

**Safeguarding**

**Developing policy and procedures**

**For organisations working with children and vulnerable adults**

**LGBT+ Futures Programme Workbook**

As part of the LGBT+ Futures Fund Programme, Consortium and its partners are delivering a range of learning and skills development opportunities.

These online toolkits are designed for LGBT+ Groups and organisations to work through with key volunteers, staff or Trustees to develop key policies, procedures, plans and management techniques.

As you work through the toolkit you will see a range of **icons** which are designed to alert you to additional information and support at the appropriate time.

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**Important Information:** don’t be tempted to skip a section with this icon next to it.

**Additional Support Available:** Email us if you need more support or information on a topic

**Group Activity:** Get your volunteers, colleagues or Trustees involved in this part of the toolkit

**Additional Resources Available:** Click on the icon to take you to a resource to find out more information the topic

**Webinar Available**. Click on the icon to find a recorded webinar on the topic you are learning about

**External Link or Resource:** clicking on this icon will take you to an external resource or webpage

This Toolkit is not intended to be a definitive guide or template.
It is designed for LGBT+ groups to work through a series of activities and information in order to build a better understanding of the subject matter.

All the information provided was up to date at the time of creation.

This Toolkit was created by Consortium and The Proud Trust for the LGBT+ Futures Fund Skills Development and Training Programme 2019.

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**Introduction to Safeguarding**

If your group works with children and / or vulnerable adults, you will require robust safeguarding policies and procedures tailored to your group’s specific circumstances. Additionally, the Charity Commission advises that safeguarding should be a priority for ALL charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.

It is therefore not possible to provide a standard ‘template’ as your policies and procedures must be relevant to your organisation, but the following toolkit has been designed to help you understand your roles and responsibilities and start to shape your organisation’s policy. The toolkit also provides an opportunity to review if you already have procedures in place.



**Your policy should be proportionate to the services you provide and client groups. For example, a group providing a monthly social club for mainstream adults would not require the same level of policy and procedure as a group providing 1:1 support to vulnerable teenagers.**



Assessing whether a child or adult is experiencing abuse is the responsibility of professionals within the Local Authority. Your role as providers of services is not to make that assessment but to safeguard by informing the Local Authority if you believe or suspect that abuse has taken place or that a child or adult might be at risk.



This toolkit will use the ‘Important’ icon to indicate throughout, areas that are relevant and important to all organisations.

**Safeguarding Structures**

**Multi Agency Working**

Your local Safeguarding Board coordinates all local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and also provides training (which is usually free) to any individual who works with young people/vulnerable adults. Some areas have separate web pages for children and vulnerable adults, but most are combined.

A simple internet search of ‘safeguarding board (your area)' will take you to the website. The website for your local Safeguarding Board will provide guidance around safeguarding, key services in the local area and information about local pathways and protocols.

Most will have “report a concern” link, though you may have to search.

The Board are also there to advise and do keep in mind that at any point if your organisation has a safeguarding concern, a query or even if you are clear on what to do but you just want reassurance – you can contact them!

Listed on their website, alongside standard contact information will be ‘out of hours’ contact information as often safeguarding issues happen after office hours.

The Board website will also include the following

* Contact details for the Designated Officer (formerly known as the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO). The role of the Designated Officer is to handle any safeguarding allegations made against staff or volunteers
* Contact details for Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) for reporting and investigating online abuse

**Research your local board and record their contact details below regarding:**

* Standard contact information
* Out of hours
* Designated Officer
* CEOP

**Ideally use this opportunity to make contact to introduce your organisation.**

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**Safeguarding audit**

For groups with an existing safeguarding policy and procedures already in place it can be helpful to carry out an audit and consider any necessary changes for improvement.

****Manchester Community Central have produced a comprehensive audit for the voluntary sector to meet their safeguarding board minimum standards and it is a helpful tool to audit your procedures (ctrl+click)

<https://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/voluntary-sector-safeguarding-toolkit>

We have also provided a brief audit tool for groups with less comprehensive safeguarding requirements which you can access [here](https://www.consortium.lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Brief-audit-tool.docx) (ctrl+click)

For groups starting the process of developing your policy and procedures, you may wish to store a copy of the brief audit tool to utilise at a later date.

