

# Are they safe?

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A safeguarding guide for group leaders in the voluntary and community sector

Working with children and young people aged 0-18

2017 edition (England)

**NSPCC**





## Thanks and acknowledgements

Many people have helped to develop this updated Are They Safe? guide, but there are some groups who deserve a special mention. They are:

- Young people and staff members from Out and About, sadly no longer in operation, but which was an Ipswich-based charity that enabled disabled children and young people to have fun and enjoy their choice of everyday leisure activities throughout the east of England.
- Young people and staff members at Stonewall, a charity that works for the equality of gay people at home, at work and at school in the UK and internationally.
- Parents and representatives from BME voluntary organisations, working with staff members at the Race Equality Foundation.
- Parents, volunteers and staff members from Home-Start schemes across England. Home-Start is a parent support charity working with families of young children in their own homes and via the delivery of group work and specialist support.

A big thank you to all of you, and to everyone else who helped.



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# Introduction and welcome

Welcome to the NSPCC's Are They Safe? guide. It is written for leaders of a wide range of voluntary, community and faith groups working with children and young people of all ages and providing a range of activities, support or services, from arts activities and hobbies to faith-based education or community work. Whether your focus is on babies and pre-school children, on after-school care or on clubs and activities for teenagers and young people, we hope you will find this resource useful.



While this guide contains material that we hope is useful to those who already have direct, practical experience in child protection, it is likely to be of most use to groups that are in the early stages of thinking about safeguarding, or who want to start again from scratch. If your group has already done some work in this area, you may find the NSPCC Standards, set out in our self-assessment tool and resources, more relevant to your needs.



# What is safeguarding?

We are using the word 'safeguarding' to mean the process of protecting children and young people from harm – whether this is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse, neglect (deliberate or not) or factors like bullying, prejudiced attitudes or a failure to enable them to participate in activities that are open to most children and young people.

In terms of children and young people under the age of 18, 'child protection' has a narrower definition than 'safeguarding', and is just one aspect of it. We use it to refer to the process of protecting individual children who are identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

This guide is primarily concerned with the child protection aspect of safeguarding, but also covers some areas within the wider safeguarding agenda.

Various types and categories of abuse and neglect are set out in legislation and guidance relating to children and young people. The principal types of abuse are listed in the Working Together Guidance (2016),

available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). The guidance lists physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. It recognises that, in addition, there are recently emerged variations and types of abuse, such as sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and other abuse associated with culture and belief. There is also recognition that much abuse of children and young people is now perpetrated online.

A child protection response may be necessary in any case where a child or young person under the age of 18 may have been abused or may be at risk of abuse. For children and young people who are deemed by statutory services not to be at active risk of abuse, but are nonetheless assessed as being in need of additional support, 'early help' may be offered.

'Safeguards' are measures that an organisation can put in place to help reduce the risk of children, young people and adults being harmed; many of them may be similar to some of the components of a preventative or early help approach. They may also include policies, processes,

procedures and measures to guide staff and volunteers in what to do if they are concerned that a child or young person may be at risk, and to empower children, young people and/or their families to seek help if they are worried.

Good safeguarding practice when working with children and young people needs to pay close attention to issues around information sharing and consent. Care also needs to be taken in respect of older teenagers with care and support needs who move from children's to adult services and who may be at points of transition in their lives. At such times, they may be at risk of increased vulnerability and may become casualties of a lack of coherence between children's and adult services. The SEND guidance and the chapter on Transition to adult care and support in the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016, at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), provides more information on this.

Safeguarding responsibilities do not, of course, stop when a young person reaches 18, particularly if the young person has care and support needs. However, the legislative framework changes and the most important piece of legislation switches from the two Children Acts (1989 and 2004) to the Care Act 2014. The Special educational needs and disability (SEND) Code of Practice is also an important document for those working with young people with care and support needs who are moving from children's to adult services. If you are working with any young adults over the age of 18, you may find it helpful to refer to the booklet that sets out our NSPCC Safeguarding Standards, available on our website.

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The website for the Social Care Institute for Excellence, [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk), has a wealth of useful information relating to safeguarding young adults.

# Why do voluntary and community groups need safeguards if they work with children and young people?

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While most children and young people in the UK grow up without suffering harm on a serious scale, it is a sad fact that some do not, and that even those whose suffering is less serious nonetheless experience hardship and distress that they should not have to endure and that can have long-lasting consequences. For example:

- Almost one in five children aged 11–17 who took part in the NSPCC’s most recent national prevalence study, published in 2011, reported having been severely maltreated (physically, sexually or by neglect) at some point in their childhood (NSPCC, 2011)
- The 2016 version of the annual NSPCC report *How Safe are our Children*, available at [www.NSPCC.org.uk](http://www.NSPCC.org.uk) includes the information from The Crime Survey for England and Wales that “in 2014/15, 5.7 per cent of 10–15-year-olds in England

and Wales were the victim of a violent crime. Of these offences, 67 per cent resulted in an injury to the victim. An estimated 373,000 violent offences were experienced by children aged 10–15 in 2014/15.” (ONS, 2015)

- *How Safe are our Children?* also states that in the year leading up to the report, “there were more than 23,000 Childline counselling sessions with children about their experiences of abuse and neglect, and a rise in the number of counselling sessions with young people about suicidal feelings.”
- It also makes reference to the link between childhood abuse and adult mental health issues, stating that, “One research study in the US found that nine out of ten children who experienced abuse or neglect in their early years went on to have at least one psychiatric diagnosis before they reached adulthood.” (Sroufe et al, 2005)

- Stonewall found that 55 per cent of gay, lesbian and bisexual young people experienced homophobic bullying (Guasp, 2012, *The School Report* (2012), available at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)).
- Research carried out by the Lankelly Chase Foundation and others, published in 2014, considered the underlying causes of risk and disadvantage for women and girls. It found that, in Britain, 1 in 4 women experience physical violence perpetrated by a partner at some time in their lives. There is an accumulation of risk over the life course and the poorest outcomes are for those who experience abuse and violence as both children and as adults. Many of the negative outcomes of violence and abuse increase the risk of further victimisation; women who become homeless, misuse drugs and/or are involved in criminality are highly likely to experience further violence.

## **So, what has all this to do with voluntary and community groups?**

The answer is that activities and groups run in local communities by organisations in the voluntary, community and faith sectors are key providers of services to many thousands of children and young people every year. Leaders and adult helpers in these groups have a great deal of contact with many of the children and young people who attend, as well as with their families. Under the law (the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004) and under government guidance on how organisations should work together, we have a responsibility to contribute to the safeguarding of the children and young people we work with, and to act on any concerns that someone is at risk of abuse. In addition, we need to make sure that the way we ourselves work with children and young people keeps them safe and does not place them at unacceptable risk of harm. Creating and implementing safeguards is the route by which these responsibilities can be met.

# How can I use this guide to create safeguards for my group?

The guide offers a simple, step-by-step approach (we describe it as ‘a pathway to safer practice’) to developing and acting on a plan for putting safeguards in place.



