

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

Model policy series

10. Model Policy on Safeguarding



All organisations which work with vulnerable groups; children or older people who may be at risk, should put in place a safeguarding policy stating how they intend to keep those people safe. Although a template can provide a good starting point, it is important that your own policy reflects what your organisation does, who you work with and how you do what you do. Only commit to procedures that you can carry out, and once the policy is in place, it must be implemented as written. Make sure it says what you intend it to say, and that you then carry it out.

Mission statement

This should state clearly your organisation's commitment to keep people safe and demonstrate an awareness of specific vulnerabilities which might affect your service users and how you would respond to keep them safe.

Example: In our work with children / young people / adults who may be at risk due to age, illness or disability, _____ (*organisation*) will endeavour at all times to provide services and activities which minimise risk and are as safe as we can make them.

We aim to protect our service users from harm or maltreatment, prevent the impairment of health or development, ensure the provision of safe and effective care, promote people's life chances and ensure children enter adulthood successfully.

We will work in partnership with other local / national agencies to put in place appropriate procedures for reporting, making referrals, accessing training and specialist support, as and when required.

Safer recruitment

It is important that your organisation uses clear and fair procedures to recruit all staff and volunteers. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks can be requested when you offer an applicant a post to provide background information about them. There are also other safeguards you can put in place once the person starts work.

Example: To do so, _____ will seek to recruit using appropriate procedures, safeguards and checks.

We will take up references for all posts and volunteer roles prior to appointment. We will use Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks to help us to assess suitability and where there is eligibility to do so by determining which roles are in regulated activity and therefore subject to a barring list check and those roles eligible for enhanced DBS checks only. We will assess any criminal record information that is disclosed in line with our data protection and equalities (treating ex-offenders fairly) policies.

We will provide an induction programme for all new volunteers and staff, appropriate training to enable all personnel to undertake their roles safely and confidently, and ongoing training as benefits the personal and professional development of individuals and of our organisation.

We will regularly review our recruitment procedures in response to changes in legislation and systems external to our organisation e.g. DBS and barring list checks

Volunteers

It is important that all volunteers are treated fairly, are given clear expectations of their role within the organisation and are supported to fulfil that role.

Example: All volunteer roles will be supported by a Volunteer Co-ordinator /Supporter.

Volunteers will be treated equally alongside any paid staff, and all volunteers will be offered the same opportunities for advancement, responsibility, training and gaining qualifications and acknowledgement for their contribution to our organisation. In turn, our volunteers will adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times as a representative of our organisation.

Any volunteer roles, which would be regulated activity if unsupervised, will be appropriately supervised in accordance with statutory guidance.

Safeguarding Officer

Appointing and naming a safeguarding officer and a deputy demonstrates your organisation's commitment to safeguarding. They provide an important role in supporting service users and other workers. The role can sound daunting so support for the two officers, both mutual and from the trustees, is vital.

Example: Our appointed Safeguarding Officer is _____ (*name*) from _____ (*date*) and supported by _____ (*name*) as deputy, who will be available to all staff, volunteers and service users to speak to when they have any concerns, issues or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of service users, volunteers and staff.

The safeguarding officer and deputy will have access to appropriate training to support them in these roles. They will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, contribute to appropriate policies, maintain records and keep

confidentiality, adhere to and promote this policy within the organisation, and support or provide access to support for individuals suffering harm or abuse.

Awareness of harm and abuse in our organisation

Demonstrate an understanding of harm, abuse and a legal duty to act if it takes place within your organisation.

Example: Harm is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, financial), neglect (deliberate or not) or factors such as bullying, prejudicial attitudes or a failure to enable *a person* to participate in activities that are open to most of their peers.

All incidents of harm to anyone involved in our service will require an appropriate response to reduce risks and improve our service

Deliberate acts of harm (sexual, physical, emotional and financial) and neglect are abuses against the person and will incur disciplinary proceedings and require reports and referrals to social services, the police, other professional bodies and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if in regulated activity.