**Communicating your policy to your team**

It is important that everyone within your group is aware of the policy and that they are able to identify and feel confident to report a concern.

How you communicate the policy will depend on how you routinely communicate with your staff, volunteers and members.

Examples of how to ensure that everyone is aware of the policy include:

* Include it on a team meeting agenda
* Send a copy out to all staff and volunteers with a covering note
* Include it in all induction training



* Speak to people individually

It is good practice to ask people to sign to confirm they have read the policy.



Consider and record how you plan to communicate your policy

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**Developing your policy**



**Defining safeguarding**

**Children are defined as any individual up to the age of 18**

Safeguarding children is defined in the DfE document ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’1 as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children’s health or development
* ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* ****taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> (ctrl+click)

For the purposes of safeguarding:

**Vulnerable adults are defined as individuals aged 18+ who are, or may be in need of community care services because of their:**

* + **mental health**
	+ **other disabilities**
	+ **age**
	+ **illness**
	+ **A person who is or may be unable to take care themselves**
	+ **A person who is unable to protect themselves against serious harm or being taken advantage of**

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined under the Care Act 2014 as:

* protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
* people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.
* people and organisations making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.
* recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being.

The 6 Principles of Safeguarding as defined by The Care Act 2014 are:

* Accountability
* Empowerment
* Partnership
* Prevention
* Proportionality
* Protection

**Confidentiality**

It is essential that groups understand the requirements relating to confidentiality as part of the safeguarding remit.

Whilst it is important to develop an ethos where clients, staff and volunteers feel safe to disclose, it is also essential to make explicit your group’s requirement to pass on any information that suggests an individual is a risk to themselves or to others and / or a criminal act has been or may be committed.

A simple and effective way to communicate this is via a confidentiality statement that can be displayed in a prominent place and you could consider including it in any client membership/sign up forms.

You will also need to consider if there are any other reasons why client information may be shared and ensure this is communicated. For example, some groups providing counselling or similar support may provide staff with clinical supervision during which client information would be discussed. Groups providing this type of 1:1 support may also consider putting in place a signed confidentiality agreement with each client.

Below is a brief confidentiality statement. Adapt this template (and change the language to suit your members) to draft your own statement and record it in the box below.

**Confidentiality Statement example**

*[organisation name] want to ensure we provide a safe space for our members [you can include a brief service description such as: at our weekly drop-in]*

*All information is kept confidential EXCEPT:*

*where, in our opinion, there may be a danger to yourself or to others. In this situation, [organisation name] will need to pass information on to ensure we are keeping you and others safe.*

*Information may be passed on to social services and / or the police.*

*for the purposes of supervision*

*Supervision sessions are with [organisation name] team members to allow staff to gain support and guidance and ensure we are working ethically and competently.*

*[if appropriate adapt your statement to also create a sign-able agreement form]*

***AGREEMENT****: I have read and understood the above information and agree to the conditions as made clear to me.*

*Signed (client)*

*Date*



Confidentiality statement / agreement

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**Categorising service provision**

In order to focus your policy, it is important to consider all of the different types of service and provision your group provides and whether they are for children, vulnerable adults or both. Some key categories of service include:

* Group activities
* 1:1 work
* Home visiting
* Lone working
* Supporting with personal care
* Supporting with personal finances

Use the box below to record your organisation’s service categories from the list above and add any other categories that are relevant.

It can be helpful to record the specific details and then the service category and client group, for example ‘coffee mornings’: group activity, vulnerable adults.

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When developing your procedures refer back to the above list and consider whether separate procedures are required for the specific categories. For example, if your group carries out work that involves visiting clients in their home, this is likely to require a specific set of procedures quite separate from those covering group activities in a centre.

**Policy contents**

**Safeguarding Statement**



All safeguarding policies should start with a statement providing an overview of organisational aims and responsibilities.

A very basic example is provided below:

***Introduction***

*[organisation] is committed to safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults that it comes into contact with.*

*The purpose of this policy and its subsequent procedures are to outline a clear framework to protecting and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults so that all staff, volunteers and those working on behalf of the [organisation] are aware of their roles and responsibilities in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking action.

