

- ensuring that those who run activities have the expertise, knowledge and skills to do so properly;
- completing a risk assessment which involves identifying risks and the means of reducing or eliminating those risks for all activities or events;
- risk assessing any changes being made to activities or events involving children, young people and adults at risk;
- having a written plan in place if the event or activity has to be cancelled;
- having a written plan in place in case of emergency including contact numbers;
- implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis.

Transport

We do not provide transportation for any people that we support. However, we may occasionally transport clients to a volunteering activity if there are no other options available and only as a last resort. This must be authorised in advance by the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy and on the following basis:

We ensure that we:

- gain written permission from parents or carers to carry children, young people and adults at risk;
- keep a register of who is being transported and who is driving, when to where and return, with collection and return times being specified;
- provide all transporting and being transported with an emergency contact numbers;
- plan journeys regarding time, distance and stopping points;
- consider if another driver might be required or the possible need for extra supervision;
- have emergency procedures in place.

and we ensure that drivers:

- are recruited under safeguarding recruitment procedures;
- are suitably qualified to drive the required vehicle;
- provide proof of insurance regarding business use and comprehensive insurance;
- can evidence the vehicle is roadworthy and suitable for transporting each individual;
- provide suitable and age-appropriate seat belts, booster seats and wheelchair anchor points;
- avoid transporting children, young people or adults at risk on their own.

The Late Pick Up of a Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk

If attempts to contact the parent and nominated emergency contact fail, then the supervising adult should wait with the child, young person or adult at risk with other staff, volunteers or parents wherever possible.

Staff, paid and unpaid, should avoid:

- taking the child, young person or adult at risk home or to another location;
- waiting alone with the child, young person or adult at risk in a vehicle or at the venue;
- sending the child young person or adult at risk home with another person, without parental consent;
- leaving the child, a young person or adult at risk alone.

If all attempts to make contact fail, it may be advisable to contact the police for advice.

Child, Young Person or Adult goes Missing

If a child, young person or adult at risk goes missing from the group or organisation it should be reported to the police. Use 999 where there is a concern that they cannot be found or are vulnerable. A missing person may be assessed as 'at risk' if they fit one or more of the following categories:

- is under 16
- has expressed feelings of suicide
- has dementia

- has been acting totally out of character
- has mental health issues
- is under increased stress
- has an illness or a physical disability
- has a learning disability
- is in need of regular medication / care

The Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding should be informed as soon as possible, and all details and actions recorded dated, timed and signed.

First Aid

General First Aid training is provided to those staff and volunteers who run our external group projects, i.e., allotments. All staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid and hold valid and up to date certificates of competence issued by HSE and Quallsafe approved trainers.

The duties of a First Aider are:

- to give immediate first aid to children, young people, adults at risk, staff or visitors when needed
- to ensure that an ambulance or other professional medical help is called when necessary

Our organisation undertakes to ensure there is always a trained First Aider on site at our venues or, if other venues used such as schools, that they have appropriate first aid cover. We also provide training and guidance on dealing with hazardous materials such as blood, other bodily fluids and chemicals. We ensure sufficient equipment is available to deal with accidents or spillage.

All incidents will be reported and recorded in the First Aid and Incident Accident Books.

The duties of a Mental Health First Aider are:

- to recognise when a person requires external professional mental health and/or medical support
- to create person-centred action plans for people that promote positive overall health and wellbeing

Buildings and Venues

Safeguarding risk assessments will be carried out on all building and venues used by our organisation or by the host's venue management, such as schools, hired community halls and meeting rooms. The safeguarding risk assessment should cover:

- access especially how people enter and leave the building
- signing in protocol
- use of keys
- toilets and changing rooms
- fire procedures
- any outside space
- car parks
- any other relevant issues

Ethical Fundraising

We are committed to our fundraising being:

- **Legal:** All fundraising must meet the requirements of the law.
- **Open:** Fundraisers must be open with the public about their processes and must be willing to explain (where appropriate) if they are asked for more information.
- **Honest:** Fundraisers must act with integrity and must not mislead the public about the cause they are

fundraising for or the way a donation will be used.

- **Respectful:** Fundraisers must demonstrate respect whenever they have contact with any member of the public.

SAFEcic RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to attain the highest standards of safeguarding practice, everybody needs to be vigilant in adhering to this policy and also assessing the risks of their own work and activities. These risk assessments will be carried out annually by the Lead and/or Deputy. However, it is the responsibility of everyone to draw attention to practices and procedures that they are unhappy or uncomfortable with.

It is only through adopting SAFEcic policies and practices that we can all be confident we have done everything we can to safeguard the children, young people and adults at risk in our care.