## How to use this guide

- Read through the nine steps in the guide.
- Begin working through the steps one by one. Take your time, and make sure you get help.
- Use the references in order to open pages on the NSPCC website that help you work through each step. The guide and the website also suggest other resources that you might find useful. Bookmark and save pages from the website as you need to, and put them together in a folder organised into the different steps. Keep the folder together with this guide. You can use a hard copy folder if it is your preference, or you can keep your resources as e-copies.
- Use the wallchart that comes with the guide to note down the aspects of safe practice you already have in place, and to record your planned actions from each step.
- The wallchart becomes the written record of your plan. Display it in a prominent and convenient place, and tick off the planned actions as you complete them.
- If you prefer to use visual images or symbols rather than text to record actions and planned actions on the wallchart, then that is fine – as long as everybody knows what the images and symbols mean.
- Use the wallchart stickers to plot your progress along the pathway.
- As you create new documents (such as new policies and procedures), keep copies of them in your folder along with the extra pages from the website.

## You are ready to go!

By now, we hope you will be keen to know what the nine steps are, so turn to the next page and let's get started!

# The nine steps along your pathway to safer practice

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## Step 1 – Assessing the risks

Use the exercises and checklist to see what your group has or has not got in place.

## Step 2 – Identifying leaders

Decide on who is going to be your 'designated person' for child protection/safeguarding and be clear about their role.

## Step 3 – Getting support

Make sure that everyone understands why it is important to develop safeguards. Use one of the various films that are available to help your trustees/management committee, or children, young people and parents/carers to discuss the issues.

## Step 4 – Writing a safeguarding policy

Be clear about why your group needs a policy, and make sure you include what needs to be in it.

## Step 5 – Writing procedures

Create your basic safeguarding procedures.

## Step 6 – Setting a code of behaviour

Write a code of behaviour for your group so that everyone knows what is expected of them.

## Step 7 – Employing the right people

Make sure you do what you can to have the best people working for you, and that they are safe to work with children and young people.

## Step 8 – Getting informed – need to know topics

Make sure that you know about the issues in this section. Your knowledge will help to keep children and young people safe.

## Step 9 – Putting it into practice

What needs to be done to make sure your group's safeguards work? This final step will bring your safeguarding arrangements alive and help you to know that they are effective.



A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a bright yellow raincoat, is sitting at a table and painting. She is holding a paintbrush and looking towards the camera with a smile. The background shows a large window with a view of a cityscape. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The overall atmosphere is cheerful and creative.

# Step 1: Assessing the risks

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# Step 1

## Assessing the risks

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For some groups, children or young people may not be the main focus of the activity. For example, the main focus might be arts, music, drama, worship, or managing an illness or disability. Your group may be for adults, which also provides activities for children and young people, like a summer school or weekend club. You may already be doing many positive things that keep children and young people safe, and it is helpful to remember these. Equally, as you think about your contact with children and young people, there may be areas where you think you could do better.

Try this three-part exercise to help you get a real picture of the part that children and young people play in your group and the ways in which you can and could in future keep them safe. Make sure you write down your thoughts and ideas.

### **Exercise Part One – Mapping your contact with children and young people**

Think about the main activities or services that your group provides for children and young people, and the other ways in which it comes into contact with them.

It might be helpful to draw a mind map to show the different ways that children and young people have contact with your group., Write down what they are (for example, face-to-face, every day, once a week, occasionally or rarely, via email or internet) and the different activities they relate to.

Also, think about the children's and young people's:

- age
- disability
- gender
- religion
- ethnic background
- sexual orientation
- language needs, including different communication methods, such as Braille or sign language

The clearer you can be about the children and young people involved with your group, the better your safeguards will meet their needs.

### Exercise Part Two – What you do well

Community groups are usually very committed to protecting children and young people. There are likely to be many things that you already do that keep them safe, and you will need to build these into your safeguards. They may not be obviously linked to child protection or written down formally, but if you have an example of good practice, use it and share it.

Think about the strengths of your group and write them down.

Your headings could cover:

- the way children and young people are cared for and valued
- the way you are able to welcome and include children and young people from many different backgrounds or who have different characteristics in terms of disability, age, gender, or sexual orientation
- understanding of children's and young people's specific needs (for example, age or ability)
- communication with all children and young people and asking them what they think
- the contact/involvement of the local community
- the staff's commitment and attitude to children and young people
- the way the group is managed
- existing policies and procedures
- staff training
- how staff are recruited.

You could add more as you think of them.

### Exercise Part Three – What are the gaps and risks?

Here is a checklist of some of the main safeguards to have in place. Go down the checklist and tick off whether you have them or not.

You may have other safeguards specific to your group or activity. You can add them in the spaces at the bottom of the checklist. Think about the safeguarding issues that might come up because of the types of children and young people you have contact with, or the types of activities they are involved in.

For example:

- deaf or disabled children and young people
- activities involving changing clothes, such as dance costumes
- one-to-one contact
- danger of favouritism or special treatment for children who are particularly good at an activity and that makes others feel left out or worthless.

This guide may not have all the resources to develop safeguards for specific areas you identify, but it will provide you with signposts and other references that will help.

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Does your group have...?	Yes	No
A child protection/safeguarding policy and a procedure for what to do if there are concerns about a child's or young person's welfare or if there are concerns or allegations about an adult's behaviour towards a child or young person (including a member of staff or volunteer)?		
A designated person for child protection/safeguarding who deals with concerns or allegations of abuse?		
A rigorous recruitment and selection process for paid staff and volunteers who work with children and young people?		
A written code of behaviour that outlines good practice when working with children and young people?		
Regular support and supervision of staff and volunteers, together with a training plan and regular opportunities for them to learn about child protection and safeguarding, dealing with bullying, and about health and safety?		
A whistle-blowing policy. This is an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice any concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour?		
Information for children, young people and for parents or carers about your safeguarding arrangements and where to go for help?		
Commitment to safeguarding from within the highest level in your organisation, and a protective culture that puts children's and young people's interests first? – children and young people must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.		
Guidance on e-safety, including internet use, use of mobile devices, photographs, video/digital equipment and websites, chatrooms and games?		



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# Step 2: Identifying leaders

## Step 2

### Identifying leaders

There are two important roles in safeguarding children and young people:

1. Leading the development of safeguards, for example, by using this guide.
2. Being the designated person for child protection.

One person could undertake both of these roles in your group or it could be shared. Either option is fine, but the most important thing is that someone takes on the responsibilities and that the person or people doing this get the full backing of the most senior people in the group – including the trustees or management board members if you have them. If you can identify a deputy to cover absences, this is even better. This section will help you decide who will take the lead and make sure safeguards are put in place.

#### **A designated person**

It is good practice for all groups, however small, to identify at least one person (the 'designated person') to be responsible for dealing with concerns or worries about children and young people, and with allegations of abuse against staff or volunteers. Everyone in the group should know who this is and how to contact them. In many smaller groups, this person is often the leader, manager or officer-in-charge. Having a designated



person is an essential element of the NSPCC Safeguarding Standards for the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

The designated person's role is to:

- receive and record information from anyone who has concerns
- assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to
- consult initially with a statutory child protection agency, such as the local children's social care teams (previously called social services and education departments), or the NSPCC (0808 800 5000, text 88858) to talk about any doubts
- make a formal referral when required to a statutory child protection agency or the police.



It is not the designated person's responsibility to decide whether a child or young person has been abused or not. This is the task of children's social care who have the legal responsibility, or of the NSPCC, which also has powers to help with child protection concerns. It is, however, everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action is taken.

The designated person should know who is responsible by law for child protection in their area.

This means they should be in contact with:

- the local children's social care team
- police
- education and health authorities.

The designated person should also know about the role of the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) and the existence of local child protection procedures.