We expect everyone to have read, understood and adhere to this policy and its related procedures.*

Your opening statement should also indicate when the policy was produced and how often it will be reviewed/updated with a date for the next review provided

Discuss with relevant team members and record your opening statement. **You may find it easier to return to this once you have worked your way through the toolkit.**

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**Designated Staff contact details**

Depending on the size of your group you may want to identify a Safeguarding Lead(s). This would be an individual(s) with operational understanding of the policy and pathways for referral who would be available for other staff and/or volunteers for advice.

This is worth considering if you have staff or volunteers who work limited hours (as outreach staff, or outside of normal working hours) and may not have access to the information they need.

The Lead(s) could be available on a rota basis and full contact details should be included in your policy together with your Safeguarding Board contacts.

It’s also worth considering a lead role in relation to the policy i.e. someone who keeps it updated and ensures all staff /volunteers attend at least Level One Safeguarding training (available from your Local Safeguarding Board).



Discuss with your team and if appropriate identify staff who can take on the role of safeguarding lead(s). Also record any action that is required in order for them to take on this role, such as undertaking relevant training.

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**It is important to remember that regardless of whether you have named leads, *anyone* can make a referral to raise a concern about a child or vulnerable adult.**

**Definitions of abuse**

You may wish to include the definitions of children and vulnerable adults into your policy, which you can obtain from the ‘[Developing your policy](#Definingsafeguarding)’ section in this toolkit.

The HM Government document ’Working Together to Safeguard Children’ categorises and defines abuse in terms of:

* **Physical**
* **Sexual**
* **Emotional**
* **Neglect**

Under these four headings there are a number of ways abuse can be further defined

* Discriminatory
* Psychological
* Financial or material
* Organisational
* Self-neglect
* Modern slavery
* Child sexual exploitation
* Domestic abuse
* Child trafficking
* Female genital mutilation
* Bullying and cyberbullying

The HM Government document ‘Care and Support Statutory Guidance’ categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

* **Physical abuse**
* **Sexual abuse**
* **Psychological abuse**
* **Financial or material abuse**
* **Neglect or acts of omission**
* **Discriminatory abuse**
* **Domestic abuse**
* **Organisational abuse**
* **Modern slavery**

Keep in mind, that all of the above can include abuse which happens online/via social media and this should be managed in the same way. Also keep in mind that abuse can occur anywhere (not just within the home) in any environment or context which is known as ‘contextual abuse’.



Copy the definitions relevant to your organisation into the box below, to be included in your policy. For example, if your policy only relates to vulnerable adults you do not need to include the definitions relating to children.

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**Minimising risk**



Think about the services you deliver and ways in which you can minimise risks in order to keep children and vulnerable adults and your staff / volunteer team safe. Refer back to your [service category list](#Categorisingservice) to help frame the discussion.

*Ensure these relate to minimising risk of abuse and avoid confusing this with any health and safety risk factors.*

*Risk factors and ways to minimise will depend on the type of services and clients you are working with. These are just two examples to give an idea of the thought process involved:*

**Example 1)**

If an organisation provides peer group support to adults experiencing mental health issues, they may need to consider factors such as ensuring detailed referral information, or an initial assessment is carried out before a new member joins a group so that staff/volunteers have an overview of the person’s presenting issues.

This may include developing thresholds in order to determine if a person’s issues are too complex to be supported via a peer led group, or perhaps extra safety measures can be introduced such as a professional mental health worker must accompany individuals above a certain threshold to the peer group.

**Example 2)**

If an organisation delivers group activities, they will need to consider the staff to member ratios to determine the right balance appropriate to the organisation/service. This will vary depending on the nature of the activity, staffing and their level of qualifications/experience and services users.

The NSPCC provides guidelines around *recommended* minimum ratios when working with children. However, these are guidelines and you may feel you require a higher staff to child ratio if the activity is volunteer led, or the children taking part have additional needs etc

* **0 - 2 years -** one adult to three children
* **2 - 3 years -** one adult to four children
* **4 - 8 years -** one adult to six children
* **9 - 12 years -** one adult to eight children
* **13 - 18 years -** one adult to ten children



Develop and record all the ways in which your group will aim to minimise risk to be included in your policy.

