

Why do we want to know about your approach to Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion?

Quite simply, we support the voluntary sector to help people and communities thrive across Wiltshire and Swindon. The safety and wellbeing of those benefiting from our grants is key to this.

Because they are a high priority for everyone supporting the voluntary sector, a wealth of information on safeguarding and equality is available. This may feel overwhelming, especially if you are part of a very small organisation with limited time or are just starting up. Hopefully, this guidance will help you to navigate this information as well as explaining why we want to understand what you are doing. (See end of document for local sources of support & guidance).

At the heart of all the advice is a desire to ensure that everyone involved with the voluntary sector, whether as a trustee, volunteer, staff member or recipient of support, can do so safely and is treated with respect and dignity.

Think about the things that make us feel comfortable in any given environment. The list might include:

- a warm welcome
- being spoken to kindly
- being treated fairly
- being free to share an idea or opinion
- being able to make a contribution
- knowing what you can expect and what is expected of you
- feeling safe
- feeling that any worries or concerns are taken seriously
- knowing people have thought about how to run activities safely
- being able to trust the people supporting us

This is what safeguarding and equality is all about. Thinking through safeguarding and equality questions relevant to your organisation and having clear processes so everyone knows what is expected, will help to create the sort of environment, where all individuals, regardless of their background or vulnerabilities, can feel welcome, comfortable and safe, and ultimately thrive.

Key things that we will want to know you have considered:

Acknowledge and accept – it is an uncomfortable truth, but harm, abuse, prejudice or discrimination can and does occur in any setting and some people are more at risk than others. This is recognised in key legislation and guidance e.g. the Care Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 and the Equality Act, 2010.

Know what is expected – trustees (management committee) should check what their responsibilities are in respect of safeguarding and equality, both in terms of good practice and the law. This will be determined by the types of activities you provide and who the beneficiaries are, but all organisations will need to take some action. Organisations working with children, young people or adults at risk have specific responsibilities in terms of safeguarding including having a designated Safeguarding Lead. The Equality Act 2010 gives organisations providing services responsibilities towards people with certain 'protected characteristics'. If you need more information, a good place to start is:

[What is safeguarding? — NCVO Knowhow](#)

[Get started with equity, diversity and inclusion — NCVO Knowhow](#)

If you want to further develop your knowledge or practice, try:

[Checklists and frameworks — NCVO Knowhow](#)

[ACF publishes new report on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - ACF](#)

Understanding the risks or barriers – trustees should take time to work out (and periodically review) what are the potential risks or barriers involved in their services from all perspectives e.g., staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, trustees and members of the public. This understanding will then form the basis for deciding what you need to do in terms of safeguarding and equality.

Recognise, respond and report – everyone involved in the organisation should be able to recognise a safeguarding concern and know what to do about it. Trustees will need to make sure everyone has information about the things to look out for, who to speak to about a concern, and where to record the details. A clearly written Safeguarding Procedure with up-to-date contact details and a reporting template is important. All trustees, staff and volunteers should be familiar with the document.

[Policies and procedures — NCVO Knowhow](#)

[Health and safety for community groups | Resource Centre](#)

Similarly, anyone in the organisation should feel they know how to recognise and raise an issue about equality, diversity and inclusion. Clear statements on how the organisation views and deals with bullying and harassment are also helpful, as is a clear complaints procedure.

[Respond to discrimination — NCVO Knowhow](#)

[Equality and diversity policies for small groups | Resource Centre](#)

Roles & responsibilities/involving everyone - trustees should give everyone involved in the organisation clear guidance on their safeguarding and equality responsibilities, which will depend on their roles. The Charity Commission recommends appointing at least one person who oversees safeguarding, deals with any concerns and ensures regular reviews and updates. Ultimately, everyone can play their part in good safeguarding practices. Similarly, you may want someone to take a lead on equalities, as this is a continual learning process.

