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<b>Policy owner(s):</b> Amanda Allard - Strategic Director of Practice and Programmes & Designated Safeguarding Lead Heather Devine, Head of People and Culture	<b>Review Frequency:</b> Annual <b>Next Review Date:</b> Sept 2024

## Keeping NCB Safe

### Statement and Scope

The purpose and scope of this policy statement is to set out NCB's absolute commitment to protect and ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults who:

- **receive direct or indirect services and/or support through our extensive operations, programmes and projects**
- **engage in our broad range of activities and events; and**
- **work or volunteer for or in association with the NCB family.**

We bring this to life through the embodiment of our organisational ethos and culture built on respect, trust, integrity and transparency to achieve:

- **Safer Governance**
- **Safer Organisation**
- **Safer Recruitment**
- **Safer Voice**
- **Safer Culture**

### Commitment

It is NCB's unequivocal belief that no child, young person, vulnerable or other adult should be subject to abuse of any kind and that we all have the same fundamental rights of freedom and expression to live our lives fully and safely. It is therefore paramount at NCB that we promote this message of equality and inclusivity across all areas of our work, externally and internally, through recognition of:

- Our individual and collective responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all engaged with NCB and that this is enshrined in the delivery of our mission, values and strategic objectives
- The equal rights of all individuals to protection against all types of abuse or harm regardless of age, race, religion or belief, gender, or sexual orientation
- The additional vulnerability of some individuals owing to the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication or other needs

- That we are stronger and better together across NCB and in partnerships to champion and promote equality, diversity and inclusion across our communities.

## **Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children, young people, vulnerable adults and adults in England and Northern Ireland including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Children Acts 1989 & 2004 & The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Care Act 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 & the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Charity Commission Guidelines for Trustees
- The Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR 2021)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, 2016)
- The Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- Children's Services Cooperation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- Children and Young People's Strategy (Northern Ireland) 2019-2029
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order (Northern Ireland) 2011

**Policy agreed by:**                **NCB Board of Trustees**

**Date:**                                **September 2023**

**Next review due:**                **Sept 2024**

### **Contacts:**

If you have any questions about Safeguarding at NCB, please contact:

- Amanda Allard, Strategic Director of Practice and Programmes and Designated Safeguarding Lead: [aallard@ncb.org.uk](mailto:aallard@ncb.org.uk)
- Heather Devine, Head of People & Culture: [hdevine@ncb.org.uk](mailto:hdevine@ncb.org.uk)

For any confidential concerns regarding Safeguarding at NCB that you don't feel can be dealt with by one of the above, please contact:

- Steve Crocker, Trustee Safeguarding Lead: [trusteesafeguardinglead@ncb.org.uk](mailto:trusteesafeguardinglead@ncb.org.uk)

# Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the overarching principles and framework as to how NCB determines, maintains and communicates its commitment to:

- Safeguard and protect children, young people, vulnerable adults, and families who receive NCB's services or engage in our activities from harm.
- To provide a comprehensive overview of our overarching principles that guide our approach to deliver upon our commitment to keeping NCB safe.
- This policy applies to the Board of Trustees, all NCB staff (permanent, temporary, full or part-time), our associates and volunteers.
- This policy applies to any working environment, whether working in the NCB offices, at external sites, remotely or any other venue.
- This policy and corresponding, full document suite, enables all parties to **recognise** any form of abuse, or signs of suspected abuse; provides guidance on how to **respond** to and **report** any concerns with confidence and trust; and, how to **record** any incidents.

## Definitions

Abuse is broadly defined as someone being caused harm or distress through many forms ranging from disrespect or micro-aggression to physical, emotional or mental pain. Forms of abuse include:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Coercive control Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation**
- **Psychological or emotional abuse**
- **Discriminatory abuse (on any grounds set out in the Equality Act 2010)**
- **Modern day slavery**
- **Human trafficking**
- **Female genital mutilation**
- **Extremism and radicalisation**
- **Financial or material control**
- **Bullying and cyberbullying**
- **Organisational, institutional abuse and commercial exploitation**

## Safer Governance

As the legal entity, NCB (registered company limited by guaranteed no.: 952727; registered charity 258825) is responsible for ensuring an integrated approach across the NCB Family to deliver our vision, mission, values and strategic direction in-line with our charitable objects and to do so safely. This is achieved through a robust, governance framework and practices, which are underpinned by the seven principles of the Charity Governance Code (revised 2020):

1. Organisational purpose
2. Leadership
3. Integrity
4. Decision Making and Controls
5. Board Effectiveness
6. Diversity
7. Openness and Accountability

These principles are embedded throughout our core governance structure, which is spearheaded by our Board of Trustees and our Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In accordance with good governance and delineation of designated responsibilities, the Board is supported by two standing committees and an advisory group to execute its statutory obligations, and to ensure organisational sustainability and security. These are the Finance, Risk and Audit (FRAC); People and Culture Committee (PCC); and the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG). Keeping the NCB Family safe, in its entirety, threads throughout this structure by means of clearly defined remits and delegated duties with the FRAC having specific remits to monitor and assess risk including around safeguarding.

