

AM 646/23

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 23 MARCH 2023

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Report by: Nigel Stone, Head of Resources and Jim Mitchell, Access and Learning Manager

Summary:

This report contains a draft new Safeguarding Policy for the Authority. Previously these risks have been largely covered as part of various other policies or procedures, however it is now good practice for an Authority such as ours to have a specific safeguarding policy such as is proposed here.

The policy has been drafted by an internal staff working group and then recently passed to staff and the unions formally for their consultation. Members of the Authority are now asked for their comments and, once happy, asked to recommend the draft for approval. A draft of the policy was considered by the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee (RAPC) on 6 March 2023 and it was recommended for approval at this meeting.

1. Development of the draft Safeguarding Policy

- 1.1 The Authority has always taken its responsibilities for the health and safety of its staff, members, volunteers and the wider public extremely seriously. It therefore has an extensive suite of existing policies which help support and protect all those groups.
- 1.2 As part of the ongoing review of such policies, it was decided that a need existed for a specific policy to define and support the areas which make up what is now widely termed as 'safeguarding'. Such a policy is becoming more commonly requested by event organisers, funding bodies and suchlike.
- 1.3 In Summer 2022 a staff working group (core members being the Head of Resources, Access & Learning Manager, Lead Education & Youth Officer and the HR Officer) was established to engage with different teams / functions across the Authority and to draft / circulate a formal safeguarding policy.
- 1.4 As part of the work of the group, they reviewed similar policies of many local authorities, public bodies and other NPAs. The policy cannot be detailed about situations that may occur, as every case will clearly be different, but is designed to signpost and support anyone with concerns as to how and where to get help.

- 1.5 Having drafted the policy attached as **Annex 1**, a formal staff and union consultation was begun in February and the draft policy has been updated with regard to all responses received. It has further been updated following the inputs from members of the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on 6 March 2023. The feedback to date has been very positive to both the idea of having a policy and the content within it; a summary of the comments and subsequent changes is given below:

	Response / Changes made within the original draft
<p>Unison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We welcome that the Authority has engaged with its legal responsibilities and duty of care for vulnerable children and adults, the policy is perhaps long overdue. We commend the proposals in general as from our somewhat limited professional understanding they seem based on good practice and careful consideration. • The policy and associated working procedures are reliant on well informed and trained workforce and in particular some key staff. We would highlight that the policy needs a programme of supporting training in a timely manner with its approval, and invite the Authority to outline how that will be delivered at the time of such approval. This should include allocation and commitment of financial and time resources when agreeing the policy. The complexity of the policy and guidance means employees cannot be expected to comply simply by reading it, and staff will require work programmes to accommodate time for training and regular updates. Certain roles within the policy will require key persons to be trained to higher levels. • In relation to the policy/guidance we would highlight that to a casual reader, some parts of the flow diagram seem not to be in accordance with the written procedural guidance and would be happy to discuss this to provide clarification as this may merely be interpretation. • In reaching a decision on the policy and associated guidance, we would question whether staff would be genuinely protected from bullying/harassment in the event of raising concerns and ask for confirmation of the measures that would be put in place to achieve this. We seek confirmation that persons genuinely concerned about such actions and who feel unable to comply with the policy will not be subject to action or detriment. The policy itself does not operate alone and is reliant on other policies which are in our opinion overdue review, particularly as this case illustrates circumstances may mean a suite of policies such as whistle blowing are often operationally interlinked. 	<p>Agreed – we acknowledge that this policy will need a full, open communication plan to ensure understanding of the important issues it contains. This will be set alongside a training plan to identify both the initial and ongoing requirements for different people performing different roles across the Authority.</p> <p>The flow diagram has since been reviewed and updated.</p> <p>We have a full suite of existing whistleblowing and anti-bullying/harassment policies that would prevent any such repercussions happening. We will review these over the coming months to ensure they are fit for purpose and the links between all the policies are clear and understood.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for staff who are involved in safeguarding cases will be important, the reference to the Employee support line is one solution, UNISON members can also obtain support from their own legal and support advisors (one of the many benefits of union recognition in a workplace). We would invite the Authority and decision makers to consider whether other forms of support are required, including management of officer duties to remove workplace stresses and access to specific support from HR/occupational health. With respect to our Mental Health First Aiders, some of the issues that might be brought to them from matters arising from this policy may be beyond their ability to support. • We would suggest that whilst some of the guidance may be useful, all the contacts add to the length of the document and may mean employees think they are responsible for resolving issues when it is possibly better for the named safeguarding leads to take that action • We would question whether it might be better to clearly state which parts of the document are formal policy (i.e. things staff and members must do) and those that are guidance (best practice approaches to delivering the policy or can do) - possibly considering separating the two as currently a 33 page policy is somewhat difficult for staff to engage with and interpret. The use of a summary is however welcomed and useful. 	<p>We agree that support is key and feel this comes across through the wording of the policy. As with all new policies, we will monitor its usage and effectiveness carefully and further engage with the issues mentioned if they arise.</p> <p>We feel it is clear in the document that the primary / initial contacts for staff are the Designated Safeguarding Leads / HR or Monitoring Officers and these additional contacts are given as a back-up only.</p> <p>The length of the document is similar to most other similar policies we reviewed. Although entitled 'policy', there is deliberately very little mention of 'must do x or y' and it has been written in the style of a guidance and support framework.</p>
<p>Avoid acronyms and abbreviations throughout</p>	<p>Agreed, we have reviewed the document in this regard and amended a number of these.</p>
<p>Make it clear that no-one should put themselves in harms' way</p>	<p>Agreed, this has been added to the document.</p>
<p>Should we be talking about 'Adults' [i.e. all adults] or just 'Adults at risk'?</p>	<p>'Adults as risk' is the recognised term, but we accept that the policy applies to all adults as anyone could become at risk. We have amended the title of the document to reflect 'adults' but have left the remainder as these are often directly derived from recognised legislation and/or national guidance.</p>
<p>Add hyperlinks to documents where they are mentioned</p>	<p>Yes we will do this in the final version.</p>
<p>Does the policy (6.1 and 6.2) apply to situations where we are the lead partner within a group project?</p>	<p>The wording of these sections have been clarified to show these situation <i>are</i> indeed included.</p>
<p>Can you ensure all contacts / info is kept up to date?</p>	<p>Yes, this is one of the roles of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.</p>
<p>Where will reports be stored?</p>	<p>These will be held securely by the Designated Safeguarding Leads.</p>
<p>As a result of the policy, will we be looking at who is / isn't DBS [Disclosure Barring Service] checked?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

