



## Safeguarding: Getting people involved

Use this page to plan how to involve staff and volunteers in safeguarding. It will also give you guidance on how you can raise awareness and how you can encourage people to speak up if they have a concern.

Safeguarding is not just about putting a series of rules, policies and procedures in place. At its core, it's about being an organisation where everyone is respected and feels safe.

Everyone in an organisation should feel they have the power to keep themselves and others safe from harm, and to report or challenge inappropriate behaviour. Effective safeguarding is done **with** people not **to** them.

### Involve people in planning

Your organisation's aims should be reflected in clear and accessible documents, policies and procedures. You can have the world's most detailed paperwork but it's the ease with which staff and volunteers use it that shows its effectiveness.

You should:

- make safeguarding part of your core organisational values and build a statement about everyone's right to be safe from harm.
- make sure everyone knows about the code of conduct, and policies and procedures relevant to their role, particularly in safeguarding.
- encourage suggestions and feedback on these key documents so you know they work well.
- lead by example – make sure your team has the confidence to call out problems as soon as they see them.
- remember that some people may have experienced harm or know people who have.
- make sure all discussions are carefully planned, with thought given to the language you use.
- make sure at least one person involved in any discussion is trained to support people who need to speak about something that's happened to them.

Ways you can do this:

- develop your code of conduct with your participants, staff and volunteers by running workshops or activities.
- set up a way for staff and volunteers from different parts of the organisation to give their views on draft documents.

This factsheet has been adapted, with minimum changes, from a series of free, online, high-quality factsheets, practical tools, podcasts and videos to promote a good safeguarding culture in charities that were developed collaboratively by an NCVO-led partnership (<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding>).

- organise discussions to explore different types of harm and how they affect people.
- talk to and regularly remind people of the organisation's values and ask them what they can do to contribute towards them.

### **Example**

Tall Towers residents association have been doing excellent safeguarding for children for many years. They realise they should be doing the same for safeguarding adults, because they don't know whether residents are at risk or not. They turn to their local voluntary services support organisation. Its safeguarding expert helps them plan and run a session for all residents to discuss types of harm including domestic violence, financial abuse and sexual harassment. They create a space for people to discuss other types of harm as well.

## **Let people know they have a right to be safe**

You must let everyone know they have a right to be safe from harm. You need to make it clear how they can speak up if they are worried about themselves or someone else. When you do this, at first you might find you have more concerns or complaints to deal with. This is normal and you should be prepared for it to happen.

Things you can do:

- give all volunteers a small card which they can keep, with a summary of what to do if they think someone's not safe.
- let people know who to contact in the organisation if they're worried about a safeguarding issue. This should include an email address and phone number which is monitored.
- have posters on display about your commitment to safeguarding, contact details and a photo of the person in charge of safeguarding.
- have posters or information for other services that people can contact if they have a worry, such as NSPCC Helpline, Childline and Action on Elder Abuse.
- make your safeguarding policy and procedures easy to find on your website.

### **Example**

Anytime Heritage Museum recently rebranded and reviewed all of their marketing materials. They created new signage in their welcome area which included information about giving feedback, complaints and what to do when you think someone is not safe. The revised volunteer handbook included a new section on safeguarding. The new website included a copy of their safeguarding policy and contact details for the person to speak to (the designated safeguarding officer).

## Encourage people to speak up

Everyone should feel comfortable talking about things that are worrying them. Your service users, staff and volunteers must have a clear understanding of the standards you expect and how they can speak out when those standards are not met.

You could:

- adopt a code of conduct which clearly states how you expect people to behave in the organisation and what's unacceptable.
- run a welcome session for volunteers and give people the opportunity to ask questions about the code of conduct.
- give staff and volunteers the opportunity to provide feedback on colleagues or speak about any worries they have during one-to-one sessions.
- regularly remind everyone of how to speak up about safeguarding concerns.
- regularly remind everyone that you will not allow anyone to be victimised for raising a safeguarding concern and create a policy to support this.
- provide independent support (an advocate) for people who want to make a complaint or who have experienced harm.

### Example

David Smith is an operations manager at Rainfall Animal Sanctuary. In this role he's also the designated safeguarding officer. At every induction session and training event, David reminds people that if they have a worry about someone's behaviour, they can report this to him. He explains that the organisation's procedures means the person that's been reported will be told to step back from their role without any judgements being made while the issue is investigated.

## Listen when people speak up

You must be ready to listen when people speak up. You should encourage all your staff and volunteers to:

- **Show they care and help people open up**  
So that people know they can trust them and their feelings are important.
- **Take their time and slow down**  
It can take many conversations, not just one, to understand someone's experience.
- **Show they understand**  
So the person they're talking to knows they have understood them and action will be taken.

### Example

Jenna has Down's syndrome. She has been volunteering at her local hospice cafe for five years. She knows the systems well and works methodically to take orders and money. One summer, three new volunteers who all know each other start at the

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cafe. They find Jenna slow and start to tease her about how long she takes. Sometimes they deliberately change the place where orders are put to make it harder for her. Jenna starts to arrive late. When the cafe manager first talks to her, Jenna says nothing is wrong. So the manager drops in on Jenna's break each day and has a coffee with her. After three days Jenna explains about the changing places for orders. By the end of the week, Jenna has explained about the bullying so the manager can investigate and decide what to do.

You must make it clear that people should speak up about things that happen to them within your organisation as well as outside it. Everyone should know that if they feel they are not being listened to, they can also go outside the organisation to report the problem. This is called whistleblowing.

- Want more ideas on encouraging children to speak up? Use the 'let children know you're listening' pages which inspired the advice above (from NSPCC Learning): <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/let-children-know-you-re-listening/>
- Want to know more about whistleblowing? Read Knowhow NCVO's 'encouraging people to speak out' pages which talk you through how whistleblowing is different to other kinds of speaking up: <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/checklists-training-and-other-support/specialist-guides/whistleblowing-encouraging-people-to-speak-out-1>
- If you work with children use this 'whistleblowing guidance' page which links to a helpline as well as detailed advice (from the NSPCC): <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>