The designated person needs to know the relevant contact numbers and addresses of the statutory agencies in their area. If concerns arise, for example, when away on a trip, you should make contact with local agencies, whose details will be in the phone directory. The children's social care service for each area always has an out-of-hours duty team who can be contacted at any time.

The designated person should know what their responsibilities are, and have a basic awareness of child protection. They need to complete child protection awareness training, and read important documents. A useful starting place will be to complete the NSPCC introductory e-learning course available at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk). There are also NSPCC courses designed specifically for designated safeguarding officers, including a course specifically for those who work in smaller VCS organisations. The designated person will also find information and support on the NSPCC website ([Preventing abuse](#)).

### **A role description for the designated person**

A role description for any job or role is important because it means that both the person doing the job, and the group or organisation asking them to do it, are clear about exactly what the person's responsibilities are. The role description should also, where necessary, cover the boundaries of those responsibilities, and the person or committee the designated person should report to.

Here is an example of a role description for a designated person that combines the wider role of leading in the development of safeguards. You may find it useful to adapt it for your group, or you could insert it into the person's wider job description if they have other duties apart from acting as the designated person. You can find an electronic version of it on the NSPCC website.

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### Example role description for a designated person for child protection/safeguarding

**Employer:** Brayford Youth Club

**Hours:** 10 hours per week

**Location:** Brayford Community Centre

**Reports to:** Club management committee chair

**Grade:** Voluntary position

**DBS requirement:** Appointment to this post is subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS check

**Purpose of the role**

To take the lead role in ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place at Brayford Youth Club for keeping children and young people safe.

To promote the safety and welfare of children and young people using the youth club.

**Duties and responsibilities**

Make sure that all issues concerning the safety and welfare of children and young people who attend the youth club are properly dealt with through policies, procedures and administrative systems.

Make sure that the workers at the youth club, children/young people, parents/carers and the management committee are made aware of the procedures and what they should do if they have concerns about a child or young person.

Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child or young person who attends the youth club.

Take the lead on dealing with information that may constitute a child protection concern or an allegation about a member of staff or volunteer. This includes assessing and clarifying the information, and taking decisions where necessary in consultation with colleagues, the chair of the management committee and statutory child protection agencies.

Consult with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies, such as the local authority children's social care department and the police. This includes making formal referrals to these agencies when necessary.

Consult with the NSPCC when such support is needed.

Report regularly to the management committee.

Be familiar with and work within local inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local safeguarding children board.

Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse, and keep up to date with new developments in this area.

Attend training in issues relevant to child protection from time to time and share knowledge from that training with workers and management committee members.

Attend team meetings, supervision sessions and management meetings as arranged.

Work flexibly as may be required and carry out any other reasonable duties



# Step 3: Getting support

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## Step 3

### Getting support

Thinking about putting safeguards in place can seem like a big task, and it helps greatly if the job is not all down to one person. You may run your group by yourself, or with other volunteers who are all pressed for time. Whatever your situation, however, it is important to get the right people involved. If you are in a large group, make sure you talk to representatives from every section, as child protection and safeguarding procedures affect everyone, and everyone needs to be committed to them.

Depending on their size, some organisations may decide to form a working group. It will meet to discuss what needs to be done, or to read and comment on draft documents.

The working group might include:

- Trustees or the management committee
- Managers or leaders in the group
- People in direct care of children or young people
- People responsible for health and safety in the building
- People responsible for organising events, outings or residential trips.

There may be people in your group who know about child protection through their job or experience. If they can become involved it will be a great help. There are also other local people you could ask to help.

They might include:

- The local authority children's social care department (previously social services and education departments)
- The local safeguarding children board (LSCB)

- Other named child protection professionals in education, health or the police
- A grant-making body you work with
- Your local CVS or VCS organisation
- Support from the NSPCC

They may not always be able to help, but the important thing is to keep asking. There are other resources, books, and guidance that can help as well.

See the [NSPCC website](#) for more information.



### **Support from children, young people and families**

If at all possible, it is also very important to involve the children, young people and families using your group when you start to work on your safeguards. They will have views on what makes them feel safe already, and on what needs further work. Some of the ideas will be things that leaders and trustees will not have thought of. It will also be impossible to develop a safe culture in the group and to make the safeguards work properly if the children, young people and families involved do not contribute and do not understand the reasons for things being done in a certain way.

There are lots of methods you can use to consult with children, young people and families. There are also ways of doing it that are unlikely to work well or could be intimidating. Asking an individual young person or parent to attend a meeting full of 'official' people and to give their opinion is one example of an approach that should be avoided.

### **Some ideas of what could work well include:**

- Working with another local project that specialises in participation work
- Using resources like those developed by Participation Works ([www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)) or Kidscape ([www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk))
- Designing questionnaires that ask for people's views
- Running a participation activity that asks children and young people to talk about, draw, make a film or video diary or show by some other means what being safe in the group means
- Running a focus group for parents and carers on the same topic
- Using the short film 'I feel safe when...' (available on the NSPCC website) or another film that covers similar ground

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### Using film to raise awareness and prompt discussion

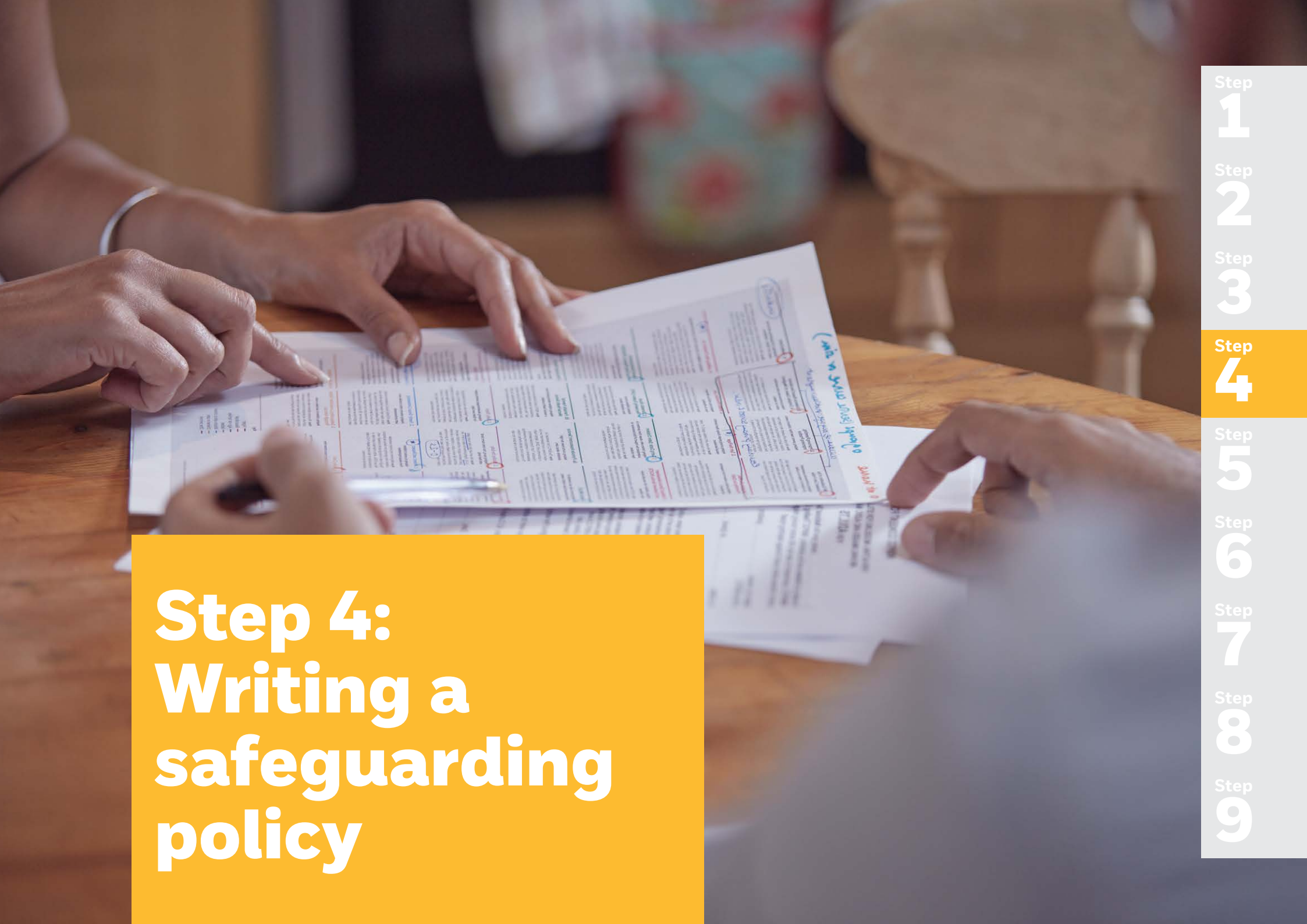
The short film referred to above is upbeat and positive; it provides you with a helpful way of raising awareness about safeguarding and starting discussion on why it is important in your group. The comments made by children in the film also suggest various safeguards that you can put in place, some of which match the steps in this guide. The children in this film are relatively young and the footage does not contain accounts of abuse or images that could be distressing. There are other films available that are more difficult to watch for these reasons, but you may feel that such a film would be more appropriate for your audience. Faith groups may prefer one of the films in our [Multi-faith Safeguarding Hub](#).

