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# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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**Effective Date: 19 February 2019**

**Approved by:** Executive Board February 2019

## 1. Overview

1.1 Safeguarding<sup>1</sup> is at the heart of what we do and fundamental to our existence as a charity. We are all ambassadors for the NSPCC and for safeguarding. Some of us in the services directorates are specialists in child safeguarding practice, others in fundraising have contact with many adults and children, whilst others seldom meet the public as part of their work. But from the point of view of the public we are all the NSPCC, and they expect us to know what to do if they, or we, have concerns about a child<sup>2</sup>.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out the NSPCC's approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk or vulnerable adults<sup>3</sup>. It applies to everyone working and volunteering for the NSPCC or acting on their behalf and provides the framework to help us safeguard children with commitment and confidence. It describes some corporate and directorate safeguarding responsibilities so that you know who to ask for decisions or advice when you need to.

## 2. Our approach to safeguarding

### 2.1 Principles

Our approach to safeguarding is driven by a number of principles which are informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, relevant legislation and guidance, and by the NSPCC's values and understanding of best practice.

- **Principle 1** All children have a right to protection from harm and abuse, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, identity or additional vulnerabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions: Safeguarding children is the action we taken to promote the welfare (or wellbeing) of children and protect them from harm. Child protection is part of the safeguarding continuum and focusses on the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

<sup>2</sup> Child: This policy is in respect of all children. A child includes babies, children and young people from pre-birth up to 18 years. In Scotland, there is a variance to this where a child is someone up to the age of 16 years unless the child is subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing, in which case they are considered a child until the age of 18 years. See National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 (para 21-24) for more detailed guidance on this

<sup>3</sup> An adult at risk is '*any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support*' (Care Act 2014 [England]). This definition is broadly consistent with definitions across the devolved nations. In Scotland, the definition of an 'adult at risk' or 'vulnerable adult' applies to those aged 16 years and over. Institute of Fundraising Guidance refers to 'vulnerable adults'. The 'practical guide to dealing with donations' it says that 'It is important to recognise the distinction between an individual lacking the mental capacity to make a decision and someone who has capacity but may be vulnerable at that moment in time. While both situations require a fundraiser to respond appropriately, the fact that issues around mental capacity have a legal context means that this needs to be understood as a discrete part of this area'.

- **Principle 2** The best interests of the child are paramount in all considerations about their welfare and protection, including when to maintain confidentiality and when to share information about them.
- **Principle 3** Children have a right to participate in decisions about their lives. Their views, wishes, feelings and experiences are evident in our work with them.
- **Principle 4** Concerns or allegations that NSPCC staff or volunteers have abused or neglected a child or adult will be managed sensitively and fairly in accordance with these policies, relevant legislation and local procedures.
- **Principle 5** Working together with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to promoting children's welfare/wellbeing and ensuring their protection. In some limited circumstances, it will not be appropriate to engage with parents and carers to protect the child.
- **Principle 6** As part of working together we expect professionals to act on our concerns, and we will escalate our concerns in our efforts to be satisfied that the child has been protected, taking a stand in cases where we consider the protection of the child has not been taken seriously either within the NSPCC or those investigating child protection.

### **What to do for those who do not work directly with children**

The child's welfare is paramount and this means that the child's safety and protection must be the most important consideration and take priority over everything else. These procedures outline what action should be taken if you have concerns about a child's<sup>4</sup> safeguarding including child protection.

The procedures apply to the following individuals: all staff in directorates/teams/services who do not work directly with children or adults at risk, volunteers (including trustees and interns), secondees, agency staff, students, who in the course of their work or volunteering, have information or receive information that gives them cause for concern about a child's safeguarding/child protection. The procedures also apply to sole traders and contractors, including training associates and fundraising agencies.

### **What to do if for those working directly with children**

The child's welfare is paramount and this means that the child's safety and protection must be the most important consideration and take priority over everything else. These procedures outline what action should be taken if you have concerns about a child's<sup>5</sup> safeguarding including child protection. The procedures also explain what action should be taken if no satisfactory action has been agreed with the relevant local authority/police or school (as necessary).