Can you add an appendix of relevant laws / legislation?	We decided not to add this, partly as they change very regularly but mainly as we felt a focus on the legal aspects in the document took away from the guidance/support nature we were looking to achieve.
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1.6 In January 2023, Nigel Stone and Jim Mitchell (the proposed Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy), began a series of training sessions on how to undertake their specific roles, with further sessions to follow shortly.

2. Next Steps

2.1 Following formal adoption, the new policy will be widely communicated to staff, members, volunteers and made public on our website. Following this initial engagement, the working group will then draft a detailed training action plan to ensure the policy is fully recognised, understood and embedded within the work of the whole organisation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- **Subject to any agreed changes at the meeting, the Safeguarding Policy be approved.**

Contact:

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Head of Resources
Tel: 01590 646655
Email: nigel.stone@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Papers:

Annex 1: Draft Safeguarding Policy

Annex 1



Safeguarding Children, Young People & Adults

Policy & Procedures New Forest National Park Authority

This is an important policy which sets out what should be done if you witness, or are made aware of, a situation where a person is at risk or you think may be put at risk.

Important: Remember it is not up to you to decide if wrongdoing / abuse has taken place, BUT it is up to you to report ANY concerns. The Authority will provide a full package of support for those identified as potentially at risk and equally to those who have witnessed/reported it.

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers and members.

Document Version History:

Version 1.0

Agreed: xx March 2023

Significant version changes made:

- xxx

Changes completed by:

xxx

Next Full Review Date:

xx March 2025 (minimum every two years)

Summary:

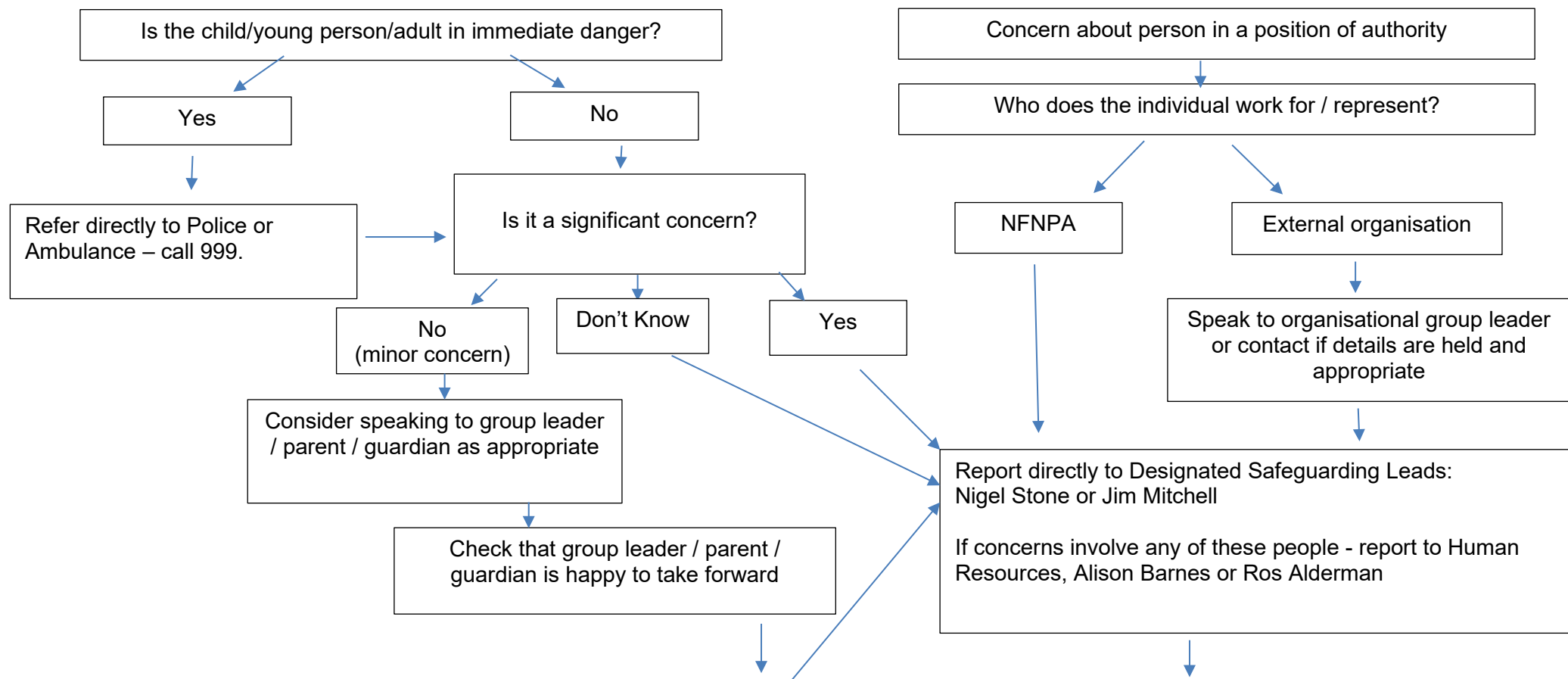
<p>Recognise</p>	<p>Staff, Members or Volunteers may observe, or have disclosed to them, a potential safeguarding concern in the course of their duties (for example relating to a child, young person, adult at risk or domestic abuse).</p> <p>They should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm • Do nothing to put themselves in harms' way • Listen carefully • Reassure the person that they are being taken seriously and have done the right thing to tell someone.
<p>Respond</p>	<p>If the incident or disclosure is considered severe, such as an ongoing or immediate threat to life or serious harm, the person should call the police on 999.</p> <p>If appropriate, the person should immediately inform their line manager of the safeguarding concern. The line manager may need to assist them with producing the written record.</p> <p>If further support is needed, contact should be made with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy).</p>
<p>Report</p>	<p>The person, with the assistance of their line manager as appropriate, should complete the appropriate Safeguarding Incident Reporting Template (Appendix A).</p> <p>You should create a clear and concise recording, including as much factual information as possible.</p> <p>Clear and concise records must also be kept where a decision not to report is taken setting out the reason for this decision.</p> <p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and the Deputy) will monitor all Safeguarding Incident Reports and identify if any action is required by the Authority in terms of its service delivery, including if reporting to social care is required.</p>
<p>Record</p>	<p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The record is signed and dated and stored securely and with restricted access in accordance with the Authority's Data Protection and Records Management Policies • Reports are never amended later, instead make a further report setting out any changes / updates required.

