

Updated Charity Commission guidance on safeguarding

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Safeguarding has long been a priority of the Charity Commission. Since 2018 the Commission has increased its focus on the issue, producing revised guidance and regulatory alerts and conducting statutory inquiries. Safeguarding is set to remain a key issue for charities and getting safeguarding right is a governance priority for very many boards.

Updated guidance

On 22 October 2019, the Charity Commission made further updates to its safeguarding guidance for charities.

The Commission's approach to safeguarding as a key governance priority for all charities has not changed. What the updates focus upon are the practicalities of ensuring how best safeguarding practice can be enshrined within a charity. The updated guidance includes more detailed information on using DBS Checks as part of wider range of checks to carry out when hiring staff or recruiting volunteers. All roles should be risk assessed to establish whether they are eligible for standard or enhanced level DBS checks. There is also a link to guidance on carrying out checks on people who are overseas. The revised guidance also now includes information for charity trustees on how to check and ensure that relevant safeguarding policies are fit for purpose.

Performance should be monitored using qualitative reports as well as statistics, to identify risks and gaps in policies. Recommendations include creating a standing agenda item on safeguarding for meetings, recording potential conflicts of interest at any level and speaking to people in the charity to make sure they know how to raise concerns.

The guidance also signposts other key resources for charities, such [Bond's 'Good governance for safeguarding'](#) and the [NCVO's safeguarding resource](#).

NCVO's safeguarding resource in particular looks at things the Charity Commission expects charities to do, and provides know-how outlining simple steps to help charities do these things well.

This guidance groups the Charity Commission's '10 actions to ensure good safeguarding' into six main areas of activity:

- Understanding and managing the risks
- Policies and procedures
- Making safeguarding a priority
- Supporting your staff and volunteers
- Handling and reporting concerns
- Your culture and values

Checklists and know-how are provided for each of these areas.

The guidance also includes information on the different approaches that should be taken when safeguarding children, adults at risk and the general public, noting key points:

- People will not always be alert to the reasons why adults need safeguarding, and policies and procedures can help get the message across.

- The way abuse is reported in relation to children and adults at risk is not the same and the legislation for managing each is different. Organisations should understand the right steps for each.
- All adults, including adults at risk, have the right to make unwise decisions and this could include deciding not to take action to protect themselves. This is different for children, as their safety is the primary concern.
- All charities, whether or not working specifically with children or adults at risk, are expected to follow the Charity Commission's safeguarding guidance.

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