The best way to use film is in the context of a meeting or group session. You can pause at any point to allow time for discussions or exercises with your audience.

Remember that talking about child abuse can bring difficult feelings or memories to the surface for some people, so be sure to:

- watch the film (or any other film you intend to use in its place) yourself first and think about its impact on your audience;
- speak individually before the session to anyone you think might be particularly affected;
- make sure you know what to do with any disclosure that someone may make to you after they have seen the film;
- run the session together with another person so that you can support each other;
- provide information about where people can go for help if they have been affected;
- acknowledge the emotional impact of the subject with the audience at the beginning of the session;
- leave time at the end of the session in case anyone needs space to talk to you on a one-to-one basis.





# Step 4: Writing a safeguarding policy

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## Step 4

### Writing a safeguarding policy

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A child protection or child safeguarding policy is a written statement that makes it clear to staff, parents, children and young people what the group thinks about safeguarding, and what it will do to keep children and young people safe. This section tells you what the purpose of a child protection or safeguarding policy is and what should be in it.

#### **The purpose of a child protection or safeguarding policy**

The purpose of the policy is to show clearly that the group takes the safety of children and young people seriously, and that it expects its staff, volunteers and trustees to do so too. It sets out the overarching principles that underpin the group's child protection and safeguarding procedures and systems.

#### **A child protection or safeguarding policy states:**

- what the group wishes to say about keeping children and young people safe
- why the group is taking these steps
- how, in broad terms, the group is going to meet this responsibility
- who it applies and relates to: for example, all staff and volunteers, children and young people up to the age of 18
- how the group will put the policy into action and how it links to other relevant policies and procedures, such as taking photographs and videos, internet use, and recruitment.

It should be no longer than one or two sides of A4 paper.

#### **The policy should also:**

- identify the group, its purpose and function
- recognise the needs of children and young people from the group members' (or potential members') full range of different backgrounds and identities, and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy
- include a commitment to making sure that everyone, including children and young people, is aware of and understands your safeguards
- include arrangements for the regular review of the policy and related procedures.

#### **All children and young people have the right to be protected**

Children and young people who have a disability, come from a different ethnic or cultural group or are perceived as 'different' in some way can easily become victims of discrimination and prejudice. Any discrimination is harmful to a child's or young person's wellbeing, and may mean that they do not obtain

the services they need to keep them safe.

Your group needs to make sure that all children and young people have the same protection, and your policy needs to say that this is your belief. In trying to get help for children and young people, you will work with other professionals who might make the wrong assumptions because of prejudice or ignorance.

You and your staff know the children and young people you work with and must make sure any discrimination is challenged so that disabled children and young people or those from different ethnic or cultural groups find the services they need.

#### **An example of a child protection or safeguarding policy**

Having a child protection or safeguarding policy is an essential element of our NSPCC VCS Standard on Child Protection. You can find an example of one on our website (here). We have reproduced it on the following page for you – perhaps you could adapt it to create the child protection or safeguarding policy for your group.

**(Example)****Our child protection policy**

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of (name of group/organisation).

**The purpose of this policy:**

- To protect children and young people who receive (name of group/organisation)'s services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

(Name of group/organisation) believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

**Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance which seeks to protect children and young people, namely:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0–25 years: Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015

- Working together to safeguarding children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015

**This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:**

- Recruitment, induction and training
- Role of the designated safeguarding officer
- Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Recording and information sharing
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Safer recruitment
- E-safety
- Anti-bullying
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety
- Training, supervision and support
- Lone working policy and procedure
- Quality assurance

**We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children and young people, 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
- some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of their level of dependency or their communication needs
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's and young people's welfare

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**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people, a deputy and a lead board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, one-to-one discussions
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

**Contact details**

- Designated safeguarding person (DSP)
- Deputy DSP
- Senior lead for safeguarding
- Children’s Social Care
- Emergency duty team in Children’s Social Care
- Designated person in local authority for managing allegations against staff
- Police
- CEOP  
www.ceop.police.uk
- NSPCC Helpline  
0808 800 5000

**We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually and when there are significant changes in legislation or internal to our organisation.**

This policy was last reviewed on: ..... (date)

Person responsible for overseeing review:  
(enter name of person – usually DSP)

Signed: .....  
(this should be signed by the most senior person in your organisation eg the safeguarding lead on your board of trustees)

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: ..... (date)



# Step 5: Writing procedures

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## Step 5

### Writing procedures

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Child protection and safeguarding procedures are detailed guidelines that tell everyone what to do in situations where child protection or safeguarding could be a concern. It is very important to have clear instructions to ensure that there is a speedy and effective response for dealing with issues around the safety of a child or young person.

Think about the ways in which worries may be raised, as this will help the procedures to work well.

For instance:

- A child or young person may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them, or that has happened to another child or young person
- Someone else might report that a child or young person has told them, or that they strongly believe, that a child or young person has been or is being harmed in some way
- A child or young person might show signs of physical injury or neglect, for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child's or young person's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- The behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child or young person may worry you or make you feel uncomfortable in some way
- Someone might make an allegation that a worker or volunteer has harmed a child or young person or behaved inappropriately towards them
- You may witness worrying behaviour from one child or young person to another.

#### **Bullying**

Our understanding about the impact of bullying on children and young people increases each year and it is vital that groups have clear guidelines about bullying, its consequences and the support available to those involved. There are times when bullying can reach the threshold where children or young people are being abused or at risk of being abused. It is the group's responsibility to act appropriately to ensure this is dealt with effectively.