Choosing staff, volunteers and trustees – it is important for organisations to have a clear and consistent process for selecting trustees, staff or volunteers that involves appropriate checks to ensure people are suitable and safe to carry out the role they want to take on. This may include: the collection of key information (e.g, an application form), a clear description of the role, checking ID, taking up references, a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check where required. See guidance:

[DBS Guidance leaflet - Working with Adults in the Charity Sector](#)

[DBS Guidance leaflet - Working with Children in the Charity Sector](#)

You should also think about how representative your trustees, staff and volunteers are of the communities you serve. Is there more you can do to encourage people from a more diverse range of backgrounds to get involved or help lead the organisation?

[NCVO - Trustee Diversity](#)

Policy & procedures – ideally all the above should be written down in a Safeguarding Policy and an Equalities Policy so you can communicate your approach to the issues and how you will deal with any concerns raised. Other policies and processes that will help to ensure good safeguarding and equalities practice include: Health & Safety, Risk Assessments, Bullying & Harassment, Data Protection, Whistleblowing and Complaints, Codes of Conduct, Volunteer Agreements, Safer

Recruitment processes, training for staff and volunteers, engaging with wider communities, seeking feedback on how to improve. See links in the 'Recognise, respond & report' section above.

Safeguarding day-to-day – having Safeguarding and Equalities policies is good practice but will only protect and include people if they are part of your organisation's daily thinking and behaviour. To make this happen, think about the following: regular safeguarding or equality discussions at trustee meetings; safeguarding or equality issues discussed at team meetings or staff and volunteer supervision sessions, training updates, and, most importantly, creating an environment where it is OK to ask questions or share and discuss concerns.

Finally..

When you apply for a grant, there is an opportunity to give us some information about your approach to safeguarding and equalities on the application form. We will explore this with you further when we review applications and share any areas, we feel require attention.

If you do not have policies in place, you can still apply, and we will decide any actions required before we proceed with your application. If any issues are identified, we may still award a grant but ask you to report progress on the recommendations or, we may delay a grant decision until further work has been completed.

After a grant has been awarded, we ask groups we fund to inform us of any potentially serious concerns or disclosures about the safeguarding or protection of any Child or Adult at risk.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information. We look forward to receiving your application. Do contact us if you have any questions.

Local sources of support and guidance:

Swindon	Wiltshire
Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS) Carol Willis Tel: 01793 538398 info@vas-swindon.org For advice on: developing policy & practice, accessing training & DBS checks	Wessex Community Action Anita Hansen Tel: 01722 326822 communitydev@wessexcommunityaction.org.uk For advice on: developing policy & practice, accessing training & DBS checks
Swindon Safeguarding Partnership https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/	Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) https://www.wiltshirescb.org.uk/ Wiltshire Safeguarding adults board https://www.wiltshiresab.org.uk/
Reporting concerns regarding children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you suspect abuse of a child contact Swindon Multi Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) • E-mail: Swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk • Telephone 01793 466903 (during normal office hours) • Click here for the MASH referral form 	Reporting concerns regarding children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0300 456 0108 (8:45am-5pm Mon-Thurs) and (8:45am-4pm) Friday • Emergency Duty Service 0300 456 0100 (5pm - 8.45am) • If a child is in immediate danger or left alone, call police or ambulance immediately on 999
Reporting concerns regarding adults at risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi agency safeguarding adult's online referral form • Emergency Services 999 – for adult in immediate danger/medical attention/crime committed Further advice or information:	Reporting concerns regarding adults at risk: Adult MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub): Tel: 0300 456 0111 Textphone: 01225 712501 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email: adviceandcontact@wiltshire.gov.uk • Mon to Thurs: 08:30 – 17:20 Fri: 08:30 – 16:20

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult Safeguarding Team, Swindon Borough Council - Tel: 01793 463555• Email: adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk (Mon to Fri inclusive, 8:30am to 5:00pm)• The Emergency Duty Service (EDS) is available outside office hours on (01793) 436699	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you need urgent help or advice outside of these hours, you can call 0300 456 0100• In an emergency always dial 999
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