



Safeguarding Policy

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Woodlands Village Hall Dorset
Registered Charity No. 1201931
www.woodlandsvillagehalldorset.org.uk

Introduction

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children or other vulnerable groups and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Village hall management committees and trustees have a duty of care to all those using the village hall. This includes all volunteers, staff and contractors undertaking work. All reasonable steps need to be taken to prevent harm and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. Safeguarding policies and procedures that everyone has read and understood must be in place and used in the day-to-day operation of the charity.

There are several important pieces of legislation that promote and safeguard children and adults at risk. The Care Act 2014 sets out the processes and definitions and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides the framework for The Vetting and Barring Scheme and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 is also key but there are many other important pieces of legislation.



Charity Commission

The Charity Commission expects that safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, village halls included. They have produced detailed guidance on Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees: [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](#)

There are 9 actions for charities operating in the UK recommended by the Charity Commission that trustees need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance. These are:

1. Ensure your charity has an adequate safeguarding policy, code of conduct and any other safeguarding procedures. Regularly review and update the policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.
2. Identify possible risks, including risks to your beneficiaries or to anyone else connected to your charity and any emerging risks on the horizon.
3. Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within your charity.
4. Ensure that everyone involved with the charity knows how to recognise, respond to, report, and record a safeguarding concern.
5. Ensure people know how to raise a safeguarding concern.
6. Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided, ensuring it is current and relevant.
7. Review which posts within the charity can and must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
8. Have a risk assessment process in place for posts which do not qualify for a DBS check, but which still have contact with children or adults at risk.
9. Periodically review your safeguarding policy and procedures, learning from any serious incident or 'near miss'

The Charity Commission defines a safeguarding policy as being a 'statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children and adults at risk from harm'.



What is expected of a village hall committee?

The committee itself may not work directly with children or adults at risk but it is responsible for the contracts it makes with hirers, and is expected to understand what the relevant safeguarding law is and how it applies to their building and users of the hall (volunteers, staff, contractors).

Of key importance to both smooth operations, and to meeting any challenges, is good communication between the activity providers and the village hall management committee.

1. All the committee should be aware of:
 - a. The legal responsibilities of the committee in relation to safeguarding.
 - b. Charity Commission expectations.
 - c. The contact details of their local Safeguarding Board/Partnership and other local agencies that can offer support and advice on safeguarding in their respective County.
2. The trustees need to ensure they take the following actions:
 - a. Sign the hall's Declaration of Acceptance of Office (an example can be found at Appendix B).
 - b. Appoint a person (or two) to be the safeguarding lead(s) responsible for ensuring safeguarding practices and procedures are in place.
 - c. Understand actions to be taken should it be necessary to report an incident and, most importantly,
 - d. Support the responsible person(s) so they can carry out their duties. Appointing a lead person does not mean that trustees can abdicate their responsibility with regard to safeguarding at the village hall.

There may be reluctance by a volunteer(s) to be appointed as the safeguarding lead and concern about taking responsibility, but there is support available from your local ACRE Network member and other professional agencies.

The lead person will be the main point of contact for hirers or anyone regarding safeguarding at the hall. They will ensure that safe recruiting practices are in place, that relevant DBS checks are carried out, that all trustees have signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and that the hall's Hiring Agreement is in line with safeguarding principles and procedures. The appointed person will also remind the committee about regular review of the hall's safeguarding policy.

The safeguarding lead could be a volunteer with experience of safeguarding such as a pre-school leader or an employee of the hall such as a manager or booking secretary.



Hiring Agreement

Whenever the trustees hire out any part of the charity's premises, a written hiring agreement should be in place so that both the trustees and the hirer know their rights and responsibilities. This hiring agreement ensures that both parties fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the hire, establishing a clear contract between two parties which could be used as evidence should legal action become necessary.

It is a key document because it passes responsibility for the hall to the group or individual for the period of hire. This includes compliance with all the hall's principles and procedures for safeguarding. It is therefore reasonable for the trustees to expect hirers be able to provide evidence of that compliance on request. The evidence could be a paper copy of a policy or the group may be able to share a link to their website for an online copy.

Disclosure and Barring Service

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with children and adults at risk. It replaced the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). DBS is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Home Office.

The DBS is responsible for:

- processing requests for DBS checks (previously referred to as CRB checks)
- deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on, or removed from, a barred list
- placing or removing people from the DBS children's barred list and adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The DBS searches police records and, in relevant cases barred list information, then issues a DBS certificate to the applicant. Information released on DBS certificates can be extremely sensitive and personal and notice should be taken of the code of practice for recipients of a DBS check.