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**Recognising abuse**



**Remember you can contact your Safeguarding Board at any time for guidance.**

Your safeguarding policy could include specific examples of some of the keys signs of abuse to look out for, or you may wish to include a general statement that anything out of the ordinary requires further exploration.

If using examples, where possible tailor examples to your client needs and age group. For instance, sudden concerns about money may indicate financial abuse, however, if your group provides debt advice this is likely to be a common factor for all members and not in itself indicative of abuse.

These are some examples of how to frame signs of abuse.

* Individual becomes withdrawn or overly loud (any change in their normal presentation).
* Individual has unexplained bruising or secrecy around their body such as long sleeves during hot weather.
* Individual appears fearful around certain / specific people.
* Individual frequently appears unkept and / or appears undernourished.

**If you choose to include a list in your policy, make clear they are *examples* and such lists are not exhaustive.**

****Develop and record your examples or your general statement

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**Procedures to respond to concerns and disclosures of abuse**



Your policy should set out your group’s procedures for staff, volunteers and other service users to report, if they have any safeguarding concerns or if an individual makes a disclosure of abuse. As a team, think about how this can be best managed. If possible, involve your services users to include their views.

Ensure procedures are appropriate to the person with concerns. For example, a young child in a play group would not be expected to provide a detailed written report of their concerns!

**Service users**

For services users of any age, an example of a simple procedure is to display safeguarding posters with a brief statement on how to report and contact details of the safeguarding lead(s). This could include their photograph to help members identify the leads.

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For inspiration try a quick internet search of the words ‘safeguarding poster’ and view images. Safeguarding In Schools also provide a number of helpful templates:

<https://www.safeguardinginschools.co.uk/free-safeguarding-posters/> (ctrl+click)

This can be combined with or displayed alongside your confidentiality statement so that the message is clear: *if you have any concerns this is how to tell us and when you tell us, this is what we will do with the information…*

**Staff / volunteers**

Ensure procedures are simple and easy to follow. It can help to draw up a flowchart or brief one-page guide which can be displayed. If the procedures require any specific documents such as a report template, ensure these are readily available and their location is detailed (and accessible).

**Responding to direct disclosures**

The way in which information is handled and passed on remains the same whether it is an ‘observed’ concern such as noticing someone with lots of bruising, or a direct disclosure, such as someone telling you they have been assaulted.

The difference is the way in which staff and volunteers need to respond to a direct disclosure, as they will need to respond with sensitivity and obtain relevant information without asking leading or unnecessary questions. They may also need to take immediate action to ensure the person’s safety and wellbeing.



**It is therefore important to ensure your team receive appropriate training. Contact your local safeguarding board to find out what training is available and any potential cost implications.**



Develop and record your procedures to respond to concerns to be included in your policy



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**Procedures to respond to allegations involving staff/volunteers**



Your policy should include procedures for handling any allegations made by service users or other staff/volunteers of abuse or inappropriate behaviour they have experienced from any worker (paid, unpaid volunteer or agency staff).

As a minimum your policy should note that:

All such allegations will be taken seriously and acted upon

All such allegations will be referred to the Designated Officer

Develop and record your procedures to respond to concerns to be included in your policy

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**Safer recruitment**

**Pre-Employment Checks**

It is essential that your safeguarding policy includes details of your recruitment procedures outlining the steps you will take to minimise risks when taking on new staff or volunteers.

As part of these procedures, you will need to state the requirement for DBS checks:

All staff, volunteers and anyone who will have direct contact with young people or vulnerable adults must be **DBS** checked. This provides access for organisations and groups about criminal convictions and other police records which help them make informed decisions when recruiting staff or volunteers.



Until a DBS check is received, you may determine that the new staff member/volunteer will not be allowed to start work with children or vulnerable adults, or the new staff member will not be left unsupervised. Consider your group’s set up to determine the most appropriate approach.

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More information and DBS forms can be found at

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service) (ctrl+click)

The personal information on the DBS certificate, e.g. date of birth and address, must be checked against that provided on the application form.

