

Guidance for volunteers and for anyone working in the voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations and private sectors



Info-sheet

Introduction

This info-sheet is applicable to volunteers working for any organisation and agency who are working with children and families. It is equally relevant for voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE), faith-based organisations and private sector organisations and agencies who deliver activities or services for children and families. This info-sheet highlights the key documents and information available on the Children's MARS website.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 says that...

Voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) and private sector organisations and agencies play an important role in safeguarding children through the services they deliver. Some of these will work with particular communities, with different races and faith communities and delivering in health, adult social care, housing, prisons and probation services. They may as part of their work provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families and communities.

Like other organisations and agencies who work with children, they should have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. Many of these organisations and agencies as well as many schools, children's centres, early years and childcare organisations, will be subject to charity law and regulated either by the Charity Commission and/ or other "principal" regulators. Charity trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it. The Charity Commission for England and Wales provides guidance on charity compliance which should be followed. Further information on the Charity Commission's role in safeguarding can be found on: [the Charity Commission's page on Gov.uk](#).

Some of these organisations and agencies are large national charities whilst others will have a much smaller local reach. Some will be delivering statutory services and may be run by volunteers, such as library services. This important group of organisations includes youth services not delivered by local authorities or district councils.

All practitioners working in these organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer.

Every VCSE, faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have policies in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. These should be followed and systems should be in place to ensure compliance in this. Individual practitioners, whether paid or volunteer, should be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children from harm, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary.

Certain VCSE organisations are named as 'relevant agencies' within the Children's MARS arrangements. However, all VCSE, faith-based organisations and private sector organisations who provide activities for children and/or support families have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and working within the Children's MARS local arrangements. The Children's MARS local arrangements and appendices can be found on the [Children's MARS website](#).

Local Key Policies, Procedures and Guidance

The Children's MARS website contains a wide range of local policies, procedures and guidance across a number of topics. The key documents to access via the [policies, procedures and guidance page](#) are as below:

Documents

Guidance and checklist for safeguarding policies for VCSE, faith-based and private sector organisations

This document provides guidance around how to write a safeguarding policy and includes a template. Appendix 2 of this guidance lists a number of online resources and support specific to voluntary and community organisations including faith communities, sports groups and performing arts clubs.

Safeguarding policy template – PVI nurseries and early years provision

This template safeguarding policy is for private voluntary and independent nurseries/early years provision. This template can be used in conjunction with the information and guidance included within the 'Guidance and checklist for safeguarding policies for voluntary and community organisations' document.

Safeguarding policy template – Childminders

This template safeguarding policy is for childminders. This template can be used in conjunction with the information and guidance included within the 'Guidance and checklist for safeguarding policies for voluntary and community organisations' document.

Supplementary procedures

Guidance on the code of conduct for people working with children and young people

This guidance describes the standards of conduct and practice that should be followed by employers, staff and volunteers when working with children and young people.

Standards of safer recruitment

To safeguard children, the Children's MARS Board advises that your organisation has policies and procedures for recruiting staff or volunteers who have contact with children and for assessing their suitability to work with children. This document sets out the standards for safer recruitment and minimum standards of staff and volunteer's induction.

Statutory procedures

Managing allegations against people who work with children

This document outlines what should be done following an allegation of abuse or maltreatment of a child against a professional, staff member, volunteer or others who works with or cares for children. All organisations providing services, staff or volunteers to work with or care for children should operate within these procedures.

Assessing need and providing help

This guidance outlines early help, information sharing, making a referral to Children's Services, and what happens once a referral has been made.

Further Information and Useful Resources

The Children's MARS website contains a large amount of information that is relevant to VCSE, faith-based organisations and private sector organisations that work with children, young people and families and volunteers who are working with children and their families in any organisation or agency. Some examples of this include:

Other useful policies, procedures and guidance

Information sharing guidance

This document provides information and advice around the effective and legitimate sharing of information. VCSE, faith-based organisations and private sector organisations and volunteers who are working with children and their families in any organisation or agency can use this when making decisions around if, and when to share information within the context of safeguarding children.

Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire 2020/24 Document

This document sets out how services support children, young people and families to participate, find help online and in their networks and communities, to be resilient, stay safe and independent. The document contains information relating to the values and principals of the One Family Approach which aims to keep children in their family, in their school and in their communities.

Children's MARS Communication and Training Programme

Email communications and social media

The Children's MARS Board produces quarterly news updates which provide information on the work of the Board and includes updates on local and national guidance. We also promote new training opportunities, resources for professionals and volunteers, support for children and families and information relating to events and conferences.

If you wish to subscribe for Children's MARS communications emails, please complete the [communications sign up form](#).

A collection of our previous news updates can also be found on the [communications page of the Children's MARS website](#).

The Children's MARS Board regularly post updates via the partnership social media pages Safe North Lincs. Support and advice for children and families can be found on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Follow us on Facebook [Safe North Lincs](#) or Twitter [@SafeNorthLincs](#)

Children's MARS training programme

The Children's MARS Board seeks to support individuals in keeping up to date with their knowledge and skills relating to safeguarding children.

Our training programme gives details of upcoming courses and booking information is available on the [training page of the Children's MARS website](#). Courses are free of charge to all practitioners and volunteers working with children and families in any organisation.

e-workbooks

In addition to the Children's MARS training courses, there are a number of e-workbooks available to access from the [training page of the Children's MARS website](#). The e-workbooks provide a basic awareness of safeguarding children and are certified by the Children's MARS Board upon completion.

Toolkits

A range of toolkits are available on the [resources page of the Children's MARS website](#) and cover a number of topics. The toolkits provide advice and guidance around what you should do when working with children and families who require help and contain many resources and sources of support which families can be signposted to.

Resources

Children, young people and families page

The [children, young people and families page of the Children's MARS website](#) contains a number of resources and information around how families can access support. We recommend that staff and volunteers also make themselves familiar with this page and signpost families to the information.

This page also contains information around what to do if you are worried about a child and how to contact North Lincolnshire Children's Services.

Early Help page

The [early help page of the Children's MARS website](#) provides advice and guidance to organisations who provide early help to families. You can find guidance around how to complete early help assessments as well as information about when to request further support from Children's Services during early help.

Resources page

The [resources page of the Children's MARS website](#) is regularly updated with the latest resources which can be used to provide support to children and families. This page also contains details on a number of services to which families can self-refer and seek support from.

National advice and guidance

Keeping children safe in out of school settings: code of practice

In October 2020, the Department for Education published a voluntary code of practice to help providers of activities, tuition and out of school settings understand what they need to do to keep children safe in their care. It provides advice on what policies and procedures providers should have in place for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection, staff suitability and governance. The guidance can be found on the [government website](#).

Guidance on handling safeguarding allegations in a charity

This tool will help charities in England to handle the reporting of safeguarding allegations about the behaviour or actions of a person in their charity. The tool is available on [the government website](#).



Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

This guidance shares advice around what to do to protect people who come into contact with your charity through its work from abuse or mistreatment of any kind. The guidance can be found on the [government website](#).

Charity Commission training, resources and guidance

Through engagement with the Charity Commission, the government has strengthened safeguarding guidance for charities and trustees in the third sector and continues to support these organisations' work, including by publishing training, resources and guidance on handling and reporting of allegations for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations. These can be found on the [Charity Commission page of the government website](#).