

Safeguarding in the VCSE Sector

The voluntary and community sector in Calderdale is a vibrant and diverse range of organisations, big and small, who lead on activities and community engagement that contributes to the wellbeing of thousands of people each year across our borough.

This Toolkit

To ensure organisations are delivering safe and responsible support, activities and events, it is vital everyone involved understands their role in safeguarding and are able to demonstrate their commitment to keeping people safe.

Whether the work is with children & young people, potential adults at risk, or even the wider public, your organisation needs to make sure that safeguarding is embedded across the whole organisation – from your Board (or Committee), staff, volunteers and independent workers, right through to those who use your service.

This toolkit is designed to offer a range of helpful documents that can guide your organisation in ensuring everyone can confidently understand and deliver good safeguarding practices.

The toolkit comprises of:

1. Safeguarding & Trustees: Key things you need to know
2. Bringing the Right People In: Safer Recruitment & DBS Checks
3. Calderdale Safeguarding Training & Useful Contacts
4. Safeguarding Policy templates (available as separate documents):
 - a. Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy template
 - b. Alert or Concern Form template
 - c. Children & Young People Safeguarding Policy template
 - d. Code of Conduct template
 - e. Disclosure and Barring Policy template
 - f. Managing Allegations Guidance template
 - g. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy template
 - h. Safer Recruitment Policy template
 - i. Whistleblowing Policy template



Safeguarding & Trustees: What You Need To Know

The Charity Commission places safeguarding responsibility on the Trustees of registered charities to create strong safeguarding cultures within their organisations, but good practice guidelines suggest groups who aren't registered charities (e.g., CICs, Co-operatives) also follow key elements of this advice.

1. For Trustees (... and Directors & Committee Members!)

A strong safeguarding culture means:

- The organisation protects the people it comes into contact with (including staff and volunteers)
- The organisation identifies and minimises the risks of any harm or abuse
- Everyone the organisation comes into contact with has confidence their concerns will be dealt with appropriately
- That everyone in the organisation understands their individual roles

Key Elements of Good Practice

1. *Identify and manage risks*

Each charity must identify safeguarding risks to manage. Risks will depend on who your organisation works with and what involvement you have with individuals, families or groups.

2. *Have suitable policies and practices in place*

Your organisation must have good safeguarding policies which everyone understands and uses – your policies must include advice and procedures that allow everyone involved to know how to identify and report a concern.

3. *Carry out necessary appropriate checks*

You must make sure trustees, volunteers and staff are suitable for their roles by carrying out relevant checks. These should include references (employment ones for paid staff), ID checks for all, exploring gaps in people's work history and, where eligible, carrying out Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

4. *Protect your volunteers and staff*

This includes having clear policies on things like bullying & harassment, and whistleblowing. It's also vital that your organisation has suitable insurance in place, such as Public Liability and/or Employers Liability.



Safeguarding & Trustees: What You Need To Know

5. *Manage and report incidents appropriately*

There's no point having safeguarding policies if your organisation doesn't use them. Trustees (and/or committee members and directors) have a responsibility to ensure the policies make sense, are straightforward to follow and are cascaded to everyone involved.

It is also the board/committee's responsibility to ensure you act on feedback where policies are too complicated or difficult to follow.

Once a policy & procedure is agreed, everyone in the organisation must adhere to them when managing incidents or allegations.

This should include:

- managing and recording in a secure and responsible way
- acting quickly, ensuring those responding to concerns stop or minimise any further harm
- reporting to all relevant agencies
- sharing appropriate information with the wider board or committee
- in cases of serious harm or death, be prepared to share all relevant information with statutory partners (e.g., social care, police)

Other Local Sources of Safeguarding Support

Calderdale Council Safeguarding Services are available for advice about concerns specific to a person accessing your service, or support where you need to make a referral.

For Children & Young People, contact the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST)
Tel 01422 393336 Email: MASTadmin@calderdale.gov.uk

For Adults, contact Gateway to Care
Tel 01422 393000 Email: gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk

And where allegations or concerns have been raised around the suitability of someone in your organisation working with children or young people, please contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) LADOAdmin@calderdale.gov.uk

Additional Sources of Information

Additional resources and information from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations [Safeguarding | NCVO](#)

Charity Commission YouTube videos: [Safeguarding for charities and trustees](#)

Safer Recruitment

2. Bringing the right people in

No system is perfect, but here at VAC we've seen many groups over the years often over-rely on DBS checks. The wider work of a good safer recruitment process means organisations have a robust methodology when it comes to bringing new people into the organisation. It is very important for your organisation to know:

- who they're bringing on board,
- the relevant background about the person
- and how an individual will fit into the role they've applied for

Following safer recruitment processes gives an organisation the best possible chance of avoiding onboarding someone who is a risk to children, young people or adults at risk.

Key elements of safer recruitment include:

1. A recruitment policy
2. A recruitment of ex-offenders policy
3. Role descriptions and person specifications
4. Application forms
5. Getting satisfactory references *before* the person starts
6. Completing checks (ID checks for all and, where applicable, DBS checks)
7. Induction and training (neither need to be formal)
8. Ongoing supervision/check-ins where safeguarding is part of the conversation (again, this doesn't need to be formal)

Disclosure & Barring Checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service helps organisations make safer recruitment decisions – but DBS checks are only one thread in a good safer recruitment process.

