

Safeguarding: what are your responsibilities?

 makingmusic.org.uk/resource/safeguarding-what-are-your-responsibilities



Working with young people and adults at risk can be hugely beneficial for the individuals and group involved. It also comes with a responsibility for the group to ensure they provide a safe environment and that any children and adults at risk are protected. A good safeguarding policy is central to this.

We recommend that all groups have a safeguarding policy – regardless of their level of involvement with children and adults at risk (although the level of detail required will depend on your level of involvement with children/adults at risk). This guidance will explain why safeguarding is important, look at the best practice for voluntary groups and provide practical advice on how to make a safeguarding policy and ensure children and vulnerable people are safe. We also have a [template policy and procedure document](#) for you to use.

Contents:

What is safeguarding?

Under the law (Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004) and government guidance on how organisations should work together, voluntary groups have a responsibility to contribute to the safeguarding of the children with whom they work, to act on any concerns that a child is at risk of abuse and make sure that the way they work does not place children at unacceptable risk of harm.

Safeguarding: the process of protecting children from harm - whether the harm is caused by accidents, deliberate abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), neglect, bullying, discrimination or prejudice or failure to help children take part in activities that are open to most of their peers.

Safeguards: measures put in place to help reduce the risk of children and young people being harmed.

Why should you have a safeguarding policy?

A safeguarding policy is fundamentally about protecting children and adults at risk – but there is more to it than that. A good policy should:

- protect children and adults at risk from harm and abuse
- enable staff and volunteers to know what to do if they are worried
- show that your group is responsible and has pride in its work
- help create a safe and secure environment, helping the group to thrive and ensure everyone gets the most out of working with children and adults at risk.

In addition to the above:

- funders will often ask for a safeguarding policy as part of your funding bid and
- the Charity Commission also ask for one as part of their registration process.

If we don't work with children/young people why do we need one at all?

It might seem a policy is not needed if you do not work with children and adults at risk. But simply not working with them does not mean you won't have some level of involvement – they may attend your concerts for example.

Whilst the risk is very low, if something were to happen you will be grateful of a policy to fall back and help you deal with a potentially difficult situation – it is worth taking a little bit of time now to ensure you have something in place.

Common sense: Safeguarding can be a daunting prospect - but it does not have to be a great deal of work. There is a level of common sense to be applied to how detailed your policy needs to be in relation to how much you work with children and young people. There are also lots of great free resources and template/model policies and procedures available (see Help from the experts below). We anticipate that Making Music members groups will fall into 5 main categories

- We are a youth group: this one is pretty simple – a detailed policy must be in place.
- We are not a youth group but we do have some children/adults at risk as members: if they are members and regularly attending then you should have a thorough policy in place.
- We don't have any children/adults at risk as members but we do often have children/adults at risk involved (e.g. helping at rehearsals etc.) – if this is regular then you should have a thorough policy in place.

- We occasionally have children/adults at risk helping out (e.g. – handing our programmes at concerts) – If it is occasional and irregular then a more top line policy may be sufficient. But you should think about any specific procedures need to be followed when children/adults at risk are present.
- We have no involvement with children/adults at risk – a top line approach is fine here.

What is a Safeguarding policy?

A safeguarding policy can include many different things but essentially it should detail the general approach and practical measures your group has in place to ensure children and vulnerable people are protected.

It should be made available to all members and parents/guardians/carers of any children/adults at risk. For *all* groups this should include the following:

- A written statement of your group's commitment to protecting children and adults at risk – including the main ways you expect to work with children and adults at risk.
- Named people who are responsible for safeguarding. Including:
 - Someone who is in charge on a practical level – the main point of contact for members and external people (e.g. parents of children)
 - Someone at the highest level in your organisation (a board member/trustee) to support the named person and offer leadership.
- A procedure for children and adults to raise complaints
- A procedure of how any complaints will be dealt with
- Procedures for informing the relevant authorities when necessary
- Review date - the policy should be reviewed and updated as necessary on an annual basis. If at any point your group's involvement with children/adults at risk increases then your policy should be reviewed and updated accordingly

Template policy: we have a [template policy and procedure document](#) available for members. You can also find further guidance and template documents on the NSPCC website (see 'Help from the experts' below).

