In terms of its importance, safeguarding is an artery which runs through the voluntary sector. It is critical to the sustainability and vitality of groups and organisations, especially those which are led and managed by volunteers. It is essential for front line staff and volunteers, and the beneficiaries and users of voluntary sector services. Good safeguarding builds trust and confidence in communities.

Durham Community Action works very closely with organisations, both large and small, across all aspects and interests within the Voluntary and Community Sector in County Durham. A lot of our contact is through networking between those who manage and those who deliver services. A continuing theme over the recent year or two has been about safeguarding. What does it mean and how can we ensure it is much more than a policy in a file?

The organisations and groups DCA speak to want to work with safeguarding as a practical tool which lends confidence to those of us who provide services and enables “no wrong door” help to be available for those who most need it. We have been looking at opportunities for training volunteers and staff and for building a stronger body of safeguarding expertise, so that organisations and groups can support each other.

Times have also been changing. We are seeing much greater demands on front line community led services than before. This is at a time when many groups have been forced by financial constraints to make reductions in their back-office management and admin. The potential consequence for those working face to face with a broad cross section of communities in the County is increased exposure to risk.

Voluntary and Community sector organisations are also picking up on higher numbers of individuals with complex needs and vulnerabilities being referred or referring themselves into community activities and organisations. The sector recognises that it is imperative to ensure they are safe and supported; that their staff and volunteers are confident and properly equipped to provide support by knowing when and how to respond to situations and issues which may give causes for concerns.
We are also interested in encouraging volunteer groups to tackle safeguarding governance for their organisations, to ensure their activities and assets are legally compliant and they can be confident about providing activities which are underpinned by good practice, protecting trustees from liabilities and financial risk.

Durham Community Action is keen to work alongside the Voluntary and Community sector and statutory bodies to raise awareness during Safeguarding week.

This Briefing Paper provides a snapshot of key sources of information that colleagues in the sector may make use of when considering all these issues.

Durham Community Action

Durham Community Action is an infrastructure organisation providing advice, support and assistance to frontline groups operating in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and to various communities of interest across County Durham.

We offer impartial advice and support to help organisations and community groups think through ideas, develop them into projects, consult, plan and take action.

Further information and contact details can be found at:

www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk
Charity Commission

Jane Hobson, Head of Guidance and Practice, Charity Commission tells us:

“There’s no room for doubt around safeguarding: protecting people is too important”

The Charity Commission has published updated safeguarding guidance “Safeguarding and Protecting people for charities and trustees” which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees

This piece of guidance replaces what was Annex 1 to the Charity Commission’s published strategy on dealing with safeguarding issues in charities. The new guidance provides for a broader remit, for example by covering working overseas and working with or making grants to other organisations and it widens the scope of the guidance on getting checks on trustees, staff and volunteers and with a separate section on safeguarding children or adults at risk.

The Commission has also published a blog, written by Jane Hobson, Head of Guidance and Practice, found at https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2018/10/25/theres-no-room-for-doubt-around-safeguarding-protecting-people-is-too-important discussing the guidance which says that the new guidance has been subject to thorough user-testing in the sector.

The Charity Commission website has a section on what to do to protect people who come into contact with your charity through its work from abuse or mistreatment of any kind.

Areas covered include managing risks, policies and procedures you need to have, getting checks on trustees, staff and volunteers, protecting volunteers and staff, safeguarding children or adults at risk, working overseas, handling and reporting incidents and allegations, working with or making grants to other organisations and terrorism and the Prevent duty.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees

NCVO

NCVO provide a guide on safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations. They also provide links to advice on ex-offenders working or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults and tools to establish if a volunteer requires a DBS check.

https://knowhownonprofit.org/your-team/volunteers/keeping/safeguarding-volunteers
**NSPCC**

The NSPCC Learning website has a Safeguarding and Child Protection section which highlights actions organisations and groups can take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Areas covered include resources for schools and colleges, voluntary and community groups, faith communities, performing arts groups and deaf and disable children. They also provide guidance on writing a safeguarding policy, safer recruitment, photography and sharing images, recommended adult to child ratios, the child protection system in the UK, radicalisation and online safety for organisations and groups.


**Disclosure & Barring Service**

The Disclosure & Barring Service have a wide selection of guidance leaflets relating to eligibility and other DBS services and products.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications dbs-guidance-leaflet

**National Safeguarding Adults Network**

The National Safeguarding Adults Network launched the first National Safeguarding Adults Week, which took place between 19th – 25th November 2018.

The Network includes members from Sense, Choice Support, Dimensions, Voiceability, United Response, Brandon Trust, MacIntyre, Advance, CVT and the Ann Craft Trust.

The Network recognised that organisations around the UK, including those in County Durham, have been creating their own safeguarding weeks throughout the year and want to create a time where we can all focus on safeguarding adults, so we can be better, together. The week of action is reflected with information guides and links to practical resources available through these useful weblinks:

https://www.anncrafttrust.org/events/national-safeguarding-adults-week/

https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/
County Durham Safeguarding

Remember to follow the #TellSomeone to track the key messages being delivered through Twitter and take part in the discussion.

As always, Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board are keen to raise awareness and remind people of their key message:

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. If you have concerns about a child/adult and think they are being exploited, neglected or abused, report it.

Local County Durham Children’s Safeguarding Board (LSCB)

Information for professionals, parents and carers with guidance on child protection including links to helplines and other useful information.

http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk/

County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Partnership

This partnership provides a range of information for the general public and information for professionals including policies, procedures and working practices.

http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info/