NOTE applicants may be trans and therefore this needs to be taken into account when verifying identity. There is specialist support available for transgender candidates. Access the Sensitive Applications Team for guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transgender-applications> (ctrl+click)

**The following should be considered in addition to DBS checks**

* Identity verification: employees providing documents including a photograph and current address. This should be done at a face-to-face meeting.
* Previous employment checks, including current employer if applicable.
* Gaps in employment history explored.



Record your group’s procedures regarding safer recruitment

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**Online Safety**

Your policy should include your procedures to ensure staff and volunteers keep their personal online activities separate from your group’s online presence.

It is essential that all staff including volunteers maintain professional distance online and be aware at all times of the potential for online activity and comments to be misinterpreted or taken out of context. The measures required will depend on the nature of your group, please see suggested strategies below:

* Anyone working with service-users must not knowingly use their personal social networking account to communicate with service-users.
* Staff, including volunteers, must not post or comment on the status, wall or photos of any service-users.
* Only official pages, profiles, groups and sites should be used to share information relating to the group.
* All paid staff and volunteers must review regularly that they have no *‘Friend’* connections on their personal *SNS profile* with the service-users they work with. You should not accept *‘Friend’* requests from service-users you work with to your personal *profile page(s)*.

Realistically, even with stringent *privacy settings*, the nature of *social networking sites* like *Facebook*, means it is difficult to avoid seeing content from service-users which workers may not wish to see/should not see outside their paid/voluntary role. Social network services (SNS) such as Twitter may lead to individuals ‘following’ or ‘being followed’ by young people accessing services provided by the group/organisation without the knowledge of either party’s connections to the organisation.

Develop and record your e-safety procedures

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**Additional policies and procedures**



It is important that your safeguarding policy refers to other relevant organisation policies and procedures

Depending on the nature of your group these may include:

**Child protection records retention and storage policy**

Any disclosures or concerns should be recorded as soon as possible and kept securely. Access should only be on a strict need to know basis. The National Independent Inquiry into Child Abuse has issued guidance that all organisations are obliged to preserve any documentation relating to a child until the inquiry ends.



If your organisation does not have a separate policy around record retention, it is important to include child protection record retention within your safeguarding policy.

If applicable: think about how and where you will store information and record your groups procedures below.

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**Photography and image sharing guidance**

Procedures with regards to obtaining consent to use and share images of people. This would include a minimum age criterion. The NSPCC suggest parental consent should be obtained for any child (up to the age of 18).

[https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/photography-sharing-****images-guidance/](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/photography-sharing-images-guidance/)

**Code of conduct for staff and volunteers**

A code of conduct can be useful to explicitly state behaviours that your organisation deems as unacceptable. This often sits within a staff/volunteer handbook / guide.

**Anti-bullying policy and procedures**

This policy should relate to anyone involved with your organisation: staff, volunteers, members, service-users etc

**Whistleblowing policy**

This policy provides the procedures for staff/volunteers to report suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act within the organisation.

Please get in touch with the Engagement Team if you require support with the above additional policies: admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk.

**A good message for all of your staff, volunteers and members to take away with regards to safeguarding is:**

* **Recognise**
* **Record**
* **Respond**
* **Refer!**

**…And if in doubt go ahead and refer!**

**Remember your safeguarding board are there to support you and you can contact them at any time with queries, concerns or questions**.

**Policy Template**

Once your group has worked through all of the above, download the simple template [here](https://www.consortium.lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Safeguarding-policy-template.docx) (ctrl+click) and copy the information across to create your policy document.



**N.B. If you did not record an** [**opening statement**](#Safeguardingstatement) **at the beginning of this toolkit return to this now before completing your finalised policy document**

As you have worked through this Toolkit you will have gathered all the information you need to create your own plan, policy or information pack. Most Toolkits have templates which you can download and transfer the relevant information from the Toolkit across to, so that you have your own bespoke piece of work for your group.

If your group needs any further support around the topic covered in this workbook please get in touch with our Engagement Team via email admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk.

To find out more about Joining Consortium, visit our website for more information.