



Safeguarding Children Policy

The safeguarding of children and young people is a priority for The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). A significant number of the volunteers, beneficiaries and visitors to TCV projects and services are children and young people. This document sets out TCV policy with regards to safeguarding children and young people and its expectations of all employees and volunteers.

This safeguarding policy applies to everyone involved in the delivery of projects and services for TCV, including members of the Board, senior and all managers, employees, volunteers and contractors.

The abuse of children and young people; physically, emotionally, sexually and through neglect is a sad fact of life. Children may be abused regardless of their age, gender, religious belief, racial origin, culture or disability. They are usually (but not always) abused by people they know and trust. TCV has a zero-tolerance of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible.

TCV acknowledges the rights of children and young people to be safeguarded from abuse of all types and makes a clear commitment to uphold those rights by creating and maintaining an environment which aims to ensure, as far as possible, that children and young people who access its services are kept free from abuse and neglect.

Policy Scope

TCV recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and other country specific legislation and guidance with regards to the safeguarding of children.

This policy outlines TCV's approach to preventing and reducing the risk of harm to children who are experiencing, or are at risk from, abuse and neglect.

This policy applies to children that volunteer in TCV projects, benefit from its services or come into contact with TCV through any other process.

This policy and its attendant responsibilities apply to all TCV employees and volunteers. The term 'employees' used in this policy refers to both employees and volunteers.

This policy applies to all Service Level Agreements, e.g. Partnership Agreement, and all such agreements will contain a reference to that effect.

TCV expects all partners and contractors from whom it commissions external services to adhere to this policy as a minimum. Where appropriate, TCV will work with partner agencies to enable them to develop their own service specific, safeguarding procedures.

Key terms and definitions

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate for children and young people, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989. (TCV recognises that the legal definition in Scotland differs from that outlined above. However for the purpose of child protection guidance produced by the Scottish Government accepts the above definition).

In this document we refer to 'child' or 'children' which also covers 'children and young people'.

Policy Statements

- TCV will record and refer all concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to the lead agencies responsible for carrying out safeguarding assessments and enquiries, specifically the Local Authority or the police where appropriate.
- TCV will work in partnership with lead agencies and other relevant partners to respond to suspicions or incidents of abuse in accordance with statutory procedures.
- TCV will share information for the purposes of safeguarding with statutory services and other relevant agencies; and will comply with the statutory duty to supply information where requested.
- TCV will strive to raise awareness of safeguarding issues in the communities where it works through the provision of information and advice to its employees, volunteers and beneficiaries.
- TCV will ensure that data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This allows for the sharing of information without consent, where there is a concern that a child is suffering abuse, is at risk of abuse, or where seeking consent to share information would place the child at further risk.
- TCV will ensure that it has in place internal procedures for employees that establish clear lines of accountability, responsibility and processes for reporting safeguarding concerns.
- TCV will provide employees with role appropriate training to enable them to understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and to ensure they can appropriately identify, and report the signs of abuse.
- TCV will meet its responsibilities towards all disclosure and barring schemes in the recruitment and selection of employees. TCV will undertake checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other country specific services, for all applicants to relevant posts.
- TCV will provide support and supervision for employees in order to create an environment in which they feel able to report safeguarding issues, including where they have concerns about the behaviour of another TCV employee.
- TCV will address any suspected abuse by its employees through formal statutory investigative procedures and its own internal disciplinary procedures.
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- TCV will establish, support and maintain leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements at both operational and strategic levels. The Safeguarding and Volunteering Manager will be the operational lead for safeguarding. The Operations Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland will be the strategic lead for safeguarding.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the safeguarding policy lies with the Managing Director.

The chair of the PARC committee is the trustee responsible for safeguarding.

TCV's Safeguarding Champion is the Operations Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Champion will ensure that suitable and sufficient procedures and information are made available to TCV's workers to enable effective safeguarding. The Champion will oversee safeguarding standards. Any allegations or suspicions of abuse will be referred to the Safeguarding Champion.

The Safeguarding and Volunteering Manager will hold operational responsibility for safeguarding procedures and the monitoring of safeguarding practice across TCV.

Regional/country support for safeguarding will be provided by nominated Safeguarding Advisors.

Functional and Operational Directors are responsible for ensuring safeguarding is managed effectively within their business area.

Implementation of safeguarding policy and procedure is the responsibility of all employees.

Monitoring and continuous improvement

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise. This will ensure that it continues to meet its objectives and to take account of good practice developments.

References

- SG-P1 - Safeguarding
- HS – P15 – Risk Assessment
- HR – P1 – Recruitment & Selection

This Policy has been approved by The Conservation Volunteers Board on.....

Signed:  Rita Clifton, *Chair of Board*

Signed:  Darren York, *Managing Director*

Original issue 2002; revised and updated 2009, 2010, Jun & Dec 2012, 2013, July 2015, Jan 2017