The Board and the SLT are firmly committed to NCB's overarching values and principles and lead by example to ensure behaviours based on equality, trust, respect and transparency are enshrined across our organisational culture.

In adherence with the Charity Commission's guidelines, the Board of Trustees maintains oversight of NCB's safeguarding statement and standards by seeking assurance and evidence from the SLT that the organisation has robust, appropriate and effective mechanisms, practices and procedures to uphold its commitment through:

- Receipt of quarterly safeguarding reports and an annual report as part of NCB's compliance reporting to the Board of Trustees
- Quarterly review of identified and emerging risks to NCB as an organisation and its stakeholders around safeguarding and consideration of how practices may be enhanced to ensure a continued safe culture and to mitigate against such risks (set out in NCB's Risk Register)
- Annual review of NCB's Safeguarding Policy to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose
- Relevant and current training and guidance are readily available for staff and other relevant individuals to know how to recognise, respond to, report and record a safeguarding concern, and know they can do so with confidence and trust
- Periodic review of which posts across NCB can and must have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Access NI checks
- Risk assessment processes of other posts that do not qualify for DBS or Access NI checks, but where the post-holders may have contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Clearly documented and maintained recording and reporting (internal and external) processes and that these are revised not only through statutory or regulatory requirement, but also through NCB's valuable learning from reportable or non-reportable incidents
- The above includes identification and documenting of Serious Incidents, including those reportable to the Charity Commission and of Complaints made against NCB as an organisation or members of the NCB Family
- **All** NCB Trustees are DBS or Access NI checked upon being appointed to the Board.

To support our overarching governance structure further, NCB has designated:

- **Safeguarding Trustee Lead (STL)** who represents the Board in its commitment to keeping NCB and the communities we serve safe. The STL is the direct point of contact for NCB's Designated Safeguard Lead should incidents occur that require reporting to or informing the Board.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** who, as a member of NCB's Strategic Leadership Team, has strategic overview of the implementation and embedding of NCB's safeguarding principles and practices and that they remain fit for purpose.

The STL and the DSL are supported by NCB's Head of People & Culture to ensure policies, procedures, and reporting mechanisms remain fit for purpose and are effectively disseminated across the organisation.

### **Serious Incidents - identification and reporting**

The Charity Commission's view of a serious incident is *'an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in, or risks, significant:*

- **harm to a charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the charity through its work**
- **loss of a charity's money or assets**
- **damage to a charity's property**
- **harm to a charity's work or reputation**

With particular regard to safeguarding, NCB needs to report incidents to the Charity Commission that fall under their definitions:

- incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the charity (adults or children) which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and:
  - this happened while they were under the care of the charity
  - someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual)
- other incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with the charity through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to the charity's activities
- breaches of procedures or policies at the charity which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm, including failure to carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified in law from holding their position within the charity. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children and/or adults at risk.

The overall responsibility for reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission, and that this is done so efficiently, rests with NCB's Board of Trustees. However, in practice this is delegated to the CEO who in-turn will onward delegate to senior staff to investigate on a case by case basis. Should a serious incident not be reported but the Charity Commission becomes aware of the situation, NCB will need to be able to clearly explain and evidence as to why a decision was taken to not report at the time.

If a member of NCB's Board of Trustees, staff, contractor, associate or volunteer becomes aware of or has reason to believe that a serious incident has occurred they are to swiftly inform NCB's DSL Head of Governance or Head of People & Culture who will look further into the issue and determine the appropriate course of action. Any individual who does raise a concern can do so in-line with NCB's values and principles of operating with respect, trust and confidence with recognition that they are acting with integrity in the best interests of NCB and any individuals involved.

## **Complaints**

External or internal complaints or concerns regarding safeguarding at NCB will always be brought to the attention of the CEO who will make the recommendation to Trustees about onward referral to regulatory bodies. On receipt of a complaint about any aspect of NCB, the staff or services, this must be notified to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. If any written correspondence exists, this must accompany the notification. The complaint will be allocated within NCB for an initial response and information gathering. If the nature of the complaint implicates a staff member, Trustee or volunteer, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head of People & Culture will be immediately consulted to align the actions required within the complaints procedure with actions to safeguard the welfare of children, adults and staff. All complaints will be recorded and reported as part of the NCB Safeguarding Metrics.

## **Safer Organisation**

NCB's organisational culture promotes equality, trust and openness at all levels and how we operate with everyone having a voice that is respected and heard. This enables confidence for any concerns of any nature to be raised in good faith and with integrity with secure knowledge that there will be no judgement nor repercussions, for staff in particular, should a concern be raised.

Our overarching principles for safeguarding are based on the ability of individuals to recognise any form of abuse, to know how to respond appropriately, to report any incident or suspected issue efficiently and, where appropriate, how to record the matter.

