

Walton Village Hall and Reading Room Management Committee Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Walton Village Hall and Reading Room committee is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This policy outlines our approach to preventing harm, responding to concerns, and ensuring compliance with UK statutory safeguarding guidance, including:

- **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **The Care Act 2014**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) (where applicable)**
- **Charity Commission Guidance: Safeguarding and Protecting People**

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of Walton Village Hall and Reading Room Committee.

2. Key Principles

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All individuals, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, or sexual orientation, have the right to protection from harm.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; all trustees, staff, and volunteers must be vigilant and report concerns.
- All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

3. Definitions

- **Child:** Anyone under the age of 18.

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- **Vulnerable Adult:** An adult at risk of harm due to age, disability, illness, or circumstances.
- **Abuse:** Can include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and neglect.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Trustees & Management

- Ensure compliance with legal safeguarding duties.
- Appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** responsible for safeguarding matters (recorded in minutes and reviewed annually). The DSL must hold a standard DBS as a minimum.
- Conduct Risk Assessment in respect of Committee activities and Safeguarding
- Ensure all trustees, staff, and volunteers receive safeguarding training.
- Review and update the policy annually.

4.2 Staff & Volunteers

- Understand and follow this policy.
- Recognise signs of abuse and report concerns.
- Maintain confidentiality, only sharing information on a need-to-know basis.

4.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Respond to concerns and make referrals to relevant authorities when necessary.
- Keep accurate and confidential safeguarding records.
- Ensure safeguarding training is up to date.

5. Recognising & Responding to Concerns

5.1 Identifying Signs of Abuse

Indicators may include:

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- Unexplained injuries or frequent accidents.
- Changes in behaviour or emotional distress.
- Signs of neglect, such as poor hygiene or malnutrition.
- Reports of inappropriate behaviour or exploitation.

5.2 Reporting Concerns

- If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, call **999**.
- Report concerns to the **DSL** immediately.
- The DSL will assess the situation and refer to **Children's Social Care** or **Adult Safeguarding Services** if required.
- Maintain confidentiality—do not discuss concerns with unauthorised individuals.

5.3 Handling Disclosures

If someone shares a safeguarding concern with you:

1. **Listen carefully** – do not interrupt or ask leading questions.
2. **Reassure them** – let them know they did the right thing in speaking up.
3. **Record facts accurately** – include what was said, by whom, and any actions taken.
4. **Report immediately** – pass the concern to the DSL without delay.

6. Safer Recruitment & DBS Checks

- All staff and volunteers working directly with children/vulnerable adults must undergo an **enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check**.
- Recruitment processes will include safeguarding questions and reference checks.
- All new trustees, staff, and volunteers must complete safeguarding training.

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7. Online & Social Media Safeguarding

- Ensure appropriate privacy settings on social media accounts used for Walton Village Hall and Reading Room.
- Never share personal information or photos of children without consent.
- Report any online safety concerns to the DSL.

8. Use of Facilities & Third-Party Groups

- ~~Groups hiring or using the village hall for activities involving children or vulnerable adults must have their own safeguarding policy in place.~~
- The hiring agreement must state that external groups are responsible for their safeguarding procedures.
- The village hall reserves the right to refuse bookings from organisations without appropriate safeguarding measures.

9. Whistleblowing

- All staff, volunteers, and trustees have a duty to report safeguarding concerns, including misconduct within the organisation.
- Reports can be made to the **DSL** or directly to **local safeguarding authorities** if concerns are not addressed.
- Whistleblowers will be protected under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**.

10. Policy Review & Monitoring

- This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the trustees.
- Safeguarding training records will be maintained to ensure compliance and maintained by the secretary
- Any safeguarding incidents will be documented and reviewed to improve procedures.

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): TBC

Deputy DSL (if applicable): TBC

Local Safeguarding Contact:

For Concerns About a Child or Young Person (Under 18):

- **Cumberland Safeguarding Hub**
 - **Telephone:** 0333 240 1727
 - **Online Reporting:** [Single Contact Form](#)

For Concerns About an Adult:

- **Single Point of Access (SPA) Team**
 - **Telephone:** 0300 373 3732
 - **Email:** customerservicesASC@cumberland.gov.uk

In Emergency Situations:

- **Immediate Danger:** Call **999**
- **Non-Emergency Police Concerns:** Call **101**

Additional Support:

- **Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership**
 - **Telephone:** 0300 373 2724
- **Early Help Team**
 - **Email:** early.help@cumberland.gov.uk

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