



ShelterBox
Disaster relief

UK VOLUNTEERS'
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Statement

We believe that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation by staff, volunteers, or associated personnel.

ShelterBox will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners, or any other representatives associated with the delivery of its work harming or abusing others in any way.

Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers undertaking any UK-based volunteering role. There is a suite of safeguarding policies which cover staff and ShelterBox Response Team volunteers.

Policy

Volunteering for ShelterBox

We are committed to ensuring that when you volunteer for us, in whatever capacity and wherever you are in the UK, you are:

- Safe from sexual abuse and exploitation
- Treated with respect
- Able to speak out if you feel you are being treated unfairly or in a discriminatory way

We will:

- Provide a number of ways in which you can report any concerns
- Respond to allegations of sexual harassment, abuse, or exploitation quickly and appropriately

Recruitment

Volunteering application forms require volunteers to indicate 'I do not have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013)'. We are not able to offer volunteering opportunities to anyone with spent or unspent convictions for sexual offences or any form of abuse. Prospective volunteers and existing volunteers must disclose convictions or investigations to which they are subject.

Safeguarding Children

Children (any young person under the age of 18) must be treated with respect

regardless of their race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability, or other status.

Volunteers, other than Response Team volunteers, are not currently required to undertake a basic Disclosure and Barring Service check. We will regularly review this decision.

Volunteers must never:

- Subject a child or young person to sexual, physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in sexual activities with anyone under the age of 18 in line with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Try to spend time with any child with whom they come into contact as part of their work with ShelterBox except as part of the designated activities set out in their role
- Contact children they have met in the course of their volunteering in any way (including social media)
- Be on their own with a child in any place where they cannot be seen by others e.g. a tent or a separate room
- Take or store any photographs of children encountered through volunteering with ShelterBox unless instructed to do so and with the guidance of the ShelterBox brand and content team
- Fail to report any concerns they may have about a child

Safeguarding 'At Risk' Adults

An 'at risk' adult is defined as "any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, or unable to protect themselves due to age or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation". People encountering domestic abuse, substance misusers and asylum seekers are also defined as being 'at risk.'

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Subject an at risk adult to sexual, physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Exploit at risk adults sexually, or for financial or other gain

At Risk Adults as Volunteers

If you are an adult who would like to volunteer for us, and you have told us that you have significant support needs, we will make sure that any informal face-to-face interview is conducted by two people, and that you are made aware of this policy.

If you are appointed as a volunteer, you will not be left alone with only one other person, and you will always be aware who your named contact is. If it is appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment based on your needs.

Reporting

If anyone – staff, fellow volunteer, or member of the public – discloses to you that they have been harassed, abused, or sexually exploited by a ShelterBox

representative or through ShelterBox activity, you should report it as soon you can within 24 hours. If someone makes a disclosure, you need to make them aware that you have a responsibility to share the information with the Safeguarding Team. There are a number of different ways you can report a disclosure, or an incident involving you personally:

- Email the Safeguarding Focal Points on: safeguarding@shelterbox.org **OR**
- Use ShelterBox's independent whistleblowing service, Safecall - <https://report.safecall.co.uk/> Telephone: 0800 915 1571
- Report by post: Disclosure of Malpractice. C/o HR Department, ShelterBox HQ, Falcon House, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2PH. The HR department will acknowledge all allegations.

You do not have to decide whether or not the allegations are true or what should happen next. Your responsibility is to report to the appropriate person as soon as you can. Guidance about how to behave and the questions you should ask are given in an appendix to this policy. There is also guidance on what constitutes abuse.

If you have any concerns about the behaviour of members of staff or volunteers, you have a responsibility to report to your named contact or to the email addresses and phone number listed above. You can also use these addresses and phone numbers if you yourself have experienced harassment or abuse. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no obligation placed on any individual to report any incident of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse that has happened to them.

The Consequences of Ignoring the Safeguarding Policy

Anyone who does not act in accordance with this policy is likely to be dismissed as a volunteer. Details of the procedures involved can be found in the **Resolving Differences Policy**. If a safeguarding allegation is upheld against a volunteer, this information will be stored by ShelterBox and disclosed if a volunteer or employment reference is requested for them by any other organisation.

Response

The ShelterBox Safeguarding Team may report instances of abuse, exploitation, and harassment to local authority designated officers (LADO), multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH), the police, social services, or any other relevant body. The Safeguarding Team also have a responsibility to share anonymised information regarding serious incidents with the Charity Commission.

Data

If you (as a reporter, survivor, witness, or subject of complaint) are concerned about how your information is being used you can request access to any information held about you by ShelterBox regarding the Safeguarding concern in line with the **Data Protection Policy**. ShelterBox will not share any information regarding other stakeholders with you or any information that may disrupt the integrity of an investigation.

Appendix

What should I do if someone tells me about an incident of abuse or harassment?

You need to:

- Listen
- Empathise with the person
- Ask who, when, where, what but not why
- Repeat/check your understanding of the situation
- Report to the appropriate staff member (see Policy above)

It is particularly important not to ask leading questions or put words in anyone's mouth; you just need to establish facts and try to remember the words and phrases the person themselves uses.

What do I do if I have concerns about a child/adult at risk's wellbeing?

- The first priority is the immediate safety and welfare of the individual.
- Keep calm and act normally; do not say or show that you are shocked.
- Do not investigate or interrogate the child/adult at risk. If they report abuse directly to you, only ask questions to get enough information to understand the complaint (e.g. 'who, what, where, when' questions, but not 'why' questions).
- Never agree to keep a secret. If a child/adult at risk is in danger you will have to inform others.
- Do not directly challenge parents, carers, or teachers about your concerns.
- Record all the details that support your suspicion and report this in line with the reporting procedures laid out in the policy above

What is child abuse and what forms does it take?

Different forms of harm or mistreatment of children are categorised under the broader term "child abuse." Abuse can happen anywhere and at any time, but research shows that the perpetrators of abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child. The most commonly defined types are:

- *Physical*: violence towards or deliberate injury of a child.
- *Neglect*: persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs.
- *Sexual*: using a child for sexual stimulation or gratification.
- *Emotional*: behaviour which attacks a child's self-esteem.
- *Child Sexual Exploitation*: Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money, or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

What abuse can adults at risk experience?

Abuse can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual must always

be considered. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. The following is a list of examples of the different types of abuse which may affect an adult at risk:

- Physical – includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, unlawful or inappropriate restraint and inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Sexual – is unwanted sexual activity or behaviour that happens without consent or understanding
- Psychological – is emotional abuse which causes distress and can be verbal and non-verbal.
- Financial and material – includes theft, fraud, exploitation, and pressure in connection to wills, property, inheritance, and financial transactions, or inciting an adult at risk to do any of these things on another individual's behalf; it may also involve the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, and benefits of an adult at risk
- Discriminatory- includes abuse based on an individual's race, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation, or age; and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment or hate crime/incident.
- Neglect or self-neglect - includes a wide range of behaviours such as neglecting to care for one's own personal hygiene or health.
- Domestic Abuse – is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.