There is no legal requirement for anyone to have a DBS check. However, employers are legally obliged to ensure, by way of a DBS check, that any employee working in a regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults has not been barred from doing so. Further information on checks and eligibility can be obtained from your local Safeguarding Board.

Individuals can apply for a 'basic disclosure' from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to obtain a copy of their personal criminal record. Further information can be found here: [Request a basic DBS check - GOV.UK](#)



Safe Recruitment

The trustees must have thorough recruitment processes in place. This will include self-employed cleaners and caretakers and may also include volunteers or anyone working for, or on behalf of, the charity and having unsupervised access to vulnerable users e.g., organising a lunch for older people, running an activity for children or volunteers undertaking a task at the village hall.

Your processes must relate to the level of risk involved. A one-size-fits-all approach for all staff and volunteers may not be appropriate. A volunteer may be supporting a staff member and may be supervised at all times.

Where the trustees are employing staff who will work directly with children or adults at risk they must:

- Complete an application form which shows their employment history.
- Provide at least two references, one being the most recent/latest employer/school/college.
- If working directly with children or adults at risk, one of the references should come from someone who has supervised them working with children or adults at risk before. This should confirm that in their opinion they are suitable to work with children/adults at risk.



Woodlands Village Hall Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect.

This policy defines how Woodlands Village Hall operates to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect. We have a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises including children, young people and adults at risk involved as visitors and/or as participants in all activities and events. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees, volunteers and staff.

2. Definitions

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all staff, contractors and volunteers and will be used to support their work.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

For the purposes of this policy, adult at risk refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to Section 42 of the Care Act 2014:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it

If someone has care and support needs, but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk.

Persons affected

- All trustees, volunteers, and staff
- All those attending any activity or service that is being delivered from the village hall property
- All visitors and contractors



3. Policy principles

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk of abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and mistreatment. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. People who are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age, or illness.

- Woodlands Village Hall has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.
- Woodlands Village Hall recognises that under the Care Act 2014, it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It also recognises its responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- Woodlands Village Hall is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.
- Woodlands Village Hall is committed to stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.
- Woodlands Village Hall Committee is committed to the following principles:
 - The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount
 - All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse
 - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
 - All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities and dealt with swiftly and appropriately

4. Procedures

- a. All trustees will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse.
- b. All members of the management committee will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities **and** ensure that they understand the principles set out in this policy at 3 above.
- c. All members of the management committee will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.
- d. All members of the management committee, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted.
- e. All members of the management committee will attend annual safeguarding training run by the charity's safeguarding officer.
- f. Trustees will follow safe recruitment practices.
- g. A member of the committee will be appointed to be responsible for child and adult at risk safeguarding matters. This person will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the relevant safeguarding agency:
 - i. Children at risk: Dorset Council Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD): 01305 228866
 - ii. Adults at risk: Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board (DSAB): 01305 221 016 during office hours or 01305 858 250 for the Out of Hours Service
 - iii. Contact the Police on 999 if you think someone may be at immediate risk of harm
 - iv. The named person is Lucy Andrews – Safeguarding officer, Woodlands Village Hall.
Tel: 07976 975005



- h. If the safeguarding concerns are regarding a named member of the committee, then this should be reported to the Chair of the committee or another Trustee as determined by any conflicts of interest. This Trustee should then follow the Safeguarding Policy and report to the above agencies as appropriate.
- i. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or adult at risk will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. The appointed person will know who to contact and where to go for support and advice in relation to an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice, or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children or adult at risk who has:
 - i. behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk or may have harmed a child or adult at risk;
 - ii. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; or
 - iii. behaved towards a child or children or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child or adult at risk.
- j. The management committee will, through the booking process, ensure that all hirers of the hall have signed a hiring agreement. This will require all hirers who wish to use the hall for activities which include:
 - i. children unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and/or;
 - ii. adults at risk;to have their own safeguarding policy and must ensure that those who work with children, young people and adults at risk hold a current DBS certificate. The hirer shall ensure that any activities at the premises for children, young people and adults at risk comply with current legislation in that regard and that only fit and proper persons have access to children, young people and adults at risk. When requested, the hirer must provide us with a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). All reasonable steps must be taken to prevent harm, and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. Relevant concerns must be reported. If the hirer is unable to provide this information the hire will be refused.
- k. The exception to paragraph (h) is where the hall is hired for private parties arranged for invited friends and family or where children are accompanied by their parent(s) or guardian(s).
- l. The village hall management committee will carry out an annual review of this policy.