	Clear and concise records must also be kept where a decision not to report is taken setting out the reason for this decision.
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Your key contacts at the Authority are:

Photo to be added	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Nigel Stone Head of Resources	Contact Phone: 01590 646655 Out of hours: 07775 847473 Nigel.stone@newforestnpa.gov.uk
Photo to be added	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Jim Mitchell Access and Learning Manager	Contact Phone: 01590 646681 Out of hours: 07979 231280 Jim.mitchell@newforestnpa.gov.uk
	Other senior staff contactable, particularly around staff or members allegations: Rosalind Alderman – Solicitor and Monitoring Officer Heleana Aylett / Karen Warner – Human Resources	01590 646646 Rosalind.alderman@newforestnpa.gov.uk 02380 285662 / 71 Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk Karen.warner@nfdc.gov.uk

What to do if you have a safeguarding concern



Record:
Make a clear record of everything you can, do not amend records but instead add further detail

Reporting concerns:
Your role is NOT to investigate
Do NOT make any promises
Always put the wellbeing of the child/young person/adult first when making decisions
If in doubt, at any stage, speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads or your line manager
If you continue to have concerns keep raising them and speak to someone else.

Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

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1. Policy Statement

The New Forest National Park Authority (the 'Authority', 'NFNPA') is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, so that they can be healthy, stay safe and enjoy and learn from their experience of the National Park and the Authority.

**Safeguarding means protecting and promoting a person's health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.
Safeguarding children, young people and adults is a collective responsibility.**

We give equal priority to keeping all children, young people and adults safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We recognise that some children, young people and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. We recognise the issue(s) may only have just happened, may not even have happened yet or could have been going on for some time – we need to react in all these situations.

This policy applies directly to all staff, members and volunteers, who will be provided with appropriate, clear, up-to-date and practical guidance. This policy also aims to ensure that the risk of being exposed to false allegations of abusive, illegal or improper conduct being made is minimised.

Safeguarding and child protection is based on legislation; policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people and adults at risk in England. The key legislation includes:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, July 2018.

The Authority believes that all children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be:

- Protected from abuse and safe in the activity that they, or their parents and carers, choose;
- Listened to and heard;
- Valued and treated as individuals;
- Respected for their individuality and identity;
- Encouraged and praised;
- Involved in decisions wherever it is appropriate.

The Authority will achieve the above by:

- Creating appropriate procedures and supporting guidance into place, keep them updated and act on them (see Appendix A: statement of related policies and guidance)
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy
- Ensuring all staff, member, volunteers understand and follow the safeguarding procedures and guidelines
- Ensuring children, young people and adults at risk know about our safeguarding policy and procedures and what to do if they have a concern

- Building a positive safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and all those we work with know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

Our commitment to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015:

The New Forest National Park Authority is committed to the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the abolition of modern slavery and human trafficking. Responsibility lies with all individual staff and members of the organisation, overseen by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

As an equal opportunities' employer, we are committed to creating and ensuring a non-discriminatory and respectful working environment for our staff and volunteers. We want all our staff and volunteers to feel confident that they can expose wrongdoing without any risk to themselves.

Our recruitment and people management processes are designed to ensure that all prospective employees or volunteers are legally entitled to work in the UK and to safeguard them from any abuse or coercion.

We do not enter into business with any organisation, in the UK or abroad, which knowingly supports or is found to be involved in slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibility

Responsibility for this policy lies at all levels of the Authority. All New Forest National Park Authority staff, members and volunteers should read and understand this policy and the reporting procedures.

2.1.1 Designated Safeguarding Leads

Photo to be added	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Nigel Stone Head of Resources	Contact Phone: 01590 646655 Out of hours: 07775 847473 Nigel.stone@newforestnpa.gov.uk
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	<p>Other senior staff contactable, particularly around staff or members allegations:</p> <p>Rosalind Alderman – Solicitor and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Heleana Aylett / Karen Warner – Human Resources</p>	<p>01590 646646 Rosalind.alderman@newforestnpa.gov.uk</p> <p>02380 285662 / 71 Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk Karen.warner@nfdc.gov.uk</p>
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The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer and the Deputy have the following responsibilities:

- To provide advice and information relating to safeguarding concerns
- To ensure the NPA’s safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and compliant with legislation and statutory guidance
- To ensure appropriate training is available for employees, Members, and volunteers
- To work with all teams in the discharge of their safeguarding duties.