### **Making sure everyone can access your procedures**

You will need to make sure that everyone is able to understand and use the procedures, regardless of the language they use or whether they have a disability. This may mean providing the procedures in different languages for anyone whose preferred language is not English, or in other formats for disabled people, such as Braille or large text.

### **What procedures should you have?**

There are a number of procedures in the NSPCC VCS Safeguarding Standards. They include:

- A procedure for dealing with situations where a child or young person says that they are being abused or is showing signs of abuse or neglect
- Procedures for managing allegations against someone in your group (either an adult or another child/young person)
- Whistleblowing and complaints procedures
- An anti-bullying procedure
- A procedure for reporting accidents


The toolbox resources provide you with templates for all these procedures, but you will need to adapt them so that they suit the needs of your organisation.

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### Some general guidelines to writing procedures

- Make sure that you state the purpose and aim of each procedure.
- Be clear about to whom the procedure applies. For example, this should include all those in contact with children and young people, even if it is not their main job to look after them – like the caretaker, for example.
- Provide a summary of useful information relevant to the procedure. For example, it is helpful to include a description of the different categories of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect) in your procedures on what to do if you have a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse, and your procedures on managing allegations against staff members, volunteers or another child/young person. These procedures could also contain examples of signs and indicators that might give cause for concern.
- Provide clear directions on the steps you expect people to take when following each procedure. Flow charts and diagrams can help make the procedure clearer. Ask people in your group to check the procedure while it is still in draft form. It is all too easy to think that you are being clear when in fact there may be something confusing or contradictory in what you have written.
- Include details of key people who should be informed, including their contact numbers. State whose job it is to tell them and the timescales for doing so. It is important that staff and volunteers do not feel on their own when dealing with a worrying situation. The procedures should encourage them to get advice and support even if their concern turns out to be nothing to worry about. Parents, children and young people also need to know who they should talk to if they are worried.
- Make sure the procedure states how, when and what information needs to be recorded. Include details like whose job it is to record it, distinguishing between fact and opinion, and where it should be stored confidentially.
- Be clear about where the procedure stands on confidentiality. The legal principle that the “welfare of the child is paramount” means that taking action to safeguard the child or young person is most important. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected, but if doing this leaves a child or young person at risk of harm, the child’s/ young person’s safety has to come first. So, legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child or young person. However, when a concern or worry is raised, not everyone needs to know about it. This respects the child’s, family’s and/or staff’s rights to privacy. So, only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise, there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned. It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the group’s procedures.
- It is not child protection but I am still concerned? Make sure your procedure does not leave children or young people without support if they need help, even if the concerns are not about abuse. You may be concerned that a child, young person or family needs some help in making sure all of a child’s/young person’s needs are met or to address a particular problem. Examples of this might be where a child or young person is suffering because of poverty, getting into trouble in the community, or has a disability and needs extra help. In these instances, you can get them help by referring to the local assessment framework used by children’s social care in your area or by helping them access their area’s ‘early help’ offer. It is appropriate for your procedures to make reference to this. Refer to your local authority website.

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt, stands in a gymnasium. He is holding a green and white dodgeball with both hands. The gymnasium has a wooden floor with yellow and blue markings. In the background, there are wooden bleachers and a blue wall. The lighting is bright and even.

# Step 6: Setting a code of behaviour

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## Step 6

### Setting a code of behaviour

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It is a good idea to think about how you expect everyone in your organisation to behave towards children and young people. This includes staff, volunteers, parents and the children and young people themselves. A code of behaviour can help to ensure that these expectations are accepted and understood.

It is important that a code of behaviour reflects the child-centred principles of the group. It should be made known to all children, young people and workers and, where possible, it should be prominently displayed, perhaps as a poster. Children and young people should be given every opportunity to learn that they have the right to be treated with respect, and that others have the right to be treated respectfully by them. They should be taught and encouraged not to put up with any behaviour from adults, children and young people that makes them feel threatened, and to avoid behaving in this way themselves. This includes face-to-face contact and also behaviour carried out using technologies like mobile devices and internet chat rooms.



It may be best to have a separate code of behaviour for adults working with children and young people, from the code for children and young people themselves, as the style of language used may need to be different and there may be a different approach to breaches of the code. However, the ethos and values underpinning each document should be the same and should include positive statements about:

- listening to each other
- valuing and respecting others in the group
- involving others, including children and young people, in decision making as appropriate
- offering praise and encouragement
- respecting differences
- cooperating with each other

There should also be a clear statement about promoting an anti-bullying environment and about dealing firmly with bullying in all its forms

Some groups have a separate policy on bullying, and we recommend that you work towards this if you do not already have it. It is a central part of our NSPCC VCS Safeguarding Standards (Standard 3) and you can find lots of help with it in our Safeguarding Tool.

Involving children and young people in the writing of the behaviour code is really important. It can help develop a clearer understanding of the reasons why the code is helpful, ensure their views are heard, and provide an element of shared ownership. Children and young people are much more likely to stick to the code and to help each other do so if they have helped create it.

As well as developing a behaviour code, you need to think about what the consequences will be if someone breaches it. For staff and volunteers, such breaches will be dealt with in supervision, and/or via the group's disciplinary processes. If the breach raises a child protection concern, then the group's child protection procedures will also need to be used. For children and young people, unless their behaviour is of such concern that it constitutes a child protection risk to other children and young people (in which case, the relevant procedure needs to be followed), the use of a traffic light system is often helpful.

You can find examples of codes of behaviour in the [Safeguarding Tool](#). An outline of a traffic light system is given here; you can also find it at the end of the example of a code of behaviour for children and young people.

### **Breaches of the code of behaviour for children and young people**

This code of behaviour is only useful if it forms part of a process for guiding children and young people to receive appropriate support.

It is the responsibility of (insert name/role) to ensure that all children and young people attending (name of group/organisation) are informed of this code of conduct and to confirm with them that they have seen, understood and agreed to follow it. Children and young people must also be made aware of the consequences if they breach the code.

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### Following the traffic light system

**1** If a child or young person breaches the code of behaviour, the most appropriate sanction for a minor or first time breach will be to remind him or her about the code of behaviour and ask him or her to comply with it. Children and young people will be given the opportunity to reflect, enabling them to plan a positive response, with support from either staff or mentors.

**2** If, having followed the above step, the child or young person continues to exhibit inappropriate behaviour, they should be referred to the appropriate member of staff who will give them a formal, green light warning. Supportive interventions may need to be identified at this stage. The action should also be recorded in the discipline book and parents/carers informed.

**3** Any further persistent inappropriate behaviour will result in a more serious sanction being imposed (eg restriction/suspension from the project facilities). This is the yellow light warning. Again, supportive interventions may need to be identified at this stage. This action should also be recorded in the discipline book and parents/carers informed.

**4** If these interventions are still not effective in helping the child/young person to change his or her behaviour, a red light warning may be needed, with further sanctions. It may be that at this point, (name of group/organisation) will discuss with the child or young person and their family a possible referral for further support from other services.

### Use of child protection procedures

If staff at (name of group/organisation) become concerned that a child's or young person's behaviour suggests either that they may be at risk of significant harm or that they may present a risk of significant harm to other children or young people, (name of group/organisation)'s child protection procedures will

be followed and a referral may be made to the local authority children's social care service.

Such a referral would be discussed with the child and their family at the earliest possible opportunity, except in situations where this would possibly endanger a child's or young person's safety or interfere with a police investigation.