The procedures apply to the following individuals: all staff and volunteers working directly with children (including trustees and interns), secondees, agency staff, students, who in the course of

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<sup>5</sup> Child: This procedure is in respect of all children. A child includes babies, children and young people from pre-birth up to 18 years. In Scotland, there is a variance to this where a child is someone up to the age of 16 years unless the child is subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing, in which case they are considered a child until the age of 18 years. See National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 (para 21-24) for more detailed guidance on this

their work or volunteering, have information or receive information that gives them cause for concern about a child's safeguarding/child protection.

## 2.2 The 'building blocks' of our safeguarding work

NSPCC safeguarding comprises the following five areas of activity:

### **Safe recruitment**

We apply a fair and consistent approach to recruitment to draw our workforce from the widest pool and select the best people on merit. As an organisation committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk we have robust recruitment policies to minimise the risk of engaging anyone, as a staff member or volunteer, who may pose a risk to children.

Lead director: People director

### **Effective policies, procedures and practices**

We have safeguarding policies and procedures that set out the NSPCC's expectations of staff and volunteers. Some are for the whole organisation and some are specifically for work within directorates. Policies reflect new learning, and are consistent with best safeguarding practice and legislation and guidance across the four United Kingdom (UK) nations (England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland) and Jersey.

Lead director: Chief executive

### **Competent and confident workforce**

We provide mandatory safeguarding induction and refresher training and role-specific training. This includes the training and the developing of our workforce within professional regulatory requirements. We ensure that our frontline and specialist staff have the skills they require, and we support everyone in the NSPCC to trust their judgement and act on safeguarding concerns.

Lead director: Chief executive for corporate safeguarding training; Children's Services for social work regulatory requirements; Fundraising and Engagement and Communications for fundraising regulatory requirements

### **Actively managing safeguarding risk**

Managing risk is central to how we safeguard children and vulnerable adults through our local services and helplines. Working within a multi-agency approach we escalate our concerns as necessary to be satisfied that the child or vulnerable adult has been protected. We oversee risk management in directorates through quality assurance processes, and at a corporate level through independent inspection and the active management of safeguarding as a strategic risk owned by the chief executive officer (CEO).

Lead director: Chief executive who is owner of the strategic safeguarding risk

### **Culture and values**

Safeguarding is at the heart of the culture and values of the NSPCC. Our culture supports, enables, and mandates our approach to safeguarding. Our values embody our charity and reflect what we stand for.

Value-based behavioural framework sets out what we do for children.

Lead director: People director on behalf of the chief executive and the Executive Board

### **3. Corporate policies and procedures mandatory reading**

In addition to this policy, all staff and volunteers must read and understand the following corporate safeguarding policies and procedures.

#### **Safeguarding code of conduct and policy on appropriate professional conduct**

The code includes guidance on professional boundaries for all those who are undertaking any type of work with children for example, in children's services provision (both face to face and online), participation work, fundraising or schools work etc. The principles within this guidance apply equally to work with adult service users.

#### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Policy procedure and guidance**

This policy provides information about what constitutes FGM; it covers definitions, information about the legal context, mandatory reporting, consequences of FGM, risk factors and warning signs, its prevalence and guidance to support safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

#### **Practice guidance on safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation and extremism**

Harmful radicalisation and violent extremism is a child protection matter. This guidance provides information about what can make individuals susceptible to radicalisation and extremism, the legal context, risk factors and warning signs, and guidance to support the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of or engaged with this form of harm or those affected by it.

#### **Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse Policy**

Anyone who is employed or engaged by or volunteers on behalf of the NSPCC, regardless of the type or amount of contact they have with adults who are at increased risk of abuse, has a role to play in safeguarding and protecting them. Everyone must:

- know how to recognise potential abuse of adults at risk
- know what to do when safeguarding concerns arise
- understand what the NSPCC expects of them in terms of their own behaviour and actions.