2.1.2 Strategic Leadership Team

The Authority’s Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for ensuring that the Authority complies with its safeguarding duties. They will be kept informed on the discharge of those duties by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy.

SLT members have a responsibility to ensure their teams’ practices and procedures take account of the Authority’s commitment to safeguarding. They are responsible for the following:

- Making sure all members of staff and volunteers within their teams are aware of this safeguarding policy and reporting procedures
- Identifying those services and posts which are likely to have an involvement with children and/or adults at risk
- Ensuring that members of staff whose duties involve contact with children and/or adults at risk are screened at the appropriate level and are appropriately qualified and trained to be working with these groups
- Ensuring that all members of staff in their teams receive training appropriate to their role in accordance with the criteria of this policy
- Ensuring that all consultants / contractors engaged with their service area are subject to contractual arrangements which include appropriate provisions relating to any safeguarding concerns
- Where members of staff in their service interact with children, young people and adults at risk, ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

2.1.3 Authority Line Managers

Line Managers should supervise and support members of staff to discharge their employment duties in a way which has regard to the Authority's safeguarding responsibilities.

If an allegation or incident is reported to a line manager, they must confirm that the staff member has followed this policy and made a record of all observations and discussions to date.

If appropriate, the line manager should support the staff member with making a written record and in completing a timely report. The line manager may need to complete this on the member of staff's behalf. The line manager can seek further clarification or advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy.

2.1.4 Authority Members

Members are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with this safeguarding policy and reporting procedures and they act in compliance with it in the performance of their role.

Members have a high level of interaction with members of the public and are just as likely as other Authority staff to witness or have disclosed to them incidents of concern. Members should report any safeguarding concerns directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy).

Members are also responsible for ensuring they attend training which is offered.

2.1.5 Human Resources

The human resources (HR) team plays a key role in safeguarding. Their responsibilities include:

- Working with managers in maintaining a record of those posts that are likely to work with children, young people or adults at risk and identifying the level of involvement and the appropriate level of screening required
- Ensuring that recruitment procedures are robust and that information pertinent to working with these groups is obtained during the recruitment procedure
- Ensuring that all safeguarding and/or Disclosing Barring Service checks are carried out at the level required in respect of every role identified involving contact with children, young people and adults at risk
- Incorporating appropriate statements into the job descriptions for all safeguarding leads and new members of staff outlining their safeguarding responsibilities
- Ensuring all members of staff have an identified line manager
- Ensuring induction procedures are adhered to for all staff who are likely to have contact with children, young people and adults at risk
- Maintaining a record of staff safeguarding training
- Developing and maintaining the Authority's Personal Development Plan (appraisal) process so that all staff are evaluated on an annual basis
- Supporting managers in dealing with allegations of abuse or lack of care by Authority staff

- Referring information about individuals who may pose a risk to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

2.2 All Authority staff

All staff and volunteers should:

- Act appropriately when dealing with children, young people or adults at risk
- Keep a clear record of discussions, events and observations relating to any actual or potential safeguarding matters
- Discuss concerns with line managers / supervisors (if appropriate)
- Report any concerns about abuse or neglect as set out in this policy and procedures
- Ensure the information on any report is comprehensive, accurate, up-to-date and factual rather than assumptions / speculation
- React to serious concerns by calling emergency services.

2.2.1 Authority Volunteers

All volunteer activity is relevant to and covered by this policy.

All volunteers should know who their supervisor is, be able to speak to them about concerns and feel confident they will be addressed appropriately. They should know who else to turn to if unable to discuss with their supervisor.

All volunteers will be offered training appropriate to their role description and activities on behalf of the NFNPA, particularly if they take on autonomous work representing us, in our offices or with the general public.

Volunteer roles cannot be offered to volunteers who are not willing to undertake appropriate training (NFNPA will make adaptations wherever possible to make training accessible). Tasks outside their role description should not be assigned to volunteer without consideration of safeguarding implications.

3. Safeguarding Procedures

3.1 Support from the Authority

All staff, volunteers and members will be supported by:

- A prompt response from supervisor/line manager/DSL/SLT
- Someone they are comfortable talking openly to, without fear of recourse
- That the issue will not be trivialised or ignored
- That they can discuss it again, revisit the issue
- That they will get any mental health support or time they need to process
- They know WHO they can talk to about the situation

Each circumstance will be different and have a different impact on the individuals involved. Remember. Staff should feel comfortable to choose appropriate support.

Who else can I talk to?

When there is good reason or an immediate concern for safety it is always reasonable to contact the police or social care team directly. Follow the emergency procedures chart where possible and take the best course of action within your knowledge. Then contact the DSL, letting them know you have already made referral if that is the case.

In many scenarios it will be appropriate to discuss your concerns with your usual support team e.g. line manager or volunteer supervisor. Addressing low level concerns and handling them the right way will improve our good practice. ALWAYS report these to the DSL as they can decide whether to refer, allowing social care and other responsible authorities to build a full picture of the circumstances around an individual child or adult.

Staff handling concerns also have a right to support and advocacy in handling the difficult subject matter and any stress which arises from undertaking this work. Employee helplines, and freephone helplines are available below.

Who?	How?	Example of when
Employee Assistance Program and Helpline	Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (sharepoint.com) 0800 1116387 Managers support service 0800 1116 385	<i>Manage your own stress or difficulties arising</i> The confidential and Freephone helpline is where you can talk to a specially trained advisor, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, as many times as necessary. Callers to the helpline are given unlimited support, advice and information to help deal with their concerns, both work and non-work related.
Mental health first aiders	Current list of staff volunteers available on warbler and posters around our offices	Support for your own wellbeing, stress etc.
NSPCC helpline	0808 800 5000	Help for adults concerned about a child
Childline	0800 1111 https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/	Help for children and young people up to the age of 19.