A man and a woman are shown in a meeting. The man, in the foreground, is wearing a dark button-down shirt and has a beard. He is looking thoughtfully to the right, with his hand resting on his chin and holding a pen. The woman, in the background, is wearing a grey top and has her hair in braids. She is also looking towards the right. The background is a blurred office setting.

# Step 7: Employing the right people

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## Step 7

### Employing the right people

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Whatever activities the group or project provides for children or young people, you will want to make sure that you have the best people for the job. Selecting an unsuitable person can have grave consequences for the children and young people themselves, and for your group and its reputation.

Some people who harm children and young people appear very trustworthy and may hold important positions in the community. You should not take anything on trust or make assumptions based on someone's job or position.

Here are some tips to help you recruit safely. They apply to recruiting both paid and unpaid people of all ages, including young people themselves:

#### Define the role and develop selection criteria

Consider the tasks and skills necessary for the job and what kind of person is most suited to it. Decide how the person should behave with children and young people, and what attitudes you want to see. Develop a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience, and select against this.

#### Plan your recruitment process and prepare your paperwork

Work out your timetable for the different stages in the process, and make sure you have all the paperwork ready to send to applicants. This should include:

- A covering letter
- An application form (which includes personal details, and past and current work/volunteering experience)
- A confidential declaration form. (This can ask various questions, such as previous periods of living overseas, involvement in disciplinary investigations due to concerns about their behaviour towards children/young people, history of convictions etc. You need to check that the role for which that the person is applying entitles you to ask for the information on the form – see example in the [Safeguarding Tool](#))

- Some information about the job and about your group
- A copy of your child protection policy and your policy for recruiting ex-offenders.

You can find examples of application forms, policies etc in the [Safeguarding Tool](#).

### Advertise the vacancy

Circulate all vacancies widely – for example, by putting them on noticeboards in shops or the local library.

### Review all applications for the role and create a shortlist of suitable applicants

Use your selection criteria to help you shortlist.

### Decide on your interview questions and tests

Try to make sure that your questions and interview exercises test whether the applicants have the necessary tasks, skills and attitudes for the job.

### Conduct your interviews

Preferably at least two representatives from the group should meet with an applicant to discuss information contained in their form, and to explore their attitudes towards and motives for working with children and young people, plus anything in the form (such as gaps in employment history) that you would like to know more about. The interview also provides an opportunity to discuss your child protection policy and to ensure that the applicant has the ability and commitment to meet the standards required for the job.

To give you a better picture of each candidate, it is helpful to include interview methods like an exercise, role-play or presentation.

### Check identity

Ask for photographic documentation to confirm identity, such as a passport or driving licence, and a recent gas or electric bill that contains their address.

### Qualifications

Ask to see the original documents if they are relevant to the job.

### References

Ask for written references from at least two people who are not family members and, ideally, who have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work or contact with children or young people. If there are doubts, follow up with a telephone call.

### DBS checks

Visit DBS eligibility information on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for information and useful resources about checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

If the job involves work that is classed as Regulated Activity (see below), then, provided the person is at least 16 years of age, you will be able to ask for a DBS check on the person, which includes a check of the barred list for children and young people. In other situations, such as becoming a trustee of a children's charity or working on a regular basis with children and young people (frequency not defined but it could be less than the once per week minimum required for Regulated Activity), the role might qualify for an enhanced check that does not include a barred list check.

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### Regulated Activity

Regulated Activity is work that you must not do if you are barred from working with children and young people. It includes:

1. Unsupervised activities\*: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice/guidance on wellbeing, or driving a vehicle only for children
2. Work for a limited range of establishments\* ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises (but not work by supervised volunteers)
3. Relevant personal care, such as washing, dressing or health care, either by or supervised by a professional
4. Registered childminding and foster care.

It is illegal to have someone working on either a paid or unpaid basis in Regulated Activity if they are barred.

\*Work under (1) or (2) is Regulated Activity only if done regularly. In this context, 'regular' means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on four or more days in a 30-day period (or in some cases, overnight)


### Supervision and Regulated Activity

Work undertaken under categories (1) or, in the case of volunteers, either (1) or (2), is defined as Regulated Activity only if it is not 'supervised at a reasonable level'. It is up to organisations themselves to decide whether the supervision they can provide is 'reasonable', ie enough to protect the children and young people with whom the person is working. There is government guidance, available [online](#) to help with this.

### Agency staff and those who are self-employed

If you are using staff that you have recruited via an agency, and you are not dealing with all the checks and references yourself, make sure that you are very clear with the agency that the relevant checks have been made and are satisfactory. Ask the agency for written confirmation of this.

If you are self-employed or working on a freelance basis, you cannot apply for a DBS check on yourself. However, you could register with an agency and they can ask for the check, or you could apply to your local police for a 'subject access' check, or a basic check via [Disclosure Scotland](#) (even if you do not live in Scotland).



**Step 8:  
Getting  
informed –  
need to know  
topics**

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## Step 8

### Getting informed - need to know topics for keeping children and young people safe

Listed below are some topics that you need to think about in relation to your own group. Children and young people affected by some of these issues can be more vulnerable to harm or abuse than others who do not have these additional issues to deal with. In other cases, the topics are simply areas that it is important to know about.

You can search for all of these issues on [www.NPSCC.org.uk](http://www.NPSCC.org.uk). Where possible we have also directed you to other places for information, advice and resources to help you respond to issues appropriately.

You might not be able to do everything straight away, but, where you need more time, you can write future actions into your plan. Many of the topics are also covered in our [Standards and Safeguarding Tool](#).

#### Abuse of trust

A 'position of trust' is said to exist in situations where someone over 18 has responsibility or authority in the life of someone under 18. It may be because the older person works with the child or young person when the younger person attends or uses a service where the older person works or volunteers. It may be because the older person cares for, or has sole charge of the younger person in the community. An 'abuse of trust' is when the older person exploits this relationship to intimidate the younger person, to abuse them or to encourage them to do things that are illegal, harmful or unhelpful to the younger person. The law defines specific roles (such as that of a teacher or foster carer, for example) and settings (such as schools, hospitals or young offender institutions) where sexual activity between a 16- and 17-year-old (who would in other circumstances be deemed to be able to give consent) and someone in a position of trust is a criminal offence.

#### Avoiding accidents

Children and young people can be seriously hurt or even killed in accidents, and it is important that you do what you can to prevent accidental injuries – particularly serious ones – in your group. Equally, children and young people cannot grow and thrive without taking some risks, and you will want to have a group where children and young people can be adventurous without their adult leaders having to worry all the time about the possibility that things could go wrong. See [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk), [www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk) and [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

#### Bullying

Bullying can take many forms, and its harmful impact on children's and young people's wellbeing is often underestimated. We have already referred in Step 6 to the importance of creating an anti-bullying environment and a policy on bullying, and if you want to do more work on this, there is plenty of help available. See [Bullying](#), [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) and [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

#### Categories of abuse

It is important for all staff and volunteers working with children and young people in your group to have a basic understanding of the different types of abuse and of some of the signs and symptoms that can indicate that a child or young person may be at risk. Reading information about this is, of course, helpful, but needs to be backed up with training and face-to-face awareness-raising. See [Abuse categories](#).

