

Volunteering with Safety

Exercise: Safeguarding statement

In the training slides, we talked about safeguarding. Safeguarding is about protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment and neglect, preventing impairment of their health or development, ensuring they live in circumstances where safe and effective care can be provided, and taking actions to ensure they have the best outcomes.

This may seem quite daunting – that it is a challenge for organisations with more knowledge, experience or power than our own. It isn't though: safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The good news is that we can take steps toward safeguarding whoever we are. A starting point is to think about what we do and the power we have in our day-to-day work to make children and vulnerable adults safer, and to commit to that in a safeguarding statement.

Having a safeguarding statement helps us by reminding us to consider safeguarding in all we do. It also helps discourage individuals who might join our organisation for illicit purposes by showing that we are alert to the dangers they pose and serious about avoiding them.

This exercise will walk you through the writing of a simple safeguarding statement which you can then implement. Please follow along, preparing a draft statement you can then discuss within your group or organisation.

Step one: A statement of purpose

The first thing your statement needs is an indication of who you are and what you do. This doesn't need a great deal of detail – say what you do, not how you do it. As an example, if TDI were writing a safeguarding statement, it would open with something like:

TDI works with the public and professionals to reduce the risk of sexual offending.

We haven't gone into detail here, as we undertake a lot of different activities in pursuit of our charitable objectives, but if your organisation is set up to do a single thing – such as delivering goods to people, or befriending people by phone – it would be good to include that here.

Step two: A recognition of your safeguarding responsibility

As we said above, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. A good safeguarding statement should acknowledge that, setting a standard for



everyone within the organisation. There are all sorts of templates available online (we'll link to some at the end of this exercise), but our own policy says:

We recognise that we have a responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm wherever our work brings us into contact with them.

We've deliberately mentioned young people and vulnerable adults here, to remind ourselves that it's not just children who need protecting – anyone can be a victim and all of us are potentially vulnerable at different times and in different circumstances.

Step three: An idea of scope

We now need to say who our safeguarding statement applies to. It's everyone who works on our behalf, so think about who that may be. For many organisations, it will be volunteers, but you may also have a board of trustees, permanent employees, freelance staff or other organisations you work alongside. It's helpful to list all of these that apply to you as a way of focusing your thinking and making clear to threatening individuals that there are no exceptions. Our statement says:

This responsibility applies to anyone working on behalf of TDI, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, independent consultants and any volunteers.

Step four: Actions

The final part of the statement needs to say what you will do to ensure that safeguarding takes place. This can be a detailed list, or something much simpler.

Things you might want to include, if appropriate to the work you do, are:

- Listening to, valuing and respecting individuals
- Undertaking or providing safeguarding training
- Making yourself aware of statutory guidance on safeguarding and regularly updating your awareness as guidance changes.
- Reflecting on and learning from your activities with safeguarding in mind.
- Supervising, supporting, training and quality assuring your volunteers and staff.
- Recruiting staff with safety in mind.
- Storing and using data responsibly, in line with data protection legislation.
- Providing those you work with with information on where they can obtain help.

- Having a complaints and whistle-blowing policy.
- Fostering a healthy, respectful and supportive working environment.
- Making sure all staff, volunteers and clients are physically safe, for instance by providing the correct protective equipment.

The examples linked to at the end of this exercise will offer templates for this sort of detailed list. A good starting point could be a single sentence, for example:

We will achieve safeguarding by ensuring that everyone we work with is aware of their duty to look after others, supporting them through training and guidance, and having clear lines of escalation where there are safeguarding concerns.

We will think a little more about lines of escalation in Exercise two.

Bringing it together

Combining these four sentences, we have a basic but functional safeguarding statement:

TDI works with the public and professionals to reduce the risk of sexual offending. We recognise that we have a responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm wherever our work brings us into contact with them. This responsibility applies to anyone working on behalf of TDI, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, independent consultants and any volunteers. We will achieve safeguarding by ensuring that everyone we work with is aware of their duty to look after others, supporting them through training and guidance, and having clear lines of escalation where there are safeguarding concerns.

It says clearly who we are, that we recognise we have a safeguarding responsibility, who this responsibility applies to and what we'll do to meet it. This both shows we're serious and helps us to act on that seriousness.

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If you're interested in a more ambitious safeguarding statement, there are a number of examples available on the internet. Some of those we used when updating our own statement include:

- The NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/templates/example-safeguarding-policy-statement>
- The National Children's Bureau: <https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/June%202018%20NCB%20Safeguarding%20children%20and%20vulnerable%20adults%20policy.pdf>
- The FA: <http://www.thefa.com/-/media/thefacom-new/files/rules-and-regulations/safeguarding/section-1/1-4-safeguarding-policy-and-procedures-club-template-colour-version.ashx>

There's also the example of NHS England which is, as you may expect, very detailed – there's no need for most organisations to have anything like this much detail, but it might help you think about the very many aspects of your work which a policy might cover:

- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/safeguarding-policy.pdf>