



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Statement of Intent

1.1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principles and procedures for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults involved in Norfolk and Norwich Bat Group (NNBG) activities.

NNBG believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults. The arrangements below explain how we will do this. Please see end of policy for Appendix 1 which sets out types of abuse we recognise.

NNBG may work with children and vulnerable adults in an education and community outreach environment, via volunteer practical conservation, surveys and education opportunities and through public events such as family fun days, bat walks, talks, conferences and training.

This purpose of this policy is

- 1.1.1. to provide protection for the children and vulnerable adults who engage with NNBG;
- 1.1.2. to provide committee members and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm;
- 1.1.3. to provide individual committee members and volunteers with guidance on working with children and vulnerable adults, in order to protect them from accusations of misconduct/abuse; and
- 1.1.4. to protect NNBG as a whole and demonstrate our moral and procedural integrity in this area.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all NNBG committee members, and volunteers, or anyone else volunteering on behalf of NNBG, e.g. freelance contractors and consultants. Project partners (eg NWT, RSPB) should ensure that safeguarding policies are in place for the project and that the levels of protection for children and vulnerable adults are at least equal to the levels of protection in this policy.

1.3. Commitment

We want children and vulnerable adults to enjoy their involvement with NNBG and safeguarding is therefore a top priority. We recognise that our contact with children and vulnerable adults may arise incidentally or as a result of targeted interaction. We need to act and be seen to act appropriately at all times.

We recognise that children and vulnerable people have specific needs due to their age, circumstances, medical condition/disability etc., and that they may therefore face barriers to their engagement with NNBG, especially in their ability to communicate. We need to take this into account in all of our actions.

NNBG is committed to upholding the principle that children and vulnerable adults are entitled to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and have the right to a safe, positive and enjoyable environment when involved with NNBG.

1.4. Values and principles

- 1.4.1. The welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount
- 1.4.2. All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse or exploitation
- 1.4.3. Working in partnership with children and vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and their agencies is essential in promoting people's welfare
- 1.4.4. All allegations, suspicions of harm or abuse and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
- 1.4.5. Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children and vulnerable adults
- 1.4.6. Our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements
- 1.4.7. There is a culture of openness, learning and improvement at NNBG

1.5. Definitions

- 1.5.1. Child/young person - An individual under the age of 18.
- 1.5.2. Vulnerable adult - A person aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support. For example, the person:
 - Is an older person who is frail due to ill health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
 - Has a learning disability
 - Has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
 - Has a severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others
 - Has mental health needs including dementia or a personality disorder
 - Has a long-term illness/condition
 - Misuses substances or alcohol
 - Is a carer such as a family member/friend who provides personal assistance and care to adults and is subject to abuse
 - Lacks the mental capacity to make particular decisions and is in need of care and support
 - Is receiving nursing services/personal care in a care home or at home, medical services, or social care services

This list is not exhaustive.

- 1.5.3. Abuse - Abuse may be intentional or unintentional. It involves the misuse of power and control that one person has over another, for example:
 - Domestic abuse

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Modern slavery
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse

Many abuses will constitute a criminal offence.

1.5.4 At public events, NNBG does not take responsibility for the care of children and vulnerable adults.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. NNBG

2.1.1. To provide a designated Safeguarding Officer

2.1.2. To ensure effective complaints and whistleblowing measures are in place

2.1.3. To ensure that NNBG provides a safe physical environment for everyone who is involved with its activities and sites used for events by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

2.1.4. To treat all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously and to respond swiftly, fairly and appropriately

2.2. Safeguarding Officer

2.2.1. Has responsibility for receiving concerns about the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults

2.2.2. Makes decisions about what actions need to be taken, contacting and liaising with other agencies involved in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as appropriate

2.2.3. Ensures that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns/allegations are maintained and securely stored

2.2.4. Maintains an overview of all concerns, including details of action taken and, where possible, the outcomes

2.2.5. Reports cases (anonymised where relevant) for review at committee meetings

2.2.6. Reports any significant safeguarding incident or concern to NNBG's committee

2.2.7. Has strategic responsibilities and is responsible for ensuring this policy and the arrangements are implemented

2.2.8. Reviews this policy annually and as required by changes in legislation and/or government guidance and by the Disclosure & Barring Service, or other appropriate authorities, ensuring it is up-to-date and fit for purpose

2.2.9. Ensures committee members and volunteers have read and understand this policy

(delegating to relevant managers/supervisors as appropriate)

2.2.10. Promotes safeguarding and provides guidance and advice to staff where needed

2.2.11. Ensures that safeguarding issues and consequences arising from investigations are communicated to relevant staff members (unless confidentiality prevents this), so that informed decisions on future activities can be made

In the event that the Safeguarding Officer is not available, individuals with concerns regarding the safety of children or vulnerable adults should follow organisational procedures for alternative contact ie contact the Chairperson or Secretary.