#### Can I spot an abuser?

There is no clear-cut way to identify someone who will harm children and young people. People who pose a threat of abuse can be skilled at making sure no one knows or no-one feels able to ask questions. Make sure your staff and volunteers understand how abusers can operate and feel comfortable with seeking advice if they are worried. They also need to know the right person to contact in such circumstances.

## Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Children and young people can be seriously harmed by being involved in the sex industry. The vast majority do not do so voluntarily: they are forced into it, or are tempted, or are desperate. They should be treated as survivors of abuse and have their needs carefully assessed. Some of the children and young people you work with could be at risk in this way; make sure you are aware of the signs of this type of abuse and find out where to get help.

## Common Assessment Framework

You may be asked to contribute to an assessment of a child or young person under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or under a local framework used in your area. This is a tool used with the consent of the parent and, if appropriate, the child or young person, in order to help early identification of need and the promotion of coordinated support.

## Deaf and disabled children and young people

Children and young people who are deaf or who have a disability can sometimes be more vulnerable to abuse than those who can hear or are not disabled. They can also sometimes miss out on being included in community activities because of being seen as different or because people are worried about how to meet their needs. Find out more about why they can be more vulnerable, and how you can protect them and include them in your group.

## Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence, or domestic abuse, as it is sometimes known, is not just about physical violence towards a partner. It can take many forms, be dangerous for children and young people as well as adults, and have a very detrimental effect on children's and young people's wellbeing.

## Faith and culture

We live in a society enriched by many different cultures and where a number of different faiths are practised. Faith and culture are key aspects of our identity, and our perspective on safeguarding and child protection is deeply affected by them. See our [Multi-Faith Safeguarding Hub](#) for more information.

## Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is a criminal offence in the UK. It involves the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-medical reasons.

## Forced marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage without the full consent of both parties and where pressure or threats are a factor, [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) has a Forced Marriage Unit which offers help and support in such cases.

## Homophobia

Homophobia is fear or hostility towards people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. It can surface anywhere in families or in the community and is a major cause of bullying in schools. Homophobia causes a great deal of harm and distress to children and young people, regardless of their sexual orientation. It is important for those working with children and young people to challenge homophobia if they encounter it in their groups. Sometimes children and young people (or adults, for that matter) can use homophobic language in a way that may not be intended to cause offence or distress but may nonetheless do so; for example, by using the word 'gay' in a derogatory way. See [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk).

## Honour crimes

These are criminal acts like assaults, abduction and murder, carried out in the name of family honour. See information on honour based violence at <http://safe.met.police.uk>

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**9****Information sharing and confidentiality**

Balancing a child's or young person's right to privacy with the need to work positively with their parents and carers can be a difficult task for staff and volunteers working with children, young people and their families. It can be equally difficult to know where the boundaries to confidentiality have to be drawn when a child's or young person's safety is at risk.

**Local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs)**

LSCBs are the key multi-agency partnerships in every area of the country for organisations to come together to agree and monitor local child safeguarding policy and practice between the various agencies involved. The purpose of the partnership is for organisations to hold each other to account and to ensure that the effective safeguarding of children and young people remains high on the agenda across each region. LSCBs produce local guidance and procedures that you should try to obtain and become familiar with.

**Peer sexual abuse**

It is not always adults who abuse children and young people. Sometimes, the perpetrators are other children. It is important to recognise that even quite young children may engage in sexual play and experimenting appropriate to their age and that this is quite normal and not harmful. However, when the behaviour is abusive, it needs to be dealt with – both for the sake of the victim and for the sake of the child or young person whose behaviour is causing the problem.

**Physical chastisement and smacking**

Parents and others acting 'in loco parentis' in the UK are currently allowed to use 'reasonable chastisement' when disciplining their children (unless, as in the case of schools, they are forbidden to do so by virtue of other laws). However, any physical punishment that leaves visible marks constitutes a criminal offence. It is also widely accepted that hurting children and young people is not the best way to teach them right from wrong, and that there are much better and more effective ways of disciplining them. Parents, children and young people should

be made aware of your policy on physical punishment. See <http://www.childrenareunbeatable.org.uk/>

**Possession, witchcraft and other spiritual or religious beliefs that can cause harm to children and young people**

Most cultural practices, traditions and faiths provide protection to children and young people. Sometimes, however, the interpretation of beliefs and rituals can be harmful to them. Some high-profile cases, such as Victoria Climbié and Kristy Bamu, have highlighted that some families believe strongly that adults, children and young people may be possessed by evil spirits, and their response to this can be abusive and dangerous. See [www.ccpas.org.uk](http://www.ccpas.org.uk) and [www.afruca.org/](http://www.afruca.org/)

**Private fostering**

Local authorities have a legal duty to oversee private fostering arrangements. These are situations where the care of a child or young person is arranged with someone other than a parent or close relative for 28 days or more. See information on Private Fostering at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

**Racism**

It is essential that all those who work with children and young people have a good understanding of what racism is, the harm it can cause, and how to deal with it.

**Recording and storing information**

Most groups need to keep some information about who attends their activities, their contact details and any specific needs they may have. For some groups, the level of record keeping goes much further than this. Whatever your practice is, there are some important principles about what personal information about other people you should record, how you should do it, and how you should keep it safe. See [Recording and storing information](#).

### Resources for children and young people

There are a number of high quality resources available to help children and young people understand and be aware of safeguarding matters. They cover issues as wide as domestic violence, bullying, personal safety, sexuality, sexual relationships, mental health, the different types of abuse, where to get help and many other topics.

### Resources for parents and carers

Likewise, there is a wealth of resources for parents and carers. Some of the topics covered include positive discipline, how to hold and care for young babies, how to listen to children and young people, how to keep them safe when they are out alone, dealing with stress, protecting children and young people from abuse, preventing accidents in the home and many others.

### Safeguarding children and young people in sport

Getting involved in sport can benefit children and young people in numerous ways, and many thousands of children participate in sport either at school or in their own time throughout the year. Making sure that they can enjoy sport safely is obviously very important, and the [NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit](#) has resources to help all involved do just that.

### Sex and young people

Sex and relationships are important issues for all young people, and those who work with them need to be equipped to support them as they learn to deal with these aspects of their lives. However, it is important that parents and carers are made aware if you intend to raise these issues, particularly with younger children and adolescents. Staff and volunteers also need to consider issues linked to disability and cultural identity, and know the legal position around young people's consent to sexual relationships.

### Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) Trafficking

Serious case reviews are conducted by a local safeguarding children board (LSCB) if abuse or neglect is believed to have been a factor in the death of a child or young person, or if it is thought to have been a factor in a child or young person being seriously harmed and there are concerns about the multi-agency working in the case. There are also other situations in which an SCR must or may be carried out. Occasionally, voluntary or community sector groups can be involved in these reviews if they have had some involvement with the child, young person or their family. .

### Signs and symptoms of abuse

As with the various categories of abuse (see [add page number]), it is very important that staff and volunteers working with children and young people have some knowledge of the signs and indicators that can be suggestive of abuse.

Children and young people have been trafficked into the UK for domestic service, benefit fraud, and to be sexually exploited and abused. Methods like threats, deception or force have been used to make them comply and then to keep them in abusive or oppressive situations. It is important for you and your workforce to be aware of these issues in order to increase the likelihood that these children and young people are identified and supported.

