

Safeguarding

This Information Sheet provides guidance on processes, policies, and procedures for safeguarding for the village hall management committees



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Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Hall Management Committees have a duty of care as trustees of the charity to all those using the village hall. This includes all volunteers, staff and contractors undertaking work etc. All reasonable steps Village 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 day to day operations of the hall.

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.

This Information Sheet is intended to guide and signpost village hall committees, so they are aware of their responsibilities and can take initial steps towards developing their safeguarding practices. Details of other resources and information can be found at the end of this Information Sheet.

ACRE would like to thank Community Action Suffolk, West of England Rural Action, Support Staffordshire, and Dorset Community Action for their support in putting together this Information Sheet.

ACRE welcomes comment and feedback on their Information Sheets. A word version of the policy at Appendix A is available from your local [ACRE Network](#) member



What is expected of a village hall committee?

The committee may not work directly with children or adults at risk, but it is responsible for the contracts that it makes with hirers, and will be expected to find out what the relevant law is, how it applies to their building and users of the hall (volunteers, staff, contractors) and to comply with it where appropriate. Of key importance to both the smooth operation and meeting any challenges, is good communication between the activity providers and the village hall management committee. Good relationships and understanding are vital. One way of maintaining good communication links is by ensuring that groups have a representative on 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. All committee members need to take the following actions:
 - a. Sign the hall's Declaration of Acceptance of Office (model available from your local ACRE Network member)
 - b. Appoint a person (or 2) to be the safeguarding lead(s) responsible for ensuring safeguarding practices and procedures are in place
 - c. Comply with DBS criteria for obtaining suitable checks
 - d. Support the responsible person to develop relevant policies and to regularly review them
 - e. Check that the Hall's Hiring Agreement is in line with the safeguarding policies
 - f. Ensure safe recruiting practices are in place
 - g. Understand actions to be taken should it be necessary to report an incident.



There may be reluctance by a volunteer to be appointed as the safeguarding lead and concern about taking responsibility, but there is support available from local professional agencies including your local ACRE Network member. The lead person will be the main point of contact for hirers or anyone regarding safeguarding at the hall, they will ensure that DBS checks are carried out and that all trustees have signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The appointed person will also remind the committee about regular review of the hall's safeguarding policy.

Charity Commission

The Charity Commission expects all charities to take safeguarding seriously as part of their governance, village halls included. They have produced the image on page 6 with 10 actions that trustees should be aware of.

The Charity Commission provide further detailed information on their webpages <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees#policies-procedures-and-practices-you-need-to-have>



10 actions trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance
Safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities



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	Identify possible risks, including risks to your beneficiaries or to anyone else connected to your charity and any emerging risks on the horizon	Consider how to improve the safeguarding culture within your charity	Ensure that everyone involved with the charity knows how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern	Ensure people know how to raise a safeguarding concern
Regularly evaluate any safeguarding training provided, ensuring it is current and relevant	Review which posts within the charity can and must have a DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service	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	Periodically review your safeguarding policy and procedures, learning from any serious incident or 'near miss'	If you work overseas, find out what different checks and due diligence you need to carry out in different geographical areas of operation

 **CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**



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.

DBS are 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.

DBS search police records and, in relevant cases, barred list information, and then issue 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.

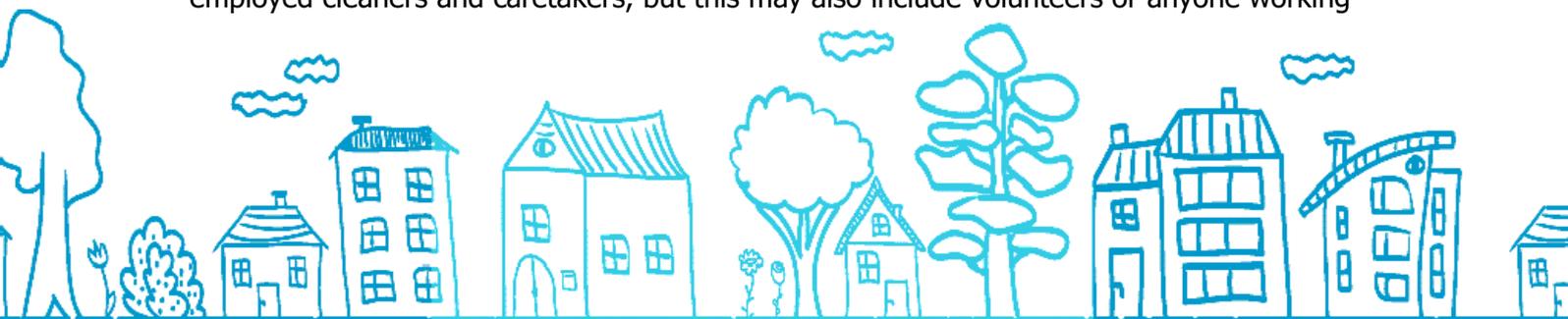
Charges

The standard charge for employers applying for a DBS check either direct to DBS or through an umbrella body (an umbrella body is a registered body that has access to DBS checks) is £23.00. No charge is made by DBS for checks on volunteers, but the umbrella body may make an administration charge.

