

Safeguarding policy

Introduction

This policy is a statement of our commitment to ensure that those benefiting from, or working with, Refugee Support Network (RSN), are not harmed in any way through contact with it. This specifically includes protecting children and young people who participate in RSN services or activities.

RSN runs a number of programmes involving children, including mentoring programmes, advice, guidance and support programmes, workshops and social activities. The principles set out here will be implemented in all activities involving children or young people.

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1. Scope

All trustees, staff and volunteers are responsible for following this policy by following the procedures set out in RSN's:

- Child Protection Procedures
- Over 18s Protection Procedures
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Practice Guide
- Whistleblowing Policy

2. Reference frameworks

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, as listed in the Appendix.

3. Definitions

Abuse may include single or repeated acts; be physical, verbal, psychological or emotional; be an act of neglect or an omission to act; be intentional or unintentional (and can result from lack of knowledge); occur when a child or young person is persuaded to enter into a financial arrangement or relationship to which they have not, or could not have, consented.

Child abuse has the meaning given in RSN's Child Protection Procedures

Child means anyone up to the age of 18 years and may include particularly vulnerable groups including care-leavers, refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of trafficking.

Safeguarding means ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, a charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it.

Staff means any and all paid employees of RSN.

Trustee means any person on the board of trustees of RSN.

Volunteer means any person who donates time and/or services to RSN.

Young person means anyone up to the age of 24 years and may include particularly vulnerable groups including care-leavers, refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of trafficking. (Occasionally RSN supports young people over the age of 24; this policy and the processes outlined in our adult protection procedures will apply to any young people who use our services, including those over 24.)

4. Our commitments

To keep children and young people safe, RSN:

- a. recognises that the welfare of a child is paramount and has priority over all interests;
- b. respects the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people and ensures that they are listened to and specifically respecting the rights of young people who are adults to retain personal choice about how they will respond to being abused or the risk of abuse, subject to our legal responsibilities;
- c. works in partnership with children, young people and their parents, carers, families and supporting professionals to promote their welfare;
- d. recognises that some children and young people are additionally vulnerable, including the particular group of young people that we support, because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, immigration status or other issues;
- e. aims to develop the ability of children or young people (wherever possible) to communicate themselves by building their self-esteem, confidence and language skills; and
- f. works together with other agencies, including social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and any other agency that may be involved with a child or young person, in the prevention, identification, investigation and treatment of alleged, suspected or confirmed abuse.

To keep children, young people, staff and volunteers safe, RSN:

- g. recognises that all people without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, beliefs,, sexual orientation or immigration status;
- h. recognises that we have a duty, not only to protect children and young people from abuse, but also to protect staff and volunteers from situations that may lead to an allegation of abuse;
- i. supports staff and volunteers in the recognition and reporting of safeguarding issues by providing access to training, supervision and support, as appropriate;
- j. commits to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of trustees, staff and volunteers;
- k. provides a safe physical environment by applying health and safety measures and carrying out risk assessments; and
- l. records and stores information professionally and securely.
- m. embeds a culture of safeguarding awareness and openness in our organisation, ensuring we discuss safeguarding good practice regularly in meetings and regular supervision, and disseminate good practice and changes in policy and legislation throughout the organisation

5. Key people and other key contacts

Key people

Designated Safeguarding Officer	Designated Safeguarding Officer	Lead Safeguarding Trustee
Catherine Gladwell	Pasha Michaelsen	Joy Johnston
+44 7727 634 688	+44 7564 010 762	+44 7894 544 871

Key contacts

Thirtyone:eight	0845 120 45 50 or 0845 120 4551 (24hr/day)
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000

RSN safeguarding line	+44 1372 632 033
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6. Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service checks

All trustees, staff and volunteers are subject to enhanced DBS checks (as permitted by law) and references. Where applicable, overseas criminal records checks may also be conducted. DBS checks will be updated every 3 years.

All recruitment follows the procedures set out in RSN's Safer Recruitment Policy, which requires, amongst other steps, face-to-face interviews and two references for prospective staff or volunteers.

7. Training

Trustees, staff and volunteers should have appropriate training, at different levels and frequency depending on particular individual roles.

All staff, volunteers and trustees:

- RSN Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Procedures and Over 18 Protection Procedures

All staff and Lead Safeguarding Trustee:

- A generalist safeguarding course (including training in recognising symptoms of abuse) offered by the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board or Thirtyone:eight's 'Facing the Unthinkable' training
- E-learning training on Prevent
- Refresher training every 3 years

Designated Safeguarding Officers

- Inter-agency procedures
- Legal responsibilities

- Refresher training every 2 years

8. Policy monitoring and review

This policy is approved and endorsed by the board of trustees. It is reviewed on a yearly basis, or more frequently if the relevant legislation changes or the activities of RSN change significantly.

Date of last trustee review:	7 August 2019
Date of next review:	August 2020

Appendix: Law and guidance

Care Act (2014)	Safeguarding Children and Young People 2014, Charity Commission
Children Act 1989	Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government
Children Act 2004	Safeguarding Strategy: unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children 2017, DofE and Home Office
Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000)	
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	
Data Protection Act (2018)	
Human Rights Act (1998)	
Mental Capacity Act (2005)	
Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)	