

Safeguarding for volunteer groups helping vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic

A practical guide to help safeguard everyone who requires help, and those who provide it

Under normal circumstances we would advise that having volunteers DBS checked is a prudent safeguarding step. But for the vast majority of work that Mutual-Aid-type groups are likely to undertake, there is no legal requirement for volunteers to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. You can check eligibility requirements by visiting: www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance) or you can contact enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk for guidance.

Regardless of whether you choose to have volunteers DBS checked, you should ensure your group follow simple, practical precautions such as keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts to safeguard all involved:

1. Each group should nominate someone to act as Lead for Safeguarding who can escalate any identified safeguarding concerns, including:
 - mental health issues
 - domestic abuse incidents
 - child abuse
 - any financial irregularity such as taking money for shopping which is never delivered

Ideally this person should have undertaken safeguarding training. During the coronavirus crisis, SAFEcic is offering its [online courses](#) at a cost price of only £6 per person, under its community objectives.

2. All volunteers should receive clear guidance (**see flowchart on page 3**) on what to do if they become concerned about any individual or incident, and on how to record.
3. Groups should implement a recording and tracking system.
4. All volunteers should live locally or be known to others in the group.
5. All volunteers should let family and friends know what they are doing.
6. No volunteer should make close face-to-face contact when delivering shopping or medicines. They should follow stringent hand cleaning and social distancing guidelines. Volunteers should not enter the home of anyone who is self-isolating.

7. All food delivered must be appropriate for any food allergies and dietary requirements, and items requiring refrigeration or freezing should be delivered promptly.
8. The person being helped should be made aware of any financial payments due and how payment is to be made securely and safely.
9. Ideally, prescription medicines should always be picked up someone known to the patient and arrangements made with the dispensary.
10. Confidentiality is of paramount importance. Groups and volunteers should NEVER share any information they gain about vulnerable people in their community.
11. Everyone receiving help should be made aware of how to report any concerns regarding the service they receive or volunteers within the group
12. Individuals should only volunteer if they feel well enough and are not shielding, self-isolating, or in a high-risk group.
13. Everyone should be aware of any escalation in the ill-health of volunteers or those at home and should refer to [NHS 111 online](#).

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Emergency: If a **child** is in immediate danger or left alone, you should **contact the police or call an ambulance on 999**.

Emergency: If a **vulnerable adult** is in immediate danger, you should **contact the police or call an ambulance on 999**

If you think a **child** you know has been the victim of abuse then please tell someone.

You can report abuse and neglect by completing the forms at the links: [Report a concern about a child](#) **OR** telephone **Onecall: 01670 536400**.

Onecall is open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

You can report a safeguarding concern about a **vulnerable adult** in the following ways:

Telephone **Onecall: 01670 536400**

Textphone: 01670 536844

Email: onecall@northumbria.nhs.uk.

Safeguarding Adult referrals should be made using the [Safeguarding Adults Enquiry form](#).

Three steps to reporting a concern

Step One:

If you are worried a child or young person or adult at risk is being/has been abused because:

- You have seen something.
- A child/adult at risk says they are being/have been abused.
- Somebody else has told you they are concerned.
- There has been an allegation against a member of staff.
- There has been an anonymous allegation.
- An adult has disclosed they are abusing/have abused a child
- An adult has disclosed they have abused a child/adult at risk

Step Two:

Talk to your **Lead for Safeguarding** without delay. If they are implicated then refer direct to social care services, or the police if a crime has, or may have been, committed.

RECORD
Sign/Date/Time
Include name,
position/role,
Address and
phone number
DO IT
PROMPTLY!

Step Three:

The Lead for Safeguarding will refer the concern to the relevant [adult](#) or [children's](#) social care services and/or the police and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours.

In cases of allegations against a person with a 'duty of care', towards a child the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will co-ordinate the next procedural steps.

Under "whistleblowing", anyone can refer directly to the police or social care services if they are concerned the Lead for safeguarding is not managing safeguarding concerns appropriately. **REMEMBER: In an emergency, if a crime has been committed, an urgent welfare check is needed or someone is seriously ill, dial 999. Do not delay!**

Northumberland CVA, 107 and 109 Station Road, Ashington, NE 63 8RS

Tel: 01670 858 688 Email: enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk

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