All NCB staff are required to undertake NSPCC on-line safeguarding children and young people training with this to be completed within the first month of taking up employment. This ensures that all staff have a solid, foundation awareness of overarching safeguarding principles to enable them to recognise issues of concerns and how to respond.

Further training and/or more specific guidance will be provided where relevant and applicable for particular roles. This is particularly relevant for, but not limited to, staff members who are engaged in front line delivery services with children, young people, vulnerable adults, families and wider community members.

For these purposes, there are particular processes in place for staff to follow with regard to home (and/or other community settings) visits with clear guidance on measures to be taken before, during and after the visit and risk assessments to be undertaken prior to any event or activity that directly involves children and young people. With these considered areas of potential high risk, such planned visits, activities and assessments are required to be signed off by the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team who will, therefore, be fully aware of the nature of the activity, who is involved, when and where and will be the point of contact for staff delivering the activity. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be consulted by exception where risk assessment identifies any potential welfare issues of those engaging in the visit, activity or event.

With NCB working extensively in partnership with delivery associates and contractors, safeguarding standards and expectations are set out in our Associate Framework Contract and in Task Orders or Contracts with delivery partners. This places a requirement for such partners to report any safeguarding concerns or serious incidents to the relevant NCB grant or contract lead who will be a member of the Senior Management Team.

## Safer Recruitment

NCB's most important assets are the individuals who work across our family; Trustees, staff, associates and volunteers and safe, sound, thorough processes are paramount in ensuring we engage those who are most suited to join us in delivering our mission and embracing our ethos and values.

We achieve this through having clearly defined, standard recruitment policy and corresponding procedures in place to ensure that all posts across the organisation are filled appropriately in-line with the role's particular duties and responsibilities. All posts are recruited under the direction of our People & Culture department to ensure all requirements are met and are undertaken with parity and consistency with standard guidance and conditions from the offset. Particular tasks throughout recruitment may be delegated to relevant managers, but these are monitored by the People & Culture Team and, where applicable, other senior staff members to ensure standards are met in following safe recruitment processes. All posts are reviewed by the recruiting manager and the department director to determine whether the role requires a DBS or Access NI checks, with this clearly set out in corresponding job descriptions and recruitment and application packs. Some roles are automatically required to obtain a DBS or Access NI due to working at LEAP as it is based in a children's centre and all staff who work in certain teams who work with children and young people on a regular basis such as the participation team. The DSL and Head of People & Culture also carry out an annual review of all roles at NCB to see if there are any roles needing DBS/Access NI checks.

The checking process is commenced with ID checks at recruitment stage with the endeavour to swiftly process and have clearance by the time the successful candidate takes up the position. All staff who require a DBS will be asked to sign a self-declaration form therefore if the check does not arrive in time for their start date, the Head of People & Culture and relevant line-manager will agree a plan to place restrictions on the role until clearance is obtained.

Where a criminal conviction is disclosed by an applicant or through a DBS or Access NI check, the Head of People & Culture and NCB's DSL will consider this objectively and non-judgmentally based on the nature of the crime and potential impact on the role. Where an assessment indicates there is a level of risk too high to allow the individual to start or continue working in the role the consequences for the individual will be dependent upon:

- the check concerned
- the reason for the check (that is, check for a new employee, a recheck for an existing employee in their current post or a check for an existing employee in a new post)
- relevant legislation
- the post concerned
- whether the individual is suitable for other employment opportunities available within the organisation.

Possible outcomes include amended duties, redeployment, withdrawal of an offer of employment or, where the individual started work before the relevant screening check was completed, dismissal.

NCB has a thorough induction processes that goes beyond the responsibilities of the role and brings new starters into our culture of trust, respect and openness from the off-set and how we keep NCB as an organisation, ourselves, each other and all those engaging with us safe. In addition to the requirement to undertake the NSPCC on-line safeguarding training, all new starters are provided clear guidance and support in familiarising themselves with NCB's overarching principles and standards as

set out in our Employee Standards and key areas of compliance. This includes, but is not limited to Safeguarding, Data Protection including use of photography and film; IT/cyber, on-line safety; Harassment and Bullying; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; and Health and Safety. New starters are closely supported by their line-manager in embracing our principles and standards throughout the duration of their stipulated six-month probation period and, in furtherance, all staff receive a formal mid and end of year review which includes managing performance and conduct against our organisational values.

## **Safer Voice**

The voice of children and young people, their views and experiences are at the heart of and flow through every aspect of NCB's work and we ensure their voice is heard and respected. This extends to how we listen to them around concerns they have regarding the safety children and young people, the challenges and risks they face in an ever changing world.

We achieve this through our direct work with Young NCB, our Young Representatives to the Board, our Young Advisory Group, our Young Research Group and FLARE specifically for children and young people with SEND. It is therefore paramount that we have optimum standards of keeping the children and young people we directly engage with through these forums safe and that they can engage with us with absolute confidence.

To engage with us through these forums, our wider participation activities, and for the use of photography and film we have four, tiers of consent in place that are standard across the whