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Guidance

Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

What to do to protect people who come into contact with your charity through its work from abuse or mistreatment of any kind.

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From: **The Charity Commission**

Applies to: **England and Wales**   **Related content**

Contents

Manage the risks

Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities.

As part of fulfilling your trustee duties, you must take reasonable steps to protect people who come into contact with your charity from harm.

This includes:

- people who benefit from your charity's work
- staff
- volunteers

It may also include other people who come into contact with your charity through its work.

What you need to do

What you need to do depends on what your charity does and who it works with.

We expect you to:

- make sure all trustees, employees, volunteers and beneficiaries know about safeguarding and people protection

- have appropriate policies and procedures in place

- check that people are suitable to act in their roles

- know to spot and refer or report concerns

- have a clear system of referring or reporting to relevant organisations as soon as you suspect or identify concerns

- set out risks and how you will manage them in a risk register which is regularly reviewed

- be quick to respond to concerns and carry out appropriate investigations

- not let one trustee dominate your work - trustees should work together

If you work with children or adults at risk there are more legal requirements.

Risks to be aware of

Risks you must be alert to include:

- sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation

- negligent treatment

- physical or emotional abuse

- bullying or harassment

- health and safety

- commercial exploitation

- extremism and radicalisation

- forced marriage

- child trafficking

- female genital mutilation

- discrimination on any of the grounds in the Equality Act 2010

- people may target your charity

- a charity's culture may allow poor behaviour

- people may abuse a position of trust they hold within a charity

If things go wrong we will check if you followed this guidance and the law.

Policies and procedures you need to have

Your charity should have safeguarding policies and procedures which are:

- put into practice
- reviewed at least once a year
- available to the public

Make all trustees, staff, volunteers and beneficiaries aware of your policy. They all need to know how to apply it.

In your policy make clear how you will:

- protect people from harm
- make sure people can raise safeguarding concerns
- handle allegations or incidents
- report to the relevant authorities

The amount of detail in your policies and how often you review them depends on what your charity does, where it works and the level of risk.

When you review policies and procedures, check you are still following them.

Use guidance to help with policies and procedures. Take professional advice if you need it.

Code of conduct

If you have staff or volunteers you must have a clear code of conduct which sets out:

your charity's culture

- how people in your charity should behave

[Read the Charity Governance Code](#)

Other policies you need to have

You also need to make sure your charity has:

- suitable health and safety arrangements in place
- first aid, fire safety and digital safety policies that everyone understands

Get checks on trustees, staff and volunteers

You must make sure that trustees, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions. This includes people from or working overseas.

You need to get:

- criminal records checks where the position is eligible
- references and checks on gaps in work history
- [confirmation that staff can work in the UK](#)
- [health checks where appropriate](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

If you work with children or adults at risk, you should check people's criminal records and information held by the police.

[Find out what checks are available from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)](#)

Always get a standard, enhanced or enhanced with barred list check from the DBS when a role is eligible for one.

If a role is not eligible for a standard or enhanced check, ask the

person to apply for a basic check.

People from overseas

It's a different process to get checks for trustees, staff or volunteers from overseas.

[Read guidance on getting checks for people from overseas](#)

Sending workers overseas

Where you cannot get a DBS check for someone going to work overseas, they may be able to [get an International Child Protection certificate](#).

Automatic disqualification

Do not appoint anyone who is disqualified as a trustee or to a senior manager position (at chief executive or finance director level).

[Guidance on disqualification and checks to make](#)

Protect volunteers and staff

If your charity has volunteers or staff, you need to protect them from harm.

Have clear policies and procedures on:

- bullying and harassment
- whistleblowing

You need to have adequate insurance which covers the individuals and the activities involved.

[Charities and insurance](#)

Safeguarding children or adults at risk

You should:

- establish good safeguarding policies and procedures that all trustees, staff and volunteers follow

- make sure all staff and volunteers receive regular training on child protection or working with adults at risk

- appoint a safeguarding lead to work with your local authority safeguarding boards

- manage concerns, complaints, whistleblowing and allegations relating to child protection or adults at risk effectively

- follow relevant legislation and guidance

Identify your local authority safeguarding children or adults board. They:

- coordinate safeguarding and promote the welfare of children or adults at risk in the area

- publish policies and procedures for safeguarding which you must follow

You can find your local board online.

Safeguarding children

Safeguarding children duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding children means to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment

- prevent harm to children's health or development

- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care

- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

> In England [follow Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
>
> In Wales [follow All Wales Child Protection Procedures](#)

[Use resources](#) and [follow standards](#) from the NSPCC for safeguarding children.

Safeguarding adults at risk

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding duties for adults at risk apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be frail

> In England [follow guidance on the Care Act 2014](#).
>
> In Wales [follow guidance on The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Care Wales](#)

Working overseas

You must:

- be aware of different risks for staff, volunteers and beneficiaries who are overseas
- have suitable reporting and monitoring processes in place for any work overseas

Challenges of working overseas include:

- different cultures, practices or legal systems
- an unstable environment, like a conflict zone
- working with many partners

You need to know and follow the laws of the country you are operating in. If they are wider then apply the same safeguarding practices as you would in England and Wales.

[Follow The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#) for overseas humanitarian work

You must know when:

- to report issues to law enforcement in the country you are working in
- you also need to report to police in the UK

You can find resources online to help with working overseas. These include:

- [The International Committee of the Red Cross's code of conduct](#) for NGOs in disaster relief
- BOND, the UK network for organisations working in international development.

Only use templates that are appropriate for your charity.

Handle and report incidents and allegations

If you have an incident or allegation of abuse you should handle and record it a secure and responsible way. Follow your safeguarding policy and procedures.

If the incident or concern involves criminal behaviour, you should report it the police.

Where necessary you must also refer to social services and report to other agencies.

[There are other regulators that you may need to report or refer to](#) depending on what your charity does.

In some cases you should [send a serious incident report to the Charity Commission](#).

If you work with children or adults at risk

Refer all safeguarding concerns with children or adults at risk to your local safeguarding children or adult team.

You must refer to DBS if you:

- [provide a regulated activity](#), and
- stop someone working with children or adults at risk, and
- [certain criteria are met](#)

Working with or making grants to other organisations

Carry out proper due diligence when you work with, or make grants to, other bodies to achieve their aims.

You must make sure that any grant recipient or partner body is suitable. They must have appropriate safeguarding procedures in

place. Make sure there are clear lines of responsibility and reporting between all bodies involved.

[How to carry out due diligence checks](#)

You should have a written agreement or contract that sets out:

- your relationship
- the role of each organisation.
- monitoring and reporting arrangements

[Grant funding an organisation that isn't a charity](#)

Terrorism and the Prevent duty

All charities must prevent abuse for extremist purposes.

Some charities, like educational charities, are 'specified authorities'. They must [follow guidance on the Prevent duty](#).

Where appropriate you should also follow:

- [Advice for schools and childcare providers](#)
- [How higher education bodies' compliance with the Prevent duty is monitored](#)

This must be part of your charity's risk assessments, policies and procedures.

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