At current time Safeguarding Officer responsibilities are designated to:

Lindsey Bilston
Phone 07713944509
Email lindseybilston@gmail.com

Where NNBG is working in a project partnership, Safeguarding Officer responsibilities may be designated to the lead partner in the project.

Useful Contacts

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS)	0344 800 8021 (professionals) or 0344 800 8020 (out of hours)
Norfolk Police	101
In an emergency	999
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) Team normal working hours	0300 123 2044 lado@norfolk.gov.uk
Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)	www.norfolklscp.org
Safer Programme	01603 228966
South Norfolk Early Help Hub (for SN Projects)	01508 533933

2.3. All committee members (including others as described in paragraph 1.2)

Whilst the Safeguarding Officer has specific safeguarding responsibilities, **all committee members and volunteers who have contact with a person thought to be at risk of abuse have a responsibility to act on their concerns.** When an individual is at immediate risk of harm or abuse, the priority is for their health, safety and welfare and incidents should be reported to the appropriate authority, e.g. the Police, without delay.

Committee members and volunteers who are unsure about whether something they have witnessed or heard is a safeguarding matter should seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer.

All staff should be aware of the common signs and symptoms of abuse and be prepared to report these so that the appropriate authorities, such as the Police and Social Services, can investigate them. See *HM Government's "What do if you're worried a child is being abused"* and *"Signs of Abuse"* in NNBG's Safeguarding section of the website.

3. Arrangements

This section outlines what NNBG will do to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe. The arrangements apply to everyone mentioned in paragraph 1.2.

3.1. Planning activities

- 3.1.1. For activities, ensure health and safety requirements and risk assessments are appropriate and implemented
- 3.1.2. NNBG does not take responsibility for the care of children and vulnerable adults
- 3.1.3. Avoid inappropriate activities and material; think about the age, maturity and ability of any children/young people/vulnerable adults, so that they can understand and participate safely

3.2. Awareness

- 3.2.1. Share information about safety issues and safeguarding best practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- 3.2.2. Be alert to potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by others to children and vulnerable adults in your care
- 3.2.3. Provide access for children and vulnerable adults to talk to another adult about any concerns they may have

3.3. Code of Conduct

- 3.3.1. Do remember you are a role model and should listen, show respect and understanding for others
- 3.3.2. Do bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may easily be misinterpreted
- 3.3.3. Do use appropriate language, gestures and posture/body language
- 3.3.4. Do respect an individual's right to privacy unless you feel they are at risk of harm
- 3.3.5. Do not rely on your good name to protect you
- 3.3.6. Do not show favouritism or get drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour (e.g. tantrums or crushes)
- 3.3.7. Do not allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching which could be misunderstood
- 3.3.8. Do not do anything to undermine NNBG's reputation for providing children and vulnerable adults with a safe environment
- 3.3.9. Do not jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts
- 3.3.10. Do not develop any form of relationship with children/young people/vulnerable adults, which could in any way be deemed inappropriate or exploitative
- 3.3.11. Do not act in ways that may be abusive or place children/young people/vulnerable adults at risk of abuse
- 3.3.12. Do not use language, make suggestions or offer advice (in person or online), which is offensive or abusive
- 3.3.13. Do not allow children/young people/vulnerable adults with whom you are working to stay overnight at your home

3.3.14. Do not condone, or participate in the behaviour of children/young people/vulnerable adults, which is illegal, abusive or unsafe

3.3.15. Do not intentionally act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or degrade children/young people/vulnerable adults

3.3.16. Do not undertake any other action that could compromise the rights, safety or welfare of children/young people/vulnerable adults

3.4. Supervision

3.4.1. Be aware of the DBS Check Guidance Note available with this Policy

3.4.2. Arrange for an appropriate ratio of adults to be present, bearing in mind the activity, number, ages and any particular needs of the individuals, in line with best practice

3.4.3. Have a minimum of two adults when working with small groups

3.4.4. Meetings with individuals should take place as openly as possible (ideally with more than one responsible adult present in the room or with an open door to allow visual contact by another responsible adult)

3.4.5. Have male and female helpers where practical

3.5. Recruitment

NNBG will follow best practice in selecting new committee members:-

NNBG is supported by people who choose to volunteer their time. There are no paid staff. NNBG will make enquiries through known and trusted people, as to the reliability, honesty and principles of anyone being considered

3.6. Training

3.6.1. All committee members will receive an introduction to safeguarding in their induction and volunteers will be made aware of this policy and the need to follow its guidance