Significant harm

Significant harm is the accepted point at which it is appropriate to refer the situation to statutory agencies. The harm may take place over a number of incidents or might be a single, serious incident. It is better to seek advice than to do nothing. It is not the role of anyone in your organisation to determine whether abuse has taken place, simply to report it to the statutory agencies, whose duty it is to investigate.

Example: Where there is risk of significant harm to our service users, volunteers or staff, the Safeguarding Officer and deputy are empowered to act accordingly.

- To log all conversations regarding the issue
- To sign and request signatures on reports and statements
- Confidentially seek advice from expert sources
- Share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with senior staff / Chair of the Board
- Share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as Social Services, the Police or NSPCC as appropriate to the circumstances
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service regarding staff or volunteers in regulated activity whose conduct is harmful to service users and when they are removed from regulated activity

Confidentiality

There is nothing in legislation that prevents the sensible sharing of relevant information to prevent harm to an individual or to assist in the prevention or detection of a crime.

Personal information on all personnel and service users should be kept securely and not shared unless there is reason to do so. Personnel should understand that

any personal information they may learn about service users in the course of their work should not be discussed outside the organisation.

Example: All reports and logs (including personnel records) will be kept securely and confidentially according our data protection policy and confidentiality statement, or in line with DBS Code of Practice if appropriate, until or unless it is necessary to share this material with the agencies named above. Information will be shared on a “need-to-know” basis only.

Communication

It is vital to plan and prepare for the appropriate sharing of information within and beyond the organisation. Staff and service users, or their families may have communication difficulties, speak languages other than Welsh and English, or be unable to hear, see, read, speak etc. Everyone should know they have the right to speak up about things that concern them.

The organisation has a duty to communicate with other agencies, to best support their service users and to fulfil their safeguarding/protection responsibilities.

Example: We will communicate this policy to all staff, volunteers, service users and their families / carers, using appropriate methods, formats and language to get the essence across.

We support and encourage all service users, volunteers and staff to speak up and contact the named Safeguarding Officer or deputy where there is

- a *concern* (a worry, issue or doubt about practice or treatment of a service user or colleague, or their circumstances), *or*
- a *disclosure* (information about a person at risk of or suffering from significant harm) *or*
- an *allegation* (the possibility that a volunteer or staff member could cause harm to a person in their care)

Staff or volunteers can report things that aren't right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties, putting someone's health and safety in danger or covering up wrongdoing. In the first instance they should speak with the Safeguarding Officer, their deputy or the trustee with appropriate responsibility (*name*

We would prefer our members and personnel to use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral to statutory agencies such Social Services or the Police, in their own right as a private individual. We also support our staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information, which they believe shows malpractice - whistle-blowing (disclosure in the public interest).

To encourage everyone involved in our organisation to understand that safeguarding is everybody's business, we will: hold forums / agenda trustees meetings / provide opportunities for discussions about issues and concerns, policy

and procedures to reflect, review and to continue to learn and improve in our safeguarding responsibilities.

Your Chairperson should sign and date your safeguarding policy when it has been approved and accepted by your board/committee. It would be wise to set a date to review it, as external policies can change rapidly and your internal policy should be kept up-to-date. Share the policy with your staff and service users; you may wish to provide a summary or easy-read version. Many funders will also ask if you have such a policy as part of a funding application.

References and links

[Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse](#) (November 2010, updated January 2013)

[Disclosure and Barring Service](#)

[WASPI](#)

The information in this document is for information only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

<p>Wales Council for Voluntary Action Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF10 5FH Registered Charity: 218093</p> <p>Tel: 0300 111 0124 help@wcva.org.uk Fax: 029 2043 1701 www.wcva.org.uk</p>	 <p>Cefnogi Trydydd Sector Cymru Third Sector Support Wales</p> <p>WcVA CgGC</p>
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