A more detailed Safeguarding policy

For groups who require a top line approach, the above is fine. For groups who are directly involved with children and adults at risk on a regular basis, you should include more detailed procedures to help you practically manage safeguarding. This could include:

- **Named responsible people - in more detail:**
 - As well as having a named person you should think about having at least one other person to provide cover. If it is a large group you could have more than one.
 - The responsibilities of the named person (and the cover people) should be clearly defined. They need to make sure that the relevant people and responsibilities are in place each time the group meets (e.g. – number of people present with DBS checks) There are more details on the sort of things to think about in the guidance and ground rules bullet point)
- **DBS checks** – if you are working with children then you should get the relevant people DBS checked. Not everyone needs a DBS check but your named people and anyone working directly with children should have them. You can find out more about who should get a DBS and how they work here as well as request DBS checks through Making Music. Things to think about for your policy are:
 - Criteria for who should have a check
 - Who is responsible for arranging them
 - Who tracks the results
 - Who sees the results and how are they used

Please note: the process of getting checks is different in Scotland to the rest of the UK – you can find out more here.

- Working with parents/guardians:
 - Ensure there are procedures in place for getting written permission from parents/guardians before children are allowed to attend.
 - Have up to date emergency contact details (these should be stored securely)
 - Having knowledge of the usual drop-off and pick-up arrangements is useful.
 - Try and build up a rapport with parents/guardians/carers
- **Guidelines and ground rules:** Each time your group meets, the Named Person(s) should ensure that proper safeguards are in place – having some basic guidelines and ground rules will help them manage this. Things to think about are:
 - The number of people present with a DBS check – this should always be one but we recommend more for larger groups
 - Adult to child ratios: not all adults have to be DBS checked – as long as some DBS checked adults are present. Ofsted recommends the following ratios:

Child's age	Amount of adults	Amount of children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

We know that on a practical level this can be difficult for groups and there is some flexibility – but it is something you should think about how you want to manage.

- - Adults who have not had the relevant DBS checks should not be left alone with children. It should also be avoided as far as is practically possible for adults with DBS checks.
 - Mixed genders: if you have children of mixed genders it is a good idea to try and have adults of mixed genders too.
 - First aid: for groups working with children on a day to day basis it is recommended that you have a qualified first aider present. 'Day to day basis' will not apply to most of our groups – but first aid is something you should think about – even if it just knowing where your venue's first aid kit is.
 - Where are emergency contact numbers are stored – who can access them and how.
 - Procedures for the end of rehearsals/concerts: ideally two adults (one DBS checked) should be the last to leave and be responsible for ensuring children/adults at risk get home safely.
- **Code of safeguarding:** this should set out how adults, children, and vulnerable people will work together in your group. It should detail what is expected of everyone and, how they should treat each other and dos and don'ts. As with the policy, in general, the Code of Behaviour should be available to all group members and parents/guardians/carers.
- **Risk assessment:** if you use a venue regularly you should carry out a risk assessment to identify any potential hazards and how you can minimise and manage this risk. You can [find out more about risk assessments here](#).

Insurance cover for abuse

Even with safeguards being in place, abuse and allegations of abuse can still happen. If this does happen all Making Music insurance packages do include indemnity cover for the groups if a claim were to be made against them.

The cover is dependent on the group having met the following conditions (also detailed in Making Music Full Group Policy documents, found via your Dashboard).

When employing / working with someone in a freelance capacity who will be doing [regulated activity](#) with children / adults at risk you must have:

1. Two written references to be obtained detailing any previous work carried out by persons involved with children or adults at risk.
2. A formal interview to be conducted to assess the commitment of such persons mentioned in 1 above to maintaining the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk.

3. Undertaking a disclosure check of such persons mentioned in 1 above with the Disclosure and Barring Service (England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or if in Scotland ensure that they are a member of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme
4. Having and adhering to a written abuse policy incorporating roles responsibilities and procedures which includes appropriate risk assessments being undertaken and guidelines to be followed.

