



# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

An overview of our Safeguarding policy so you can follow it and keep girls safe

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**Safeguarding and promoting the safety and wellbeing of girls, young women and adults is Girlguiding's first priority.**

It's at the heart of everything we do, and it's the responsibility of every Girlguiding member, volunteer and member of staff.

Our safeguarding policy is for everyone involved in Girlguiding, including members, volunteers and staff.

It makes your responsibilities in this area clear, and shows how we seek to protect children, young people and adults involved with Girlguiding.

It's extremely important that you follow this safeguarding policy and the safeguarding procedures that go with it.

This policy applies to Girlguiding volunteers and staff.

## Girlguiding's commitment to safeguarding

Girlguiding is committed to safeguarding adults and children of all backgrounds and identities while they take part in our activities.

Everyone has a right to live free from abuse, exploitation, harm and fear, and to be safe and well. We recognise that some people are particularly vulnerable because of some aspect of their identity or circumstance.

We recognise and respond to all types of harm, including:

Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and domestic, including online abuse and peer-on-peer).

Neglect.

Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

Female genital mutilation.

Bullying, harassment and cyberbullying.

Radicalisation.

Trafficking.

Grooming and harmful sexual behaviour.

You can find out more about the different types of harm and categories of abuse from the Ann Craft Trust and the NSPCC.

Our safeguarding policy, procedures and guidance aim to create a safe space for great guiding experiences, by protecting the safety and wellbeing of all our girls, young women and adults, regardless of their role.

They enable anyone associated with Girlguiding to share allegations, concerns, or make disclosures - whether related to Girlguiding activities or outside Girlguiding safely and appropriately.

## Reporting a concern

As a member, volunteer, or member of staff, it's really important that you know the signs and indicators of abuse or harm, and how to respond to and report any concerns, allegations or disclosures.

If you have a concern about someone in Girlguiding you must follow the process for reporting in our safeguarding procedures. You must make a report within 24 hours, or as soon as possible if it's an emergency.

You can contact the Girlguiding HQ Safeguarding team using the details below:

Phone: +44 (0) 20 7834 6242 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays)

For safeguarding emergencies only: Out of hours emergency phone: +44 07508 032997 (5pm-10pm Monday to Friday; 9am-10pm Saturday/Sunday/English Bank Holidays)

Email: [safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk)

Volunteers or staff members from British Girlguiding Overseas (BGO) should contact the BGO chief commissioner with any safeguarding concerns. If the chief commissioner is unavailable contact the HQ Safeguarding team as above.

The Safeguarding team aims to respond to all concerns and emails within 1-2 working days and will always respond within five working days.

If there's an emergency – when you think there's an immediate risk of significant harm contact the police or other emergency services, and let the HQ Safeguarding team know as soon as it is practical to do so, as they record and manage all safeguarding allegations, concerns, and disclosures. They'll ask you to email them a written report. For BGO, please follow the relevant emergency procedures for your country.

There's no fixed definition of 'an emergency', but some examples are:

Someone saying they immediately intend to make a suicide attempt.

Someone disclosing that alleged abuse or harm is happening at a place they're about to go to (like in their home).

Someone has a life-threatening physical or psychological injury or condition.

Someone who's causing them harm is coming to collect them.

If it's not an emergency, complete a written report about what happened. Make sure you include membership numbers and details of any actions taken. Then send it to your commissioner or the HQ Safeguarding team. Members of staff should contact their line manager or the HQ safeguarding team.

All volunteers, at any level, have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate commissioner and the HQ Safeguarding team. Commissioners at any level can also contact the HQ Safeguarding team if they're in any doubt about what they should do.

After you report a concern the HQ Safeguarding team may need to ask you some more questions. They're there to support, advise, and work with volunteers who have direct contact with members. Your county, region and country can also offer support if you need it.

Girlguiding will share information with other agencies when there's a significant risk of harm, a potential crime has been committed, or when we deem it appropriate and in the interests of child and adult protection and safeguarding.

In some other circumstances we may be required to share information with a statutory agency, such as providing an update on a looked- after child.

Our Safeguarding team also leads on bullying and harassment concerns. See our anti-bullying and harassment policy for more information.

## 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.

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 amongst members, volunteers, and staff. We do this via A Safe Space pocket guides (which we update yearly), e-learning, face-to-face and virtual training, as well as our annual conference. We also support Safe Space trainers through country and region leads, which provides continuing personal and professional development for both volunteers and staff in matters of safeguarding.

We recruit volunteers and staff safely, in line with our Recruitment and vetting policy.

We expect all volunteers and staff to follow effective safeguarding behaviours.

We use our procedures to manage allegations against volunteers and staff.

We expect volunteers to follow our code of conduct, and if they don't we take action as set out by our policies and procedures.

We use additional policies to identify safeguarding concerns, such as our Complaints and Whistleblowing policies, and our Anti-bullying and harassment policy.

We always have health and safety measures in place, in line with the law and statutory guidance, to provide a safe physical and digital environment at Girlguiding.

## **What does Girlguiding expect of you as volunteers, staff or adult members?**

To follow effective and good safeguarding behaviours.

Report all concerns, allegations and disclosures to your commissioner and the HQ Safeguarding team or, if you're based with British Girlguiding Overseas, the BGO chief commissioner, who will then contact the BGO Safeguarding team.

Inform your commissioner or the HQ Safeguarding team about any ongoing or past investigation into you or someone you have a significant relationship with (such as family members, partners, and members of same household- though this list is not exhaustive) by the Police, Social Services, an employer or other organisation you volunteer for, which relates to any safeguarding allegation, concern or disclosure, involving any children, adults at risk, or adults posing a risk.

Work with your commissioner or the HQ Safeguarding team to act when there's a report of an allegation, concern or disclosure.

Be vigilant – so you recognise when something is wrong or concerning.

Act as soon as there's a problem or concern. Report it within 24 hours, or sooner if it's an emergency or there's an immediate risk of harm.

Consider inclusion and accessibility when dealing with safeguarding issues. This could mean making adjustments to support disabled members or those with other needs.

Be accountable - don't assume someone else has responded to a concern.

Continuously develop your own safeguarding knowledge and support others in their development through the A Safe Space training programme.

Complete and continue to renew the mandatory safeguarding training relevant to your role, within the timescales set by the reminders, in line with our A Safe Space programme.

## Legal framework and Girlguiding policies

This safeguarding policy complies with all relevant UK legislation, policy and guidance which seeks to protect children and adults at risk. We expect BGO and those guiding outside the UK to follow this policy to provide the same level of protection to all our members.

You'll find a summary of the relevant legislation in the appendix. This isn't exhaustive and is for guidance only. If you need any more information or explanation, you can contact the HQ Safeguarding team.

You should read this policy alongside our other organisational policies, guidance, and procedures. You can find these on our website, or if you're a staff member, our intranet.

We review this policy annually, and agree revisions using an appropriate process. We may review it outside of this process if necessary, for example, because of legislation changes, charity commission recommendations, or any other significant change or event.

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### FURTHER INFORMATION



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How Girlguiding puts our policies into practice:

Safeguarding procedure

Managing concerns about adult volunteers procedure

Complaints procedure

Whistleblowing procedure

Investigation procedure

## Managing information procedure

### 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 and Ann Craft Trust provide an overview of safeguarding legislation.

Human Rights Act 1998

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

### England and Wales:

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Working together to Safeguard Children 2018

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Care Act 2014

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Disclosure and Barring Service 2013

### Wales

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Social Services and Wellbeing (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 Guiding Overseas (BGO)

For relevant legislation please contact the BGO chief commissioner for details.