Individuals can apply direct to Disclosure Scotland and they will be issued with a basic disclosure under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as it applies in England & Wales. A basic disclosure will cost £23 and is a lower level of screening.

Safe Recruitment

Practice safe recruitment where the committee has employees. This will include self-employed cleaners and caretakers, but this may also include volunteers or anyone working



for the village hall committee and having unsupervised access to vulnerable users e.g. organising a lunch for older people or running an activity for children or volunteers undertaking a task at the village hall.

All staff, working directly for the village hall 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
- If working directly with children or adults at risk, they should be checked under the Disclosure and Barring Service and a copy of the disclosure form kept on the secretary's file.

Developing your policies and procedures

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

An example of a policy for village hall management committees can be found at **Appendix A**. It is an overarching policy covering safeguarding of children and adults at risk. Most of the procedures can easily be put in place by the committee or may require adjustment of policies and procedures that are already in place. Organisations hiring the hall will need to have their own policy(s) relevant to their activity. ACRE Network members can assist hall committees should they have any queries or need additional support.

The policy at **Appendix A**, which is a combined policy for children and adults at risk has been created for a hall charity and the committee members who are managing the building. Hirers of the building may have one or two policies depending on the activities and events they are providing and who will be attending them.



There are many other models and examples available in the useful resources section.

Hiring Agreement

Whenever a village hall management committee hires out any part of its premises, a written hiring agreement should be in place so that both the management committee and the hirer know their rights and responsibilities. This hiring agreement ensures that both parties fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the hiring, establishing a clear contract between two parties which could be used as evidence should legal action become necessary. It is suitable for one off or regular short bookings.

A Model Hiring Agreement is available from your local ACRE Network member.

Sources of further advice and information

ACRE and the ACRE Network provides an information and advice service for village hall management committees through its network of village hall advisers. For further information and to find your local village hall adviser visit the ACRE website: www.acre.org.uk
ACRE produces a range of village hall publications and information sheets to support this service which may be of interest:

Model Hiring Agreement 2016 Edition

Model Occupational Licence

Information Sheet 21, Overnight accommodation in village halls

Information Sheet 15, Health & safety legislation, and village halls

Information Sheet 38, Fire safety in village halls

Information Sheet 42, Equality, and village halls

Useful resources

Disclosure and Barring Service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>



This link provides the Government statutory guidance, definitions, and responsibilities (*A useful reference guide*)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1>

ACRE Network member Community Action Suffolk provides lots of useful information and resources on their website

<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/safeguarding/>

NCVO Safeguarding information

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding>

NSPCC child protection guidance

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/voluntary-community-groups/>

Safeguarding concerns: practice example – hiring out space

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safeguarding-concerns-practice-examples/>

Safeguarding guidance for disabled children and adults at risk

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/>

Voluntary and community groups' guidance from NSPCC

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safeguarding-concerns-practice-examples/>

Safeguarding concerns: practice examples – hiring out space

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/>

Guidance on handling safeguarding allegations in a charity

The portal, at <https://safeguarding.culture.gov.uk/> offers a step by step guide to help charities correctly manage their concerns, identify the right people to contact if needed and access helpful resources and advice. Every organisation that delivers charitable activities has a responsibility to safeguard people from harm or abuse, whether they are staff members, volunteers, or other people who encounter your charity through its work. This tool will help charities in England to handle the reporting of safeguarding allegations about the behaviour or actions of a person in their charity.



APPENDIX A

Thank you to Community Action Suffolk for their support in creating this policy.

1. Purpose

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

This policy defines how 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.

Adult 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 paragraph 14.2 of the Care Act 2015:



- 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.

3. Persons affected

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

4. 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.

.....Village Hall charity has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

.....Village Hall charity 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.

.....Village Hall charity is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

.....Village Hall charity is aware of the work of their local safeguarding Board/Partnership and other support organisations on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of adults vulnerable from abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.



.....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.

5. Procedures

- a. All members of the committee will have signed the Trustee Statement of Eligibility form* for trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse.
- b. All members of the committee will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities, undertake training on safeguarding issues including whistleblowing where it is available and offered by their local safeguarding board/partnership or other local support organisation **and** ensure that they understand the principles set out in this policy at 3 above.
- c. All members of the committee will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.
- d. All members of the committee, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted.
- e. The hall committee will follow safe recruitment practices.



- f. 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.

The named person is

until

- g. 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:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; or
- behaved towards a child or children or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

- h. The hall committee will 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 children and adults at risk, other than for hire for private parties arranged for invited friends and family, to produce a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

- i. The village hall management committee will carry out an annual review of this policy.

* Available from your local ACRE Network member