3.6.2. Safeguarding training will be given at the appropriate level and as relevant to roles, to support the arrangements in this policy;

3.6.3. The Safeguarding Officer will ensure all those receiving training have understood the policy and procedures

3.7. Safeguarding & Our Supporters

3.7.1. NNBG will ensure all donations to their funds are recorded accurately and openly

3.8. Responding to abuse, suspected abuse and disclosures of abuse

If you have concerns about a child/young person/vulnerable adult or someone discloses that they are being abused, then upon receiving the information you should:

- react calmly
- reassure the individual that they were right to tell you and that they are not to blame and take what they say seriously
- allow them to speak freely
- do not trivialise the issue being discussed
- only ask questions to clarify the situation, do not probe or interrogate so as to investigate the allegations

- reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- inform the individual what you will do next
- make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible – see paragraph 3.9
- inform the Safeguarding Officer

If the Safeguarding Officer (or another committee member if the Safeguarding Officer is not available) considers the individual concerned is in immediate danger, or there has been a crime committed (e.g. you witness physical abuse), contact must be made with the emergency services and/or the appropriate authorities (parents/social services) to help ensure the individual does not remain in an unsafe environment. A full detailed record must be made (see paragraph 3.9).

Remember, if you witness an assault, crime, or act of abuse the priority is the immediate health, safety and welfare of the individual and you should contact the Police.

3.9. Record keeping of suspected abuse

- 3.9.1. A written record, marked 'confidential', should include the following details and can be sent electronically to the Safeguarding Officer by the person reporting the incident/concern:
 - 3.9.2. Name of person making the report stating whether or not they are expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
 - 3.9.3. Name of child/young person/vulnerable adult
 - 3.9.4. Name of parent/guardian/carer
 - 3.9.5. Date of birth
 - 3.9.6. Address and telephone number
 - 3.9.7. First language
 - 3.9.8. Date, time and place of incident/when concern arose
 - 3.9.9. How the concern was identified (alleged or reported by child/vulnerable adult; alleged, reported, suspected or witnessed by someone else; suspected or witnessed by self; other)
 - 3.9.10. Details of other people involved/alleged to be involved
 - 3.9.11. Summary of incident/concern (if you include statements by other parties try to use their words in quotations; include details of all alleged perpetrators and details of any immediate protection made)
 - 3.9.12. Details of any physical injuries reported or witnessed (including description of any visible injuries and any indirect signs such as behavioural changes)
 - 3.9.13. Names of any witnesses
 - 3.9.14. Have parents/carers been contacted? (details of any discussion)
 - 3.9.15. Were emergency services involved? (E.g. taking child to A&E, Police etc.) (where possible, referral to the Police or Social Services or LA Safeguarding Team should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be noted)
 - 3.9.16. Details of any advice given and any action taken

4. Law and guidance supporting this policy

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance, namely:

- Children Act 2004 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI)
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI) (N.B. This law will be replaced by General Data Protection Regulation on 25/05/18)
- Human Rights Act 1998 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI)
- Children and Families Act 2014 (geographical extent: E+W+S+NI)

It also reflects the Government's campaign to tackle child abuse. The "If you think it, report it" campaign literature raises awareness of the role we all play in protecting children from abuse and neglect. Details on spotting the signs of neglect/abuse and the steps you can take to report it can be found here: <https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk/>

This policy is supported by the following NNBG policies and guidance:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- DBS Check Guidance Note
- Volunteer Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Child Photo/Video Consent Form
- Helpline guidance on dealing with persons under 18 years of age
- Direct Supervision Consent Form
- Supervision ratios Guidance Note Include on RAs

All of the above policies and guidance can be found on NNBG's website

5. Allegations against committee members and volunteers

As well as protecting those in NNBGs care, safeguarding arrangements are in place to also maintain the integrity of the group. We recognise that allegations which involve a committee member or volunteer are potentially serious enough to cause significant reputational damage to NNBG (as well as to the individuals involved). Safeguarding arrangements therefore ensure that committee members and volunteers are protected from the risk of suspicion or allegation of abuse.

If an allegation is made against a committee member or volunteer, he or she will be made aware of their legal rights.

The first priority is always to ensure the safety and protection of a child or vulnerable adult at risk. However, NNBG will support committee members or volunteers who are subject to a complaint or allegation which is subsequently not substantiated or not proven.

6. Confidentiality

Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only with information stored in a secure place. There are mandatory requirements to report safeguarding concerns relating to children.

Each committee member should sign to agree with annual reviews of this policy.

This policy was last reviewed and updated on:

Appendix 1 Definitions of abuse

Definitions of abuse This list is not exhaustive

What is abuse and neglect?

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance 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; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.