A DBS check is done on a person, but it is the role they are going to do that determines whether a check is needed (not the person applying for that role). Roles that are eligible for a DBS check are referred to as Regulated Activity.

If groups are asking someone to undertake a DBS check for a role that isn't eligible, they could be in breach of Data Protection legislation, as they might be asking for information they have no right to.

DBS Checks

There are four levels of check:

Basic DBS For positions not exempt under Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.	Shows only convictions that are unspent including information about conditional cautions	You can apply for your own.
Standard DBS For positions exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.	Shows all spent and unspent convictions and cautions	You cannot apply for your own, it must be an organisation that applies.
Enhanced DBS For positions exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	Shows all spent and unspent convictions & cautions and includes information held by the Police, nationally.	You cannot apply for your own, it must be an organisation that applies.
Enhanced with Barred For positions exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	It provides the same information as an Enhanced check but also checks against the Children's and or Adult's Barred List	You cannot apply for your own, it must be an organisation that applies.

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act got to do with it?

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) allows cautions and convictions to be considered spent (i.e., legally ignored) after a specific amount of time (which varies depending on the offence). This time is known as the *rehabilitation period*. So, when the person has spent convictions, the law treats the person as if they had never committed an offence and they no longer must disclose past offences.

However, for roles that involve certain contact with children, young people and adults at risk (such as close physical contact, personal care, teaching, and/or unsupervised contact) these roles are *exempt* from the Act meaning anyone applying for such a role must (through the process of a Standard or above DBS Check application) disclose all past cautions or convictions, even if they are past the rehabilitation period.

Where can we get checks done?

The DBS website holds a list of 'umbrella' organisation – businesses that, for a fee, will undertake the checks on behalf of your organisation

<https://dbs-ub-directory.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

And in case you didn't realise, your organisation won't receive a copy, only the person who's being checked will - so remember to ask to see the physical copy in person.



DBS Checks

What level should we get done?

The level you apply for is dependent on the role a person is going to undertake. It can be a little frustrating sometimes as your trustees (or in some cases, your Governing document) may expect a more in-depth check than an umbrella provider deems eligible (for the role) and they may deny you access to a particular level of check.

Where confusion or conflict arises, the DBS Service has regional advisors who can help. You can email them at dbsregionaloutreach@dbs.gov.uk

How much do they cost?

Although the checks themselves are free for volunteers, all incur an admin charge. Different providers charge different amounts, but they're normally between £14 and £25 per check. Checks for paid staff are more expensive and are generally around £65-£85 each.

When something crops up

A DBS check is a tool that simply offers additional information to help your organisation make a decision... And, where disclosures appear, it requires your attention and care to build an accurate picture of a person.

Where a conviction (or caution) appears on a check, it doesn't necessarily mean the person isn't suitable for your organisation – have a conversation with them and give them a chance to explain. Take notes to share appropriately with named Trustees to consider all the facts. You need to take into account *when* the offence happened, what the *outcome* was, and whether it was part of a *pattern* of behaviour.

The crucial question to ask is *does this show the person may be unable to safely and responsibly volunteer for us?* Remember, the aim here is to assess risk in order to be fair and equitable.

Where the Board of Trustees decide to reject an application based on a DBS check, good practice dictates you explain why the disclosure prevented them from being able to join – avoid 'avoiding' the conversation.



Training and Other Guidance

Support from Voluntary And Community (VAC)

We offer free information and advice across a range of safeguarding issues that VCSE organisations have to manage.

We also offer free face-to-face training for volunteers, designated safeguarding leads, and trustees/committee members around safeguarding governance. Please contact us for a conversation about your organisation's needs. info@cvac.org.uk / 01422 348 777

Free Safeguarding Training from Calderdale's Safeguarding Partnership

Anyone working or volunteering in Calderdale (for organisations delivering activities or support to children, young people or adults) can access free training through the Safeguarding Children Partnership & Safeguarding Adults Board.

Their platform is called Enable and to book on to any of the courses, you will need to create an account first, please visit <https://calderdalescp.vc-enable.co.uk/Register>

Please note the Enable system can sometime reject a personal email address (including yahoo, AOL and btinternet). Should you struggle to register, the Training Manager at the Safeguarding Partnership, Sally Fletcher, will be able to advise. She can be contacted via email (sally.fletcher@calderdale.gov.uk).

For more information about the Partnership's offer, please visit

<https://safeguarding.calderdale.gov.uk/professionals/training-and-development/>

Other Sources of Support

NSPCC's website has a wide range of advice, training, templates and FAQ's that are an excellent source of support [NSPCC Learning | Safeguarding and child protection](#)

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust is the UK's pioneering personal safety charity and leading stalking authority, established in 1986 and offers advice and guidance around personal safety and lone working [Personal Safety & Lone Working training](#)

Mencap has lots of guidance and helpful advice for those working with adults with disabilities or families with children with disabilities [Let's talk about safeguarding - Responding to abuse | Mencap | Easy Read](#)

Childline is the telephone line for children to talk about anything. No problem is too big or too small Tel: 0800 1111

The Ann Craft Trust has lots of resources around safeguarding adults, including a checklist organisations can undertake themselves [Our Safeguarding Checklist- A Free Assessment - Ann Craft Trust](#)