

# Safeguarding policy

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



## How to contact the HQ safeguarding team

If you have a safeguarding concern, report it.

Get in touch during office hours on +44(0)207 834 6242 ext. 3037 or email [safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk).

For out of hours emergencies, call +44(0)7508 032997 (5-10pm Monday to Friday; 9am-10pm Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays).

If we don't answer your call straight away or it's outside these hours, please send us an email explaining your concern. We'll get back to you as soon as possible. Please don't text the out-of-hours number as we can't see these messages.

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## Policy aims and purpose

Safeguarding is what we do to promote the welfare of girls, young women and adults at risk, and to protect them from harm. Safeguarding is our first priority and is at the heart of everything we do.

This policy explains what we expect of our volunteers and staff. It also outlines how we protect children and adults at risk.

It's important that you follow this policy and our safeguarding procedure that goes with it.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all Girlguiding volunteers, members and HQ staff. This includes employees, officers, consultants, contractors, interns, casual workers and agency workers.

The Safeguarding team are on hand to help. If you need support with anything to do with safeguarding, or you have a concern, get in touch.

## Policy statement

We're committed to safeguarding adults and children of all backgrounds and identities.

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. This may be 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 non-recent, online abuse and child-on-child abuse.

**Bullying** - Deliberate behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm to another person or people.

**Child criminal exploitation** - Manipulating and coercing children and young people into committing crimes. This is a type of child abuse.

**Child sexual exploitation** - When a child or young person is given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status or affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities.

**Female genital mutilation** - When a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting'.

**Grooming and harmful sexual behaviour** - When someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

**Harassment** - Unwanted behaviour which someone finds offensive, makes them feel intimidated or humiliated, or creates a hostile or degrading environment.

**Neglect** - The ongoing failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic needs.

**Radicalisation** - Radicalisation aims to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable people to support a cause. This may be through a direct relationship, or through social media.

**Trafficking** - Where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes. They're then transported and exploited, forced to work or sold.

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

By following this policy you'll help to create a safe space where all our members can have a great guiding experience. It allows anyone to report a concern or make a disclosure.

## How Girlguiding safeguards children and adults at risk

We take all concerns seriously.

We have a safeguarding structure in place, which we've based on best practice.

We work to increase the safeguarding best practice knowledge of our members, volunteers and staff.

We recruit volunteers and staff using our Recruitment and vetting policy.

We use our Safeguarding procedure to manage allegations against volunteers and staff.

We always have health and safety measures in place, based on the law and statutory guidance.

Our safeguarding leads at county, country and region levels are there to support volunteers involved in handling safeguarding concerns.

We share concerns and information with other agencies when appropriate. For example, where there are significant concerns about someone working with children. Or where we believe that someone is at risk of abuse or harm.

We offer guidance around joint events, external visitors at unit meetings, and involving parents.

## Expectations

Girlguiding expects all volunteers and staff to:

Follow our Safeguarding procedure.

Report all concerns, allegations and disclosures within 24 hours (or sooner if it's an emergency) to your commissioner and the HQ safeguarding team.

Be vigilant, so you recognise when something is worrying.

Inform your commissioner or the HQ Safeguarding team about any ongoing or past investigation into you or someone you have a significant relationship with which relates to any child or adult safeguarding allegation, concern or disclosure. The investigation may have been carried out by the police, social services, an employer, or another organisation you volunteer for. A significant relationship includes, but isn't limited to, family members, partners, and members of the same household. You must inform the HQ Safeguarding team or your commissioner (who will inform the HQ Safeguarding team) without delay.

Work with your commissioner or the HQ Safeguarding team to act when there's a concern.

Consider inclusion and accessibility when you're dealing with safeguarding issues. For example, making adjustments to support disabled members or those with other needs.

Be accountable - never assume someone else has responded to a concern.

Complete and continue to renew the mandatory A Safe Space safeguarding training relevant to your role. We'll send you a reminder when you must renew your training.

## Reporting a concern

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

If you have a safeguarding concern you must make a report within 24 hours, or as soon as possible if it's an emergency.

Our HQ Safeguarding team aims to respond to all concerns and emails within 1-2 working days. They will always get back to you within 5 working days.

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

*BGO countries must abide by local legislation when applying this policy, where relevant.*

## Other information and useful resources

A Safe Space training

## Support organisations

Talking about sex and relationships

Think resilient

Free being me