3.2 Safeguarding Children and Young People

The Children Act 1989 states the legal definition of a child is “a person under the age of 18”. There is no legal definition of young person. For the purposes of this policy a young person is someone who might not perceive themselves as a child, but who is still in the age range of the legal definition of a “child”.

The Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all agencies including any public authorities to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Prevailing statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, defines this as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This includes taking action to identify, prevent and support children that are Missing, Exploited and Trafficked and those that are at particular risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or Child Criminal Exploitation.

3.2.1 A person may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm.

Abuse may take place in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to the victim or, more rarely, by a stranger. The abuser in any case may be an adult or adults, or a child or children. People who behave abusively come from all backgrounds and walks of life. They may be professional people; doctors, nurses, social workers, advocates, members/councillors, staff members or could be volunteers or others deemed to be in community or family positions of trust. They may also be relatives, friends, neighbours or people who use the same services as the person experiencing abuse.

It is important that everyone recognises that children with disabilities have exactly the same rights to be safe from abuse and neglect and to achieve their potential as non-disabled children. However, disabled children can be more susceptible to abuse and the early indicators suggestive of abuse or neglect can be more complicated than with non-disabled children. Children with disabilities may also be more vulnerable to abuse due to their lack of understanding of what abuse is, their trust in adults and through being less able to express their views or worries.

3.2.2 There are four main forms of child abuse and a child or young person may be subjected to more than one form of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve actions such as hitting, shaking and burning as well as giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. Physical abuse as well as being a deliberate act can be caused by an omission or failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a persistent lack of love and affection. A child may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted. This can make the child nervous and withdrawn. Other forms of emotional abuse include excessive overprotection and unrealistic pressure to succeed. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children although it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing the child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. Sexual abuse can involve penetrative acts such as rape or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. It may also involve non-contact activities such as showing pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and or psychological needs. These needs include, for example, adequate food and warm clothing and also medical care. Children may be left alone unsupervised.

3.2.3 Potential indicators of abuse or neglect

The following is a list of physical and behavioural indications that a child or young person is being abused.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts and burns particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- Fear of parents being approached about such injuries.
- Reluctance to get changed e.g. wearing long sleeves in hot weather.
- Flinching when touched or approached.
- A failure to thrive or grow.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Difficulties in making friends.
- The child is prevented from socialising.
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Fear of being left with a specific person.
- Sexually explicit behaviour.
- Sexual knowledge beyond their age and developmental level.
- A distrust of adults particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food.
- The child being dirty/smelly and unkempt.
- Loss of weight.
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

This list is by no means definitive and it is important to remember that there may be other reasons for changes in behaviour.

3.3 Safeguarding Adults

An adult is a person who is aged 18 years or over.

Statutory safeguarding duties apply to any adult who:

- has needs for care and support; and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- 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.

The Care Act 2014 creates a legal framework for how Hampshire County Council and its partners (which include this Authority) should work together to protect adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect.

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- stop abuse or neglect wherever possible;
- prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs;
- support them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
- focus on improving life for the adults concerned;
- raise public awareness so that communities play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;
- provide accessible information so people understand the types of abuse, how to stay safe and how to raise a concern about someone's safety or well-being; and
- address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

The Care Act 2014's Six Principles of Safeguarding underpin all adult safeguarding work. These are as follows:

EMPOWERMENT	Presumption of person led decisions and informed consent. Adults are encouraged to make their own decisions and are provided with support and information.
PREVENTION	It is better to take action before harm occurs. Strategies are developed to prevent abuse and neglect that promote resilience and self-determination.
PROPORTIONATE	A proportionate and least intrusive response is made balanced with the level of risk.
PROTECTION	Support and representation for those in greatest need. Adults are offered ways to protect themselves, and there is a coordinated response to adult safeguarding.
PARTNERSHIP	Local solutions through services working with their communities. Local solutions through services working together within their communities.
ACCOUNTABLE	Accountability and transparency in delivering a safeguarding response.

3.3.1 What is adult abuse or neglect?

There are different types of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which these occur. Incidents may be one-off or multiple, may affect one person or many, and may involve an act of abuse or neglect or a failure to act.

Physical Abuse

Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse

Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological Abuse

Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Economic (financial) or Material Abuse

Theft, fraud, scams, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission

Ignoring medical or physical care needs, failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care, welfare benefits or educational services, withholding the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse (hate crime)

Racism, sexism or acts based on a person's disability, age or sexual orientation. It also includes other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment such as disability hate crime.

Domestic Abuse

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence. Often categorised as 'controlling' or 'coercive' behaviours.

Organisational Abuse

Neglect and poor care practice within a care setting such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in someone's own home ranging from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be neglect or poor practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within a care setting.

Modern Slavery

Encompassing slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Self-Neglect

Covers a wide range of behaviour including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and behaviour such as hoarding.

3.3.2 Potential indicators of abuse or neglect

Abuse can happen anywhere: in someone’s own home, in a public place, in hospital or in a care home; when an adult lives alone or with others. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- spouses / partners and other family members;
- friends and acquaintances;
- neighbours and local residents;
- people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable to abuse;
- paid staff or professionals; and
- volunteers and strangers.

The adult may say or do things that provide a clue e.g. making a complaint, calling for an urgent response, voicing a concern, or issues may emerge during the course of dealings with the adult.

3.4 Reporting Procedures

Recognise	<p>Staff, Members or Volunteers may observe, or have disclosed to them, a potential safeguarding concern in the course of their duties (relating to a child, young person, adult at risk, domestic abuse or potential terrorist activity).</p> <p>They should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm • Do nothing to put themselves in harms’ way • Listen carefully • Reassure the person that they are being taken seriously and have done the right thing to tell someone • Be clear that others will be informed • Avoid jumping to conclusions • Only ask questions for clarification / Use open questions • Let the person talk at their own pace. If they have specific communication needs, provide support and information in a way that is most appropriate to them • Record information as soon as possible to ensure accurate information is collated.
Respond	<p>If the incident or disclosure is considered severe, such as an ongoing, or immediate threat to life or serious harm, the person should call the police on 999.</p> <p>If appropriate, the person should immediately inform their line manager of the safeguarding concern. The line manager may need to assist them with producing the written record.</p>

	<p>If further support is needed, contact should be made with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy).</p>
<p>Report</p>	<p>The person, with the assistance of their line manager as appropriate, should complete the appropriate Safeguarding Incident Reporting Template (Appendix A).</p> <p>You should create a clear and concise recording, including as much information as possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date and time of the incident or disclosure • The name, address and date of birth of the person considered to be at risk • The nature of the allegation or incident and, if possible, the name, address and date of birth of any person alleged to have caused the harm • Factual observations e.g. any visible injuries, the person's behaviour, physical, emotional state etc • A record of exactly what was said by all parties • Whether there was consent for the information to be shared • All action that was taken • The name, address and date of birth of any witness's to the incident or disclosure <p>Clear and concise records must also be kept where a decision not to report is taken setting out the reason for this decision.</p> <p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and the Deputy) will monitor all Safeguarding Incident Reports and identify if any action is required by the Authority in terms of its service delivery, including if reporting to social care is required.</p>
<p>Record</p>	<p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The record is signed and dated and stored securely and with restricted access in accordance with the Authority's Data Protection and Records Management Policies • Reports are never amended later, instead make a further report setting out any changes / updates required. <p>Clear and concise records must also be kept where a decision not to report is taken setting out the reason for this decision.</p>

4 Allegations against Authority staff, members or volunteers

4.1 Conduct

All Authority staff, members and volunteers must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and maintain levels of personal behaviour and conduct of the highest standard to minimise the risk of finding themselves the subject of a false allegation under the child, young person or adult at risk protection processes.

Staff should act in accordance with this policy and all relevant Authority policies in the performance of their duties.

4.2 Concerning behaviour

It is essential to act quickly and effectively if an allegation is made, or if there is suspicion or concern about an employee, Member or volunteer's relationship with a child, young person or adult, particularly if they have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may harm a child, young person or adult
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or adult
- Behaved towards a child, young person or adult in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with them

Authority staff must also remain vigilant to the possibility that another staff member may be at the risk of being drawn into promoting terrorism or otherwise may be involved violent or non-violent extremism.

4.3 Whistle Blowing

It is acknowledged that it may be very difficult for a member of staff to report that a colleague has potentially behaved inappropriately towards a child, young person or adult. The Authority will fully support and protect any member of staff or Member who, in good faith, reports concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child or adult may be being abused. This is in keeping with the Authority's Whistle Blowing policy.

The Whistle Blowing policy is specifically intended to promote honesty and openness and ensure that any employee who raises an issue or concern regarding suspected malpractice or serious wrongdoing in the workplace, will not be subject to any detriment.

4.4 Reporting Procedures

The process for reporting as outlined in section 3 of this policy should be followed. It is important that in relation to an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer the following steps are also taken:

- At the very initial stage of informing a manager, if the concern relates to a member of staff's line manager, they should report it to their SLT lead

immediately, or if that is their line manager, directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) without discussion with the line manager

- Where an allegation relates to **any** employee or volunteer this should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) and the Designated Lead for Employee Allegations. In the very early stages advice must be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) and/or Police before informing the person who is subject to an allegation, this is to consider whether there is a potential to tamper with any evidence
- Where an allegation is made against a Member this should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) and the Authority's Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
- In the case of an allegation being made about the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) this should be reported to the Solicitor & Monitoring Officer or the Chief Executive.
- Where allegations are about the poor practice of staff members rather than abuse, this should always be communicated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) for guidance and appropriate action.

4.5 Types of investigation

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice regarding a member of staff, member or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

1. Child/adult at risk safeguarding investigation (externally led by Hampshire County Council Child or Adult Services).
2. Criminal Investigation (externally led by the local constabulary).
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (internally led by the Authority using its set procedures).

In the first two incidences, the Authority will not be involved in any form of investigation unless requested to do so by the Children/Adult Services or the Police Authority.

Human Resources Service will be responsible for any disciplinary or misconduct investigations and normal employment procedures will apply.

The Solicitor & Monitoring Officer will be responsible for investigating allegations against a Member in accordance with the normal procedures for complaints against a Member for failure to comply with the members' Code of Conduct.

If someone is removed from working with a child, young person, or adult at risk because it is considered that they pose a risk of harm the Disclosure Barring Service will be notified.

5. Training and creating a Positive Safeguarding Culture

5.1 Training commitment

We are committed to ensure that all staff, members and volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with children, young people or adults at risk. The training process will help you to:

- Be able to recognise the different signs of abuse, and what appropriate course of action should be taken in these circumstances
- Have an understanding of the potential risks to themselves, and ensure good practice is adhered to at all times
- Recognise signs of improper behaviour from other staff and take appropriate action.

We will ensure all staff, members and volunteers receive an appropriate level of training. This will be based on a tiered approach and is dependent on the degree to which their role is engaged with children, young people and adults at risk. Appropriate refresher training will also be provided at regular intervals as part of a rolling programme by the Authority.

Recruitment:

Disclosure Barring Service Checks

Each post should undergo a risk assessment to determine the nature and extent of access to children, young people or adults at risk.

The appropriate level of Disclosure Barring Service Check will then be carried out in accordance with current legislation and guidance from Human Resources.

Each job description will clearly state the level of Disclosure Barring Service Check required and this will be included in the job advertisement.

Selection requirements

In addition to the appropriate Disclosure Barring Service checks, all new members of staff who will work with children, young people or adults at risk will:

- Undergo an interview which will include appropriate questions relevant to safeguarding.
- Have their identity confirmed from official documentation.
- Be required to provide two satisfactory references.
- Have their work history relating to children, young people or adults at risk (as appropriate) explored.
- Be subject to a probationary period of employment.

6. Third Parties, Data Protection and Confidentiality (inc Photography/Film)

6.1 Contractors and Third Parties

Contractors and third parties that are involved in areas where workers are likely to come into regular and/or unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk must be subject to contractual arrangements which include appropriate provisions relating to safeguarding. Where such services are tendered, this aspect must be included in the tender specification and form part of the assessment criteria.

These organisations must ensure that the correct DBS checks have been carried out for all relevant workers and provide staff with appropriate safeguarding training.

6.2 Funding and Grants

Where organisations and groups that work with children or adults at risk apply to the Authority for grant or funding assistance, including all such agreements where the Authority is acting as the lead partner, the award of the grant or funding will be subject to an appropriate and proportionate scrutiny of the organisation or groups' safeguarding practices.

6.3 Photography and use of photographic equipment

If any member of staff, member or volunteer is organising an event or meeting and would like to take photos or record a video of activities which might involve children, young people or adults at risk, advice should be sought from the Communications Team or Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy).

6.4 Confidentiality

The Authority must consider confidentiality in the performance of its duties. However, the right of a child, young person or adult at risk to be protected from harm is paramount and confidentiality may be overridden in circumstances where abuse is suspected.

However, where an allegation is made, and whilst it is being investigated, every effort should be made to ensure confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should only be shared on a "need to know" basis.

6.5 Sharing information

The Authority must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and act in accordance with its Data Protection Policy.

However, it is acknowledged that the sharing of information is essential to safeguard those at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The appropriate use of Safeguarding Incident Reporting Template will not be considered a breach of the data protection rights of the individual concerned.

The Authority is party to a number of information sharing protocols and this overrides the need for confidentiality in respect of the relevant statutory authorities as long as all activity is properly recorded.

Any queries regarding the sharing of safeguarding information with an external agency should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy) or the Legal & Information team.

Appendix A

Safeguarding Incident Recording Template

This form is used for reporting both suspicions and disclosures of possible abuse or causes of concern; therefore, not all sections may be appropriate. Please complete with as much information as possible. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence, however, the information contained within this form may be shared with appropriate agencies. **Once completed pass to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy as soon as is reasonably possible.**

Guidance for handling a Disclosure or Concern

- Take all complaints, allegations or suspicions seriously;
- Ensure the immediate safety of the person affected;
- Stay calm, and offer support and reassurance to the person making the disclosure;
- Do not make any promises regarding confidentiality;
- Listen, keep questions to a minimum, make brief but careful notes and check the person affected agrees with them (where applicable);
- Explain what you will do.

Description of Incident/Concern

This concern relates to (please tick):

- Child (under 12 years)
- Young Person (13 to 18 years)
- Adult at risk
- Adult

Safeguarding Incident Recording Template	
Your Details:	
• Name:	
• Job Role	
• Date	
• Contact Details (Phone and e-mail)	
Details of Incident / disclosure	
• Date of initial raising of concern / incident	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who raised the concern? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name ○ Contact details 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the person / child? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name ○ Age (if applicable in the case of Under 18) ○ Contact details ○ Parents or responsible adult contact details 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did the incident occur? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did the incident occur? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Date and time 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there witnesses? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name ○ Age (if applicable in the case of Under 18s) ○ Contact details 	
After the incident/ disclosure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there any witnesses to the referral? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name(s) ○ Contact details 	

- **Who have you discussed this incident with?**

- **Name(s)**

- **Contact details**

Please save this report securely and send it to:

Nigel Stone & Jim Mitchell

Appendix B

Additional Guidance for specific areas of work

We recognise that safeguarding is relevant to all areas of work and teams within the NPA and is everyone's responsibility. Some areas which have higher likelihood of contact with those at risk (e.g. working with those with additional needs, education and youth work), involve building relationships (e.g. recruitment, volunteering), working in private spaces (e.g. meetings on private property, social media interactions), or sensitive issues (e.g. mental health and wellbeing support) and are highlighted below along with any additional measures put in place.

B.1 Engagement with specific audiences

- B.1.1 Any work with young people and adults at risk through schools, youth groups, care homes or registered clubs will be done in accordance with both organisations safeguarding policies and guidelines. In most instances one or more members of staff will have signed a booking form explicitly stating that the pastoral care and physical safety of those children/young people/adults at risk remains their responsibility. In some instances, a single adult carer or parent will be the responsible adult. NPA staff and volunteers will work closely with them to promote safeguarding, plan ahead, refer any concerns via both organisations.
- B.1.2 We will reflect on any concerns in a way that is appropriate to the particular event and audience and ensure future good practice. Longer term engagement with the same attendees, or any events involving overnight stays will require extra planning and diligence.
- B.1.3 In the case of work with individual adults, adults part of a more informal group, or individual young people under the age of 18 years outside of a formal group; information and consent will need to be gathered from those individual adults (with support if necessary), or from parents or carers, ideally with the participant involved in that decision and information sharing. This information should include but is not limited to:
- Clear identification of the person (name, address, email if online)
 - Clear identification of the activity leader or coordinator.
 - Key contact and emergency contact person(s)
 - If appropriate: Identification of any additional needs, existing concerns that may allow us to plan activities more sensitively to their needs and that of other group members (e.g. Child x should only be collected by mum or designated adults, not father).
 - Consent of both the participant and their responsible adults/carers
 - Expectations of both parties' behaviour to each other
 - Sharing of what to do if either party has a safeguarding concern, who to contact and how.
- B.1.4 In the case of events run jointly with partner organisations, we will exchange policies and refer to both procedures, the key event organiser has the responsibility to ensure this happens.

For more detailed guidance refer to [hyperlinks to be added]:
NFNPA General guidance for working with children and young people
PEDALL Inclusive cycling operating procedures
Supporting work experience handbook

B.2 Digital meetings and communication, including social media

All teams within the NFNPA interact with children, young people or adults at risk in a variety of digital spaces. We recognise digital spaces can provide a window into private physical spaces e.g. private homes, and are a higher risk environment for building hidden and negative relationships e.g. grooming.

These spaces include but are not limited to:

- Live digital meetings, presentations and interactive workshops
- Social media in the public domain, closed groups or private messaging
- Email, online file sharing, chatrooms, messaging and workspaces, internal and external with other professionals or individuals.
- Published materials on our own websites, materials we have shared with partner organisations and third-party platforms e.g. Eventbrite

All content, events and spaces created under our control or paid licence (e.g. website, SharePoint sites, Microsoft teams) and use of spaces hosted by others (e.g. Eventbrite), will be carefully planned for considering all four categories of risk-conduct, content, contact and commercialisation, with any sharing of personal data reflecting our GDPR policy. Regular updates in good practice will be shared between DSLs, systems support and relevant teams to ensure content is appropriate, codes of conduct are in place and regularly referred to, and any commercial content is appropriate to our areas of work or limited.

In the case of events run jointly with partner organisations, we will exchange policies and refer to both procedures, the event host has the responsibility to ensure this happens.

For more detailed guidance refer to:

- Guidance for hosting virtual events/ Virtual events risk assessment
- Social media guidelines
- IT users' policy
- GDPR policy
- [Privacy Notice - public participation at virtual meetings](#)
- [Recording of Authority Meetings Guidance](#)

B.3 Consideration within design of new projects/ funded work.

We are an organisation that values partnership working and are actively seeking to work with a more diverse audiences in order to help build positive relationship with the natural and cultural heritage of the National Park and support sustainable economic, environmental and cultural practices. We regularly seek funding from external sources to expand beyond our core work. As such any new area of work or project designed and led ourselves, or where we are a key delivery partner on a joint funding bid, should be designed with safeguarding in mind. This could include but is not limited to:

- Well-designed staff and volunteer roles and selection

- Appropriate, funded training and knowledge sharing between current and new staff and partner organisations
- Consideration of new areas of risk as we engage with new audiences,
- Consideration of new areas of risk as we engage in new activity
- Consultation with appropriate bodies, national guidance or standards
- Compliance with standards set by grant awarding bodies
- Continuous reflective practice, policy or guideline updates and progress toward achieving excellence

We are also a grant giving body. Where we are funding others to undertake new work, we will set expectations and ask for evidence that up-to-date safeguarding guidance is followed.

Appendix C

Helpful Organisations and Contacts

Concerns about a child:

Hampshire - to report your concerns or to talk to a duty social worker regarding child protection call HantsDirect (Children's Services):

0300 555 1384 (office hours)
0300 555 1373 (out of hours)
Professionals Line 01329 225379
www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services

Wiltshire - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 456 0108 or 0300 456 0100 (out of hours).

Concern about an adult at risk:

Hampshire - to report your concerns or to talk to a duty social worker regarding vulnerable adults call HantsDirect (Adult Services):

0300 555 1386 (office hours)
0300 555 1373 (out of hours)
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/contact>

Wiltshire – Adult Social Care Advice and Contact Team on 0300 456 0111 or 0300 456 0100 (out of hours).

Other useful contacts:

Police (emergency): 999
Police (non-emergency): 101
[Report a crime | Hampshire Constabulary](#)

Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board
[Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board | Working together to safeguard adults at risk \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](#)

Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
[Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(hampshirescp.org.uk\)](#)

Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership
[Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership \(SVPP\) - Home page \(wiltshiresvpp.org.uk\)](#)

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0800 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

Hourglass (Safer Ageing, Stopping Abuse) helpline: 0808 8088141 [Hourglass \(wearehourglass.org\)](https://wearehourglass.org)

Respond (for people with learning difficulties): 020 7383 0700 www.respond.org.uk

Women's Aid (the key national charity in England for women and children experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse in their homes): [Home - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://www.womensaid.org.uk)

Refuge (domestic violence help for women and children advocacy, housing and community outreach): www.refuge.org.uk

Yellow Door, Southampton (provides a range of integrated, specialist services to those who are at risk of or who have been affected by an unwanted sexual experience): <https://www.yellowdoor.org.uk/about-us>

Respect (a confidential and anonymous help for anyone concerned about their violence and/or abuse towards a partner or ex-partner). <http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk>

Mankind (help for men experiencing domestic abuse): <http://new.mankind.org.uk>

Hampshire County Council Preventing terrorism and radicalisation within our communities. [Prevent | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/prevent)

Hampshire Modern Slavery Partnership. [Modern Slavery Partnership - Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner \(hampshire-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/modern-slavery-partnership)

National Referral Mechanism. [National referral mechanism guidance: adult \(England and Wales\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/national-referral-mechanism-guidance-adult)

Crimestoppers. [Independent UK charity taking crime information anonymously | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/)

Useful employee contacts:

Employee Support Line (Employee Assistance Programme provides proactive, practical information and emotional support to help employees to manage and reduce the impact of all of life's events, both at home and at work).

The Authority's Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA's). Mental Health First Aid is just like physical first aid - it's being the first point of contact. Our MHFA's have all qualified from a national training course. They have a good understanding of different mental health conditions and the impact of these; they can recognise signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and they are able to listen non-judgementally, give initial information and detail appropriate support to you. You may approach a MHFA for information and initial support, or they may approach you if they are concerned about you.