Appendix A – Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Trustee Statement of Eligibility

The Charity Commission Declaration of Eligibility and Responsibility can be found here:

[Trustee eligibility declaration form \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421222/Trustee_eligibility_declaration_form.pdf)

Name of Charity: **Woodlands Village Hall Dorset**
Charity Registration No: **1201931**

Declaration by Charity Trustees

I have received and studied the governing document of the charity and support its purposes. I realise that as a member of Woodlands Village Hall committee I am one of the organisation's managing or charity trustees, and I understand the duties and responsibilities as explained to me and indicated in the Charity Commission Leaflet CC3a: Responsibilities of Charity Trustees.

I am not under 18 years of age and am not disqualified from serving as a member of the committee, and in the event of my becoming disqualified, will take no further part in the affairs of the charity whilst such disqualification lasts.

By completing and signing this form, you declare that you:

- are willing to act as a trustee of the organisation named above
- understand your organisation's purposes (objects) and rules set out in its governing document
- are not prevented from acting as a trustee because you:
 - have an unspent conviction for one or more of the listed offences,
 - have an IVA, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order,
 - have been removed as a trustee in England, Scotland, or Wales (by the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)
 - have been removed from being in the management or control of a body in Scotland (under relevant legislation)
 - have been disqualified by the Charity Commission or are a disqualified company director,
 - are a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation,
 - are on the sex offenders register or have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement,
 - have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission.

Name (please print):

Home Address:

Date of Birth:

Date:

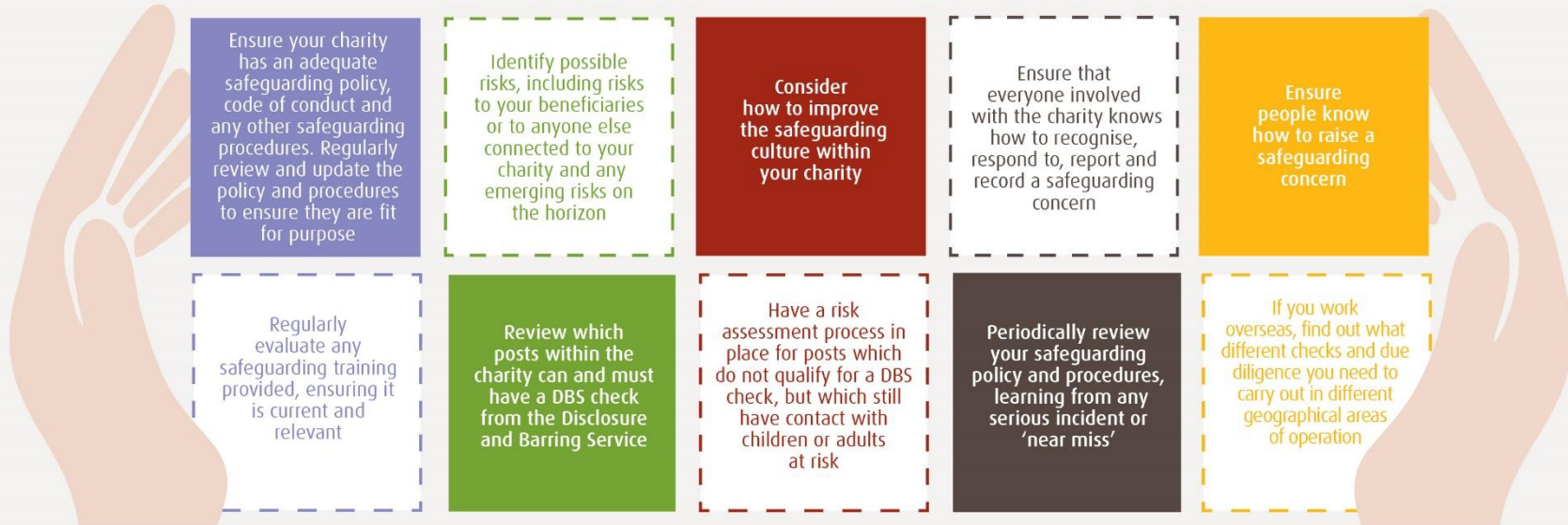
Signature:



Appendix B – Good Safeguarding Governance

10 actions trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance

Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES