

Safer Culture North East

SAFEGUARDING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Who is this factsheet for?

This factsheet is a practical guide aimed at individual volunteers in the community helping vulnerable people during the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Messages

- Safeguarding means keeping people – children and adults – safe from abuse.
- Anyone can be at risk of abuse.
- We all have a duty of care to keep people safe from harm.
- Types of abuse and harm include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, radicalisation, discriminatory, financial.

Practical safeguarding precautions for volunteers

You should always be mindful not only of safeguarding the residents you are supporting, but also of safeguarding yourself, your fellow volunteers, your own family and others you may live with.

Minimising the risk of infection

- Only volunteer if you feel well enough and are not shielding, self-isolating or in a high-risk group.
- Wash your hands before and after volunteering.
- Keep two metres apart from other people.
- Do not enter other people's homes.
- Keep a safe distance when leaving any items on a person's doorstep or at a drop off area, and make sure the items have been collected before leaving.

Keeping yourself safe

- You should have a single point of contact for any safeguarding concerns.
- Let friends and family know you are volunteering and where you are going.
- Decline any gifts you are offered by people you are helping.
- Only undertake tasks that you feel comfortable doing.
- Always decline to undertake any personal tasks.
- Do not take on too much; every little bit helps.
- NEVER share any information you gain about any vulnerable people you are supporting; confidentiality is of paramount importance.
- Do not place yourself in positions where you may feel unsafe, for instance helping late at night.
- Be cautious, if the situation does not feel safe, do not proceed.
- If you see something that concerns you, tell your single point of contact; do not investigate on your own.

If you see something, say something

- Ideally, you should have a single point of contact for any safeguarding concerns while you are volunteering. If you see something that concerns you, say something to that contact.
- If you are volunteering independently and have no single point of contact, and if you see something that concerns you, contact your local authority safeguarding team.
- Children and vulnerable adults will find it harder to tell people something is wrong during the lockdown, and victims of domestic abuse will be more at risk, so be alert to how people look and behave and if you have a concern, say something.
- If a resident is offensive or abusive toward you or another volunteer, say something.
- If you see another volunteer acting inappropriately or accepting money from a resident, say something.
- If you see something that concerns you, do not enquire or try to investigate; instead, say something to your local authority safeguarding team.

Reporting a concern if you don't have a single point of contact

If you are worried about the welfare, health or wellbeing of a child or adult and you do not have a single point of contact while you are volunteering, contact your local authority safeguarding team. Links to North East safeguarding contacts are below.

If a child or a vulnerable adult is in **immediate danger**, you should **contact the police or call an ambulance on 999**

Where to get more information

GOV.UK Safeguarding Factsheet: Community volunteers during COVID-19 outbreak:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-factsheet-community-volunteers-during-covid-19-outbreak/safeguarding-and-dbs-factsheet-faqs>

GOV.UK Coronavirus: How to help safely: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely#can-i-help>

Safeguarding awareness for volunteers video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHQG8CJROhU&feature=youtu.be

GOV.UK Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for victims of domestic abuse:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse>

Links to all North East local authority safeguarding partnerships and boards: www.vonne.org.uk/safer-culture-north-east-resources-and-training

Links to NCVO safeguarding resources and DCMS tool: knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/

NCPC What is Child Abuse? learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf



Safer Culture North East is a partnership between Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees, Connected Voice, Durham Community Action, Northumberland CVA, and VONNE, funded jointly by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and The National Lottery Community Fund.