

Sustainable Crediton Safeguarding Policy

Date approved by trustees: 20.1.26

Due for review: 20.1.27

Purpose of the policy

- To provide protection for children, young people or adults at risk who attend activities and events organised by the group;
- To provide volunteers with guidance on the procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.

General statement

There is a moral obligation and legal duty of care that we do whatever is reasonably practicable to ensure the safety and wellbeing of anyone, including children, young people and adults at risk, with whom we work. All children, young people and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Volunteers will seek to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:

- Providing a safe enough physical environment;
- Always keeping safety and welfare at the centre of what we do;
- Listening to participants, taking account of their views and promoting inclusion;
- Identifying the abuse, neglect or exploitation of children and young people and adults at risk where it is occurring and responding effectively to any concerns, formal or informal complaints or expressions of anxiety;
- Liaising with appropriate services and agencies in the event of a safeguarding issue or concern;
- Managing confidentiality and data protection issues appropriately;
- Risk assessing activities;

Trustees will support effective safeguarding procedures by:

- Following, monitoring and updating this safeguarding policy at regular intervals or as needed in line with updates to appropriate legislation, so our policy is in line with the law, and the procedures published by the Local Safeguarding Partnership (Adults and Children & Families)
- Determining that systems are in place to ensure Sustainable Crediton volunteers are familiar with the policy's contents, and understand their responsibilities.
- The trustee with responsibility for safeguarding is Nicola Frost. She can be contacted by email nicola.j.frost@hotmail.com.

Definition of abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons(s) or group of people. Abuse may be single or repeated acts. It can be:

1. **Physical** For example, hitting, slapping, burning, pushing, restraining, or giving the wrong medication.
2. **Psychological and emotional** For example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring, or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse or manipulating person to take part in acts that they do not wish to.
3. **Financial** Including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money or other valuables.
4. **Sexual** Such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed consent. Sexual intercourse with any person below the Age of Consent (16 years of age) is illegal.
5. **Discriminatory** Including any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which targets the gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, disability, or age of the victim, having the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, degrading or offensive environment.
6. **Institutional** The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable people.
7. **Neglect and acts of omission** Including ignoring medical or physical care needs

Procedures for safe working

Working with children, young people (under 18) and adults at risk

- **Children or adults at risk must be accompanied by a parent, carer or legal guardian.** The child or adult at risk will remain the responsibility of the supervising adult;
- Children under 18 attending activities with their school, college or with another organisation will be the responsibility of the teachers or staff of that organisation. The group will work with those bodies to ensure permission is obtained and adequate supervision is provided, including getting to and from the activity;
- Volunteers should never be left alone with a child or a vulnerable adult or work with them away from their supervising parent or carer, unless they are DBS checked and have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training;

3. Risk assessments, and health and safety

- All activities must be preceded by a risk assessment; this will enable planning for safety to take place ensuring that the activities are safe and enjoyable;
- Any accidents or incidents will be recorded;
- There will be a first aid kit on site at all times;
- Volunteers will make themselves aware of any first aiders present during their activities.

4. Photography and filming

•Never take pictures or film children, young people or adults at risk without written permission (of a parent or guardian if under 18 –to be sought from school, college or other organisation) and never share any pictures or film without the consent of all identifiable people in the picture or film.

Recognising concerns or evidence of abuse

Concerns about or evidence of abuse might be raised through:

- A direct disclosure by the child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- A complaint or expression of concern by another volunteer, carer/parent/guardian, or a member of the public;
- An observation of the behaviour of the child, young person or vulnerable adult by the volunteer.

Dealing with abuse discovered, disclosed, or alleged

Action must be taken immediately in ALL cases. Do not assume someone else will act. It is the responsibility of the volunteer becoming aware of a situation to:

1. Respond and make safe

•Deal with the immediate needs of the child, young person or vulnerable adult. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the person is in no immediate danger and seek medical treatment if required;

•Do not discuss the allegation of abuse with other volunteers, group members, parents/guardians or the alleged perpetrator;

•If a volunteer is involved in the allegation or concern, or they have been witnessed behaving in a way that caused or could cause harm to children then they must be removed from the activity immediately and suspended from volunteering whilst an investigation takes place. The member of staff or volunteer should be treated fairly and honestly with reassurance that this removal does not imply any guilt but is to protect them as much as the person making the allegation. The relevant agencies will take responsibility for investigations

•Do not disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm and in this case only wash the area that needs immediate treatment;

•Respond to the person who made the disclosure by:

- Reassuring them that they have done the right thing;
- Giving them time to talk without probing, pushing or asking leading questions;
- Investigation is the responsibility of the relevant agencies
- Avoiding making promises you will be unable to keep, including that discussions are confidential;
- Explaining to the person that you will share this information with the relevant agencies only.

Where there is a serious concern about the immediate safety of a child, young person or adult at risk, this should be reported to the Police as an emergency

2. Record

• Record what was said before it is forgotten and keep it somewhere secure. The record should include:

- The date, time and location the disclosure was made;
- The allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident and what the person said in their own words about the abuse. Stick to the facts, and avoid adding opinion or inference.
- The appearance and behaviour of the victim including any injuries observed;
- The actions taken.

3. Inform

• If there is a safeguarding concern or disclosure that demands urgent attention, contact Devon's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 155 1071 or email mashsecure@devon.gov.uk and give as much information as you can. The duty worker will advise on the next steps and the volunteer may be asked to fill in a referral form. An example of an urgent situation might be:

- A child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses physical or sexual abuse;
- If there are signs of physical abuse e.g. injury;
- A child, young person or vulnerable adult presents as very different/scared to go home/anxious and you are aware home could be risky.

• If the disclosure is regarding child sexual exploitation or if you think a child may be at risk of sexual exploitation you should also contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (contact details above).

• Only contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed, the child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger of abuse or an assault is taking place;

• Providing the volunteer who has handled the disclosure has followed the procedures above to ensure the safety of the child, young person or vulnerable adult they should keep all information about the disclosure confidential or on a 'need to know' basis with other members of the group in order to protect the child, young person or vulnerable adult. The fact of the referral should however be reported to the trustee with responsibility for safeguarding.

Volunteers who have handled the disclosure may find this distressing and should have access to support. If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, you can speak to us about your concerns. Whether you want to report child abuse and neglect or are not sure what to do the NCPCC helpline –0808 800 5000 –offers advice and support and can take the next steps if a child's in danger. Telephone lines are open Monday to Friday 8am –10pm and 9am –6pm at the weekend. You can contact the NCPCC online 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Email help@nspcc.org.uk