

Safeguarding policy

Safeguarding and promoting the safety and well-being of girls, young women and adults is the first priority of Girlguiding. It is at the heart of everything we do, and it is the responsibility of every Girlguiding volunteer, member and member of staff.

Statement of purpose

It is extremely important that you're clear about your safeguarding responsibilities, and about Girlguiding's commitment to safeguarding.

Our safeguarding policy will make that clear for you. It's for everyone involved with Girlguiding - whether you're a volunteer, member or member of staff - and it shows you our safeguarding principles and how we seek to protect children, young people and adults who are involved with the organisation.

You must read and always follow the safeguarding policy, and the safeguarding procedures that go with it. This is a condition of your employment or voluntary service.

Girlguiding's commitment to safeguarding

It's our policy to safeguard all adults and children while they take part in Girlguiding activities. We are committed to safeguarding adults and children of all backgrounds and identities, and we recognise that some people are vulnerable because of a protected characteristic or aspect of their identity, the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, their communication needs, or other issues. Everyone has a right to live free from abuse, exploitation, harm and fear and to be safe and well. We recognise and respond to all types of abuse and harm including physical, emotional, sexual and domestic abuse, neglect, online abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), female genital mutilation, bullying, harassment and cyberbullying, radicalisation, trafficking, grooming and harmful sexual behaviour. You can find more information on the categories of abuse on the [NSPCC website](#).

We work in partnership with children, young people, parents, carers, and external agencies to promote the safeguarding and physical and mental welfare of our volunteers, members, young members and staff.

Our safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance are designed to create a safe space for great guiding, protecting the safety and wellbeing of all our girls, young women and adults, regardless of role. They are also designed to enable everyone associated with Girlguiding to share allegations, concerns, or disclosures - whether related to Girlguiding activities or external to Girlguiding.

How do we effectively safeguard adults and children?

- We value, listen to, and respect them.
- We have a [safeguarding structure](#) in place.
- We have child protection and safeguarding procedures which reflect best practice in the UK safeguarding sector.
- We share concerns and information with other agencies when there are significant concerns about an adult's suitability to work with children, or where we believe that someone is at risk of abuse or harm.
- We process information lawfully and securely, in line with Girlguiding Data Protection procedures and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- We increase knowledge and awareness of child protection and safeguarding best practice with volunteers, members and staff. We do this via A Safe Space pocket guides, e-learning and face-to-face training.
- We recruit volunteers and staff safely, in line with our recruitment policies.
- We expect all volunteers and staff to follow effective and good safeguarding behaviours
- We use our procedures to manage allegations against volunteers and staff.

- We expect volunteers to follow the code of conduct and we take action as set out by our policies and procedures if they are not adhered to.
- We use complaints and whistleblowing policies and procedures to identify safeguarding concerns.
- We always have health and safety measures in place, in line with the law and statutory guidance, to provide a safe physical or digital environment.

What does Girlguiding expect of you as volunteers, adult members and staff?

- To follow effective and [good safeguarding behaviours](#)
- To report all concerns, allegations and disclosures to your commissioner, the HQ Safeguarding Team or, if you are based with British Girlguiding Overseas, the BGO Chief Commissioner
- You must inform your commissioner or the Safeguarding team of any ongoing or past investigation(s) by the Police, Social Services, an employer or other organisation you volunteer for, which relates to children or adults at risk, involving yourself or any person you have a significant relationship with.
- To work with your commissioner or the HQ Safeguarding Team to act when there's a report of an allegation, concern or disclosure.
- To be vigilant - so that you are alert when something is wrong or concerning.
- To act as soon as there's a problem or concern. Report it within 24 hours, or sooner if it is an emergency or there's an immediate risk of harm.
- To consider inclusion and accessibility when dealing with safeguarding issues. This could mean making adjustments to support disabled members or those with other needs.
- To be accountable - don't assume that someone else has responded to a concern.
- To support the development of safeguarding knowledge.
- To help on behalf of others and support them to develop their voice.
- To complete mandatory safeguarding training relevant to your role, in line with our A Safe Space programme.

What do I do if I have a concern?

As a volunteer or member of staff you must understand the procedures for recognising, responding to and referring any concerns, allegations or disclosures of harm or abuse. You can find information about this in our safeguarding procedures.

If you have a concern about someone in Girlguiding you must follow our process for reporting. You can find information about this in our A Safe Space pocket guide, and in our safeguarding procedure document.

You can contact the HQ Safeguarding Team on:

- Tel: + 44 20 7834 6242 (9am-5pm Monday-Friday excl. bank holidays)
- For safeguarding emergencies only - Out of hours emergency phone: +44 07508 032997 (5pm-10pm Monday-Friday; 9am-10pm Saturday/Sunday/English Bank Holidays)
- Email: safeguarding@Girlguiding.org.uk

In an emergency you should also contact the police or other emergency service, you must let the Safeguarding team know as soon as it is practical to do so.

For volunteers or members of staff from British Girlguiding Overseas (BGO) you can also contact the BGO Chief Commissioner on (+33) 6224 53553. If the Chief Commissioner is unavailable contact the HQ Safeguarding Team as above.

Timescales

The Safeguarding team aims to respond to new concerns/emails within 1-2 working days and will always respond within 5 working days. The out of hours phone is for emergencies only.

Legal framework and Girlguiding policies

This safeguarding policy complies with all relevant UK legislation, policy and guidance which seeks to protect children and adults. For those guiding outside of the UK in order to provide the same level of protection to all our members we expect you to follow this policy.

You will find a summary of this relevant legislation in the appendix. Should you need any further information or explanation about these, you can contact the HQ Safeguarding Team.

You should read this policy alongside our other organisational policies, guidance, and procedures. Find these on the website: or on the intranet for staff.

This policy will be reviewed annually, and any revisions agreed through appropriate process. It may be reviewed outside of this if required, including if any relevant legislation changes, charity commission recommendations or any other significant change or event.

Appendix

Related policies, procedures and documents

You can find these on the [Girlguiding website](#). Girlguiding is committed to these policies:

- Managing concerns about adult volunteers policy
- Anti-bullying and harassment policy
- Complaints policy
- Managing information policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Recruitment and vetting policy
- Digital safeguarding policy
- Health, safety and welfare policy

Procedures - how Girlguiding puts our policies into practice

- Managing concerns about adult volunteers procedure
- Complaints procedure
- Whistleblowing procedure
- Safeguarding procedure
- Investigation procedure

Supporting documents and guidance

- Volunteer code of conduct
- *Dos and don'ts of handling disclosures*
- Sharing photos and videos online guidance
- Privacy notice
- A Safe Space pocket guide

Documents available to staff

- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Safeguarding for Girlguiding Staff

Legislation and guidance for safeguarding children and adults (not exhaustive)

The NSPCC provides an overview of child safeguarding [legislation](#).

Human Rights Act 1998

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

England and Wales

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Working together to Safeguard Children 2018

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups 2006

Care Act 2014

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Wales

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

All Wales child protection procedures, 2008

Working together to safeguard people guidance

Scotland

Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2018)

National guidance for child protection in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2014a)

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (PVG Act)

Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

Northern Ireland

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and young people in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2017)

Revised regional core child protection policies and procedures for Northern Ireland (Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, 2018)

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership

British Girlguiding Overseas (BGO)

For relevant legislation please contact the BGO Chief Commissioner for details