#### **Non-Recent Abuse Policy and procedures**

Non-recent historic abuse is commonly used to refer to disclosures of sexual abuse that were perpetrated in the past. It can also be about a disclosure of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect (or a combination of these). The policy enables staff and volunteers to:

- be aware of and know what to do if they receive a referral about non-recent abuse
- know what to do when safeguarding concerns arise
- understand what the NSPCC expects of them in terms of their own behaviour
- know how to prevent harm to children
- know how to recognise potential child abuse concerns
- know how to recognise potential abuse of adults at risk.

#### **Online safety guidance**

The guidance is aimed at enabling all staff and volunteers to recognise the risks and potential dangers children and young people can encounter in the online world. It will also help them to monitor their own practices to minimise potential risk to children and young people

### **Managing allegations against staff and volunteers**

This procedure ensures that children and adults at risk are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by an adult working for or on behalf of the NSPCC. Its purpose is to:

- clearly define what a safeguarding allegation against a member of staff is
- introduce new senior managers - to undertake the investigative role for allegations made about their own staff within their own directorates/departments
- introduce an allegations report log and a system for monitoring all management report logs
- update the 'referral to bar' process and links it to the need to alert professional regulatory bodies e.g. HCPC
- allow for the person making the allegation to consult with their line manager or helpline in the first instance rather than going straight to a senior manager.

### **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

This policy sets out our approach to recruitment and selection, including our commitment to safeguarding children through our comprehensive employment checking procedures.

### **Dignity at Work Policy**

This policy outlines the organisation's commitment to creating and fostering a culture that promotes respect for each other and values individual differences. There is no place for any form of harassment, victimisation or bullying at the NSPCC. It applies to all employees, casual/sessional workers, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and trustees.

### **Case review procedures 2019**

These procedures outline the roles and responsibilities for staff in the organisation and in all nations, in relation to case reviews (SCRs), domestic homicide reviews and other types of reviews that NSPCC may become involved in such as local learning reviews, adult safeguarding and learning reviews, multi-agency public protection arrangement (MASA) case reviews and multiagency risk assessment conference reviews. Where these arise, this procedure should be followed.

**In addition to these corporate policies and procedures individual areas may require their specific safeguarding policies and procedures to be read and understood.**

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 Trustees**

Are required to comply with the legal duties of charity trustees in the administration of the NSPCC's purpose and activities. Trustees have a general duty to take reasonable steps to govern and assess

risks to the NSPCC's activities, beneficiaries, property, work or reputation. It is the role of the lead safeguarding trustee to oversee, champion, and challenge this work in relation to safeguarding.

### **3.2 Chief executive and Executive Board**

The Executive Board (chief executive and the directors) works closely with the Trustees and carries out the day-to-day running of the organisation. The chief executive is the risk owner of the strategic safeguarding risk register.

### **3.3 Directorates and directorate leads**

Safeguarding practice in directorates is the responsibility of respective directors. The role of the directorate safeguarding lead is to act as a focal point for safeguarding practice within the directorate; an advocate for implementation and communication of policy; and an advisor to colleagues and volunteers in the absence of other line managers.

### **3.4 Safeguarding Unit**

The unit acts as a champion and conscience for safeguarding in the NSPCC and oversees corporate safeguarding ensuring that the NSPCC complies with legal, professional, and Charity Commission requirements of good practice. They support practice improvement in directorates when required and liaise with the safeguarding lead trustee on behalf of the executive

They ensure corporate safeguarding policies, procedures and training are up to date in the light of new legislation, guidance and learning from practice. They are responsible for supporting the development of high quality safeguarding practice and providing professional expertise in matters relating to safeguarding and social work practice. Based on a 'right to know' they are required to flag concerns and gaps in corporate and directorate safeguarding policy and practice when appropriate.

The unit is directly involved and supports NSPCC staff who have been working with Safeguarding Boards through local representation and wider organisational engagement to raise the profile and understanding of the corporate strategic direction.