

# Safeguarding policy

RSN runs a number of services involving children and young people, including an educational mentoring programme, advice, guidance and support programmes, workshops and social activities, and research including 1:1 interviews and focus group discussions.

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's services or activities. The principles set out here will be implemented in all services and activities involving children and/or young people.

## 1. Scope

All trustees, staff and volunteers are responsible for working in line with 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
- Responding to Abuse policy

All these documents are reviewed regularly and are either published on [our website](#) or available on request.

## 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** means the physical, verbal, psychological or emotional mistreatment of another person. It 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** means the physical, verbal, psychological or emotional mistreatment of a child. Descriptions of different forms of child abuse can be found in RSN's Child Protection Procedures which set out how this policy's commitments are outworked in practice.

**Child** means anyone up to the age of 18 years. This term may include particularly vulnerable groups including Looked After Children (LAC), 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 25 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 25; this policy and the processes outlined in our adult protection procedures will apply to any young people who use our services, including those over 25.)

## 4. Our commitments

### To keep children and young people safe, RSN:

- a. takes a holistic approach to safeguarding which includes the promotion of wellbeing in addition to the prevention of harm;
- b. recognises that the welfare of a child and/or young person is paramount and has priority over all other interests;
- c. respects the rights, wishes and feelings of children and/or young people, ensuring that they are listened to and respecting the rights of young adults (over 18s) to retain personal choice about how they will respond to being abused or the risk of abuse, subject to our legal responsibilities;
- d. works in partnership with children, young people and their parents, carers, families and supporting professionals to promote their welfare;

- e. acknowledges that some children and/or young people are additionally vulnerable, including the particular group of children and young people that we support, because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, immigration status or other issues;
- f. aims to develop the ability of children and/or young people to communicate themselves by building their self-esteem, confidence and language skills; and
- g. 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 and/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:**

- h. 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 and all other personal characteristics, as set out in our Equal Opportunities policy;
- i. acknowledges that we have a duty not only to protect children and/or young people from abuse, but also to protect staff and volunteers from situations that may lead to an allegation of abuse;
- j. supports staff and volunteers in the recognition and reporting of safeguarding issues by providing access to appropriate training, supervision and support;
- k. commits to the safe recruitment, selection and vetting of trustees, staff and volunteers;
- l. provides a safe physical environment by applying health and safety measures and carrying out risk assessments;
- m. records and stores information professionally and securely;
- n. embeds a culture of safeguarding awareness and openness across our organisation through regular discussion of safeguarding good practice, frequent supervision and the dissemination of good practice and changes in policy and legislation throughout the organisation.

Further details of what these commitments look like in practice can be found in the policy and procedure documents listed in section 1. These include information about how RSN has adapted its practices to work safely in the light of COVID-19.

## 5. Key people

Any questions about RSN's safeguarding should be directed, in the first instance, to [safeguarding@refugeesupportnetwork.org](mailto:safeguarding@refugeesupportnetwork.org) or to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Designated Safeguarding Officer	Designated Safeguarding Officer	Lead Safeguarding Trustee
Catherine Gladwell (CEO)	Andrew Cooper (Head of Educational Mentoring)	Joy Johnston
+44 7727 634 688	+44 7858 179842	+44 7894 544 871

## 6. Recruitment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) 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's Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Procedures and Over 18 Protection Procedures
- RSN's internal staff training or the relevant section of the new volunteer training which explains RSN's policies and procedures and addresses any questions raised

### **All staff and Lead Safeguarding Trustee:**

- A generalist safeguarding course (including training in recognising symptoms of abuse), such as Thirtyone:eight's 'Facing the Unthinkable' training and those offered by the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- E-learning training on Prevent

- Refresher training every three years

**Designated Safeguarding Officers:**

- Inter-agency procedures
- Legal responsibilities
- Refresher training every two 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.

<b>Date of last trustee review:</b>	October 2020
<b>Date of next review:</b>	October 2021

## Appendix: Law and guidance

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of the following law and guidance that seek to protect children and young people.

Care Act (2014)	<a href="#">Safeguarding Children and Young People 2014, Charity Commission</a>
Children Act 1989	<a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government</a>
Children Act 2004	<a href="#">Safeguarding Strategy: unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children 2017, DofE and Home Office</a>
Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000)	<a href="#">Guidance on Handling Safeguarding Allegations in a Charity</a>
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	
Data Protection Act (2018)	
Human Rights Act (1998)	
Mental Capacity Act (2005)	
Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)	