Help from the experts and safeguarding training

We have teamed up with the [Child Protection Company](#) to develop an [online safeguarding course](#) designed specifically for leisure-time music groups, available to Making Music members at a discounted rate.

The [NSPCC website](#) has some training free resources available to help you put a policy together. Some particularly useful ones are:

- [Writing a safeguarding policy](#) (including template document)
- [Writing policies and procedures](#) – factsheet
- [Are they safe?](#) - a step by step guide to writing a detailed policy

Safeguarding in Scotland

The advice in the guidance is best practice for voluntary groups across the UK and can be used establish the basic principles of safeguarding and to help you put a policy in place.

Groups in Scotland should note that there are different laws and provisions for checking criminal records history and identifying whether people are suitable to work with children and young people. As such the DBS checks mentioned above are not relevant to groups in Scotland. You can [find out more about disclosures in Scotland here](#).

Safeguarding in Northern Ireland - AccessNI

What is an AccessNI check?

AccessNI is the system used in Northern Ireland for the disclosure of an individual's criminal history to help organisations make safer recruitment decisions.

Voluntary positions that involve close or regular contact with children or vulnerable adults will require a criminal history record check.

Can I use a certificate I have from another role?

You can't transfer a disclosure certificate from one role to another. If this is a new role with another organisation, you'll need to apply for a separate certificate.

Access NI has 3 levels of disclosure.

Each level reveals more detail about criminal convictions.

Basic check: discloses all unspent convictions or states that no convictions were found. Individuals may apply for a basic check.

Standard check: discloses both spent and unspent convictions and informed warnings and other non-court disposals from the Police National Computer. Standard checks must be made through an AccessNI registered organisation (umbrella body).

Enhanced check: discloses a full criminal record including spent and unspent convictions, cautions, informed warnings, information held by the DBS, other relevant information (soft intelligence) held by the police. Enhanced checks must be made through an AccessNI registered organisation (umbrella body).

What kind of disclosure do I need?

For volunteering roles that require regular supervision of children or vulnerable adults, an enhanced check is required.

Applying through an umbrella body.

Your group or organisation may not be registered with AccessNI. In that case you will have to use an umbrella body. These bodies provide services to employers and voluntary groups in Northern Ireland that need a standard or enhanced disclosure.

A list of umbrella bodies are listed here by county. Your committee may be able to advise which umbrella body is best to use. The umbrella body will issue you a PIN number to use when applying.

How much does an enhanced check cost?

An enhanced check will normally cost £33 but AccessNI may waive this fee if the role is voluntary within a non-profit organisation.

Registering with AccessNI.

To apply for an enhanced check you'll need to create and NI Direct account with the following information:

- PIN given to you by the umbrella body;
- your home addresses for the last five years;
- your National Insurance number;
- your driving licence and passport numbers (if you have these documents).

What happens after I register for an enhanced check?

You'll get an email confirming the umbrella body received your application for approval. When your application is approved, AccessNI will process and issue it to you. You can track your application's progress by [logging in](#) to your NI Direct account. It can take up to 3–4 weeks to process and application.

Lost or damaged disclosure certificates.

If you lose or damage a certificate within 90 days you can request a replacement free of charge.

Top 5 takeaways

1. All groups should have a safeguarding policy.
2. It doesn't have to be too complicated – a common sense approach is fine - the level of detail required depends on your involvement with children/adults at risk.
3. It's worth investing the time now – a good policy will put you on solid footing – if you do ever need it, you will be very glad it's there.
4. Your policy should be available for all members and connected people to see
5. Get help - the NSPCC site have free resources to help you – make sure you use them.

[Request a DBS check application pack](#)

We hope you find this Making Music resource useful. If you have any comments or suggestions about the guidance please [contact us](#). Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the content of this guidance is accurate and up to date, Making Music does not warrant, nor accept any liability or responsibility for the completeness or accuracy of the content, or for any loss which may arise from reliance on the information contained in it.