

Safeguarding your volunteers during COVID-19

Safeguarding volunteers during the COVID-19 period is the responsibility of all Trustees, Directors, Committee members and employees. Reasonable steps need to be taken to protect people who volunteer for your organisation or group from harm, whether you are running a newly-formed group or an established organisation.

Charity [trustee responsibilities remain unchanged during the COVID-19 response](#). Ensure the work your organisation does is safe, especially if you choose to work with new informal groups that may not have similar governance structures.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to safeguarding, but there is plenty of good information available. For example:

- NCVO's [Safeguarding for Volunteer Managers](#) is a good place to start.
- [Bristol Safeguarding](#) provides information, advice and training for local individuals, families and organisations. To report concerns about a child call 0117 903 644. To raise concerns about an adult, [complete this online form](#).

Government guidance on Trustee safeguarding duties

DBS checks on employees and volunteers

Volunteers who may be alone or responsible for vulnerable people and/or children/young people must be DBS checked. You will be charged for checks on employees, but basic checks for volunteers are free. The government has published guidance about [using DBS check effectively in response to Covid-19](#).

Policies and procedures

Every organisation needs a written policy that sets out your approach to safeguarding and procedures that set out the actions needed to ensure safety for all volunteers. The amount of detail in your policy and procedures depends on what your organisation does, who it works with and the level of risk.

In your policies and procedures, make clear how you will:

- Protect people from harm.
- Make sure people understand their responsibilities and can raise safeguarding concerns.
- Handle allegations or incidents.
- Report to the relevant authorities.

Useful templates and resources to help you write your policy:

- NSPCC: [example safeguarding policy statement for working with children and young people](#)
- Ann Craft Trust: [tips for writing and implementing a Safeguarding Adults Policy](#)
- You may also find it useful to ask other organisations or groups you know that do similar things, and that are the same size as you, to share their policies, procedures and experience so that you can benefit from their learning.

Voscur is here to support VCSE organisations. For support, advice and guidance, please contact us: info@voscur.org 0117 909 9949