### Transgender and transsexual issues

A person who is transgender (sometimes simply referred to as 'trans') is someone who does not conform to typically accepted gender roles or who identifies themselves as being of a different gender from the one to which they have been assigned. The word 'transsexual' is sometimes used if the person who identifies themselves as being of a different gender has progressed further along the transition process from one gender to another. Issues around gender identity often emerge in adolescence but could



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become evident much earlier in childhood. Further information and support is available from a variety of sources, including the NHS. See [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

### **Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children**

These are children or young people under the age of 18 who are seeking asylum, but are not living with their parents, relatives or guardians in the UK. Local authorities have a duty of care towards them.

### **Use of digital technologies/ social media**

The development of the internet, social networking sites, chat rooms, Twitter and mobile devices and other new technologies brings great benefits and opportunities to children and young people but can also carry risks that are exploited by some who want to abuse children. Children and

young people can also use them to bully or humiliate others. Your group needs to think through its own use of such technologies to ensure that they are being used safely. You also need to think about how you can encourage children and young people to keep themselves safe in the virtual world. Parents and carers may also need support in thinking through how they can best support their children and keep informed on new developments in technology.

### **Working alone with children**

In general, it is best practice to ensure that there is another adult nearby, within sight and hearing, when you are working with children and young people. However, sometimes this is not possible or appropriate, and there are other safeguards that you can put in place.

### **Working in partnership**

Working in partnership with other agencies, as well as with children and young people themselves and their families, is vital to keeping children and young people safe. If you are in contact with other agencies about a particular child or young person, it is important that they and their family know about it. Working with other agencies may be done on an informal basis or it may be part of a more formal basis, such as a Common Assessment, a support package or a core group for a child or young person who is the subject of a child protection plan.

### **Young adults at risk**

Some young people, even if they are over 18, can still be at risk of abuse. This may be due to family or personal circumstances, to drug or alcohol use, or exposure to risks

of exploitation, radicalisation or victimisation. Disability or issues around physical or mental health can increase a young person's vulnerability to such abuse in some circumstances. As already suggested, the principles of the safeguards described in this guide still apply even if the vulnerable young person is over 18, and you should still take action if you are worried. See our booklet on our Safeguarding Standards for further information.

### **Young carers**

A significant number of children and young people have a main caring role in their family due to the illness or disability of a parent or other adult living at home. Such children and young people have specific needs of their own, which need to be assessed carefully.



# Step 9: Putting it into practice

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## Step 9

### Putting it into practice

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This final step is about making sure that your safeguards work effectively. There are a number of ways in which you can do this.

#### **Making new children, young people and families welcome**

If a new person joins your group, they often need support to help them make friends and feel a part of what is going on. Our standards recommend that you send them a welcome letter, and that you have a policy that is specifically about welcoming new people – including people who may be different from the majority of the other people in the group. The policy could include providing them with a ‘buddy’ or mentor from among the other children and young people in the group, and with a link worker or volunteer who makes a special point of helping them settle in and feel comfortable without fussing over them too much. You could also put together a welcome pack for them, which could include information about your programme and about your safeguards.

See the [Bullying section](#) in our NSPCC Safeguarding Tool for the VCS for more information about making new group members welcome and encouraging more diverse membership.

#### **Induction of staff, volunteers and management board members**

New members of the team also need to be made welcome and to be provided with essential information about what is expected of them and about the group’s approach to safeguarding. They cannot be expected to follow procedures and work within policies if they do not know what they are. It is up to you to decide how best to inform new staff, volunteers and board members about what they need to know; it could be on a one-to-one basis, by asking them to read documents and then discussing them, by shadowing other staff members, or by more formal briefings or training sessions. Whatever methods you choose, we recommend that the following matters are covered as a minimum during a staff member’s, volunteer’s or board member’s induction period:

- the organisation’s child protection policy and procedures, including what to do if there are concerns about a child or young person, or

concerns or allegations about an adult, avoiding and reporting accidents, transporting children and young people, home visits and lone working, taking children and young people out and intimate care

- support/information/training about basic child protection awareness
- the behaviour code for staff and any standard behaviour code for children and young people
- procedures around keeping records, confidentiality, and the safe storage of information
- whistleblowing procedures
- information about supervision arrangements and project meetings
- a detailed discussion of the new person’s various duties and responsibilities
- information about any training they are expected to undertake

See the [Safer staff and volunteers section](#) in our NSPCC Safeguarding Tool for more information on induction support.



### Ongoing support

#### a) **for children, young people and families**

Continuing to make time to talk to children and young people both on an individual basis and in group discussions about how they are feeling and about what is happening in the group, helps to make sure that they feel safe enough to let you know about any concerns they may have. It also keeps safeguarding on the agenda in a non-threatening way, and it promotes a safe culture in your group. Parents and carers also appreciate being kept informed about the group's activities and usually value the personal contact they have with staff and volunteers, as this helps them to have confidence in the group's commitment to their children's and young people's welfare.

#### b) **for staff and volunteers**

Talking to workers about their work, and checking whether everything is OK, gives them an opportunity to discuss any concerns they have about the children and young people they are involved with. It also makes it easier to have discussions about what they are doing, including any issues that are difficult or with which they might need some help. Try to have regular times when staff and volunteers can meet with their manager or the person they are accountable to, so that a relationship of trust can build up between them. Meetings with the whole group of staff and volunteers can also be very beneficial to help the team develop, to provide training or briefings on new developments, and to work together on any issues requiring attention. However, avoid calling meetings that have no focus and no apparent purpose, as this causes frustration and makes people feel that their time is not being respected.

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**9****Training**

Opportunities for ongoing training and other ways of learning about safeguarding are important for all staff and volunteers. Relevant topics include recognising possible abuse, knowing how to respond to it, the vulnerability of some groups of children and young people, dealing with bullying, and health and safety. Those responsible for recruitment would also benefit from safer recruitment training.

There are many training providers – the [Safer staff and volunteers section](#) in our NSPCC Safeguarding Tool provides guidance on what to look for in a provider. Some training can be delivered online – see NSPCC e-learning courses available [online](#).

**Keeping policies and procedures up to date**

Policies and procedures need to be looked at regularly to make sure that they are still relevant to the work of the group and are still up to date. Set timescales to review your safeguards and make sure you know who is responsible for taking the lead in the review process. Annual reviews or reviews every two years are usually adequate.

**Audit the ways in which your safeguards are used**

Safeguards will only keep children and young people safe if they are used effectively. Ask yourself:

- Does everyone know what to do if they are worried about a child or young person? How can you be sure?
- Is everyone happy with the procedures and clear about what they are?
- Have they been used and did they work well?
- Could they be improved? If so, how?

You might want to get other people to help you with the audit, and do not forget to seek the views of children, young people and families.



# Where to go from here

Congratulations! You have completed the nine steps and your group has moved forward a long way in terms of putting safeguards in place. Make sure you celebrate your success.

Now that you have got this far, why not try out the NSPCC [Safeguarding Tool self-assessment](#) to assess your group's performance against our Safeguarding Standards for the voluntary and community sector (VCS)? The tool is very easy to use and will give you instant feedback, customised to your needs. You will find that you are well on the way to being compliant with the Standards, and you may feel that working towards total compliance is a realistic aim for your group. There are lots of resources to

help you, and being able to say that you meet the NSPCC VCS Standards will reassure families, commissioners, funders, LSCBs and other individuals and bodies who have an interest in your work. Most of all, it will enable you to know that you are maintaining your energy and commitment to do your best for the children and young people who come to your group.

All of us at the NSPCC wish you well in your work with children and young people.

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The adults and children pictured are models and volunteers.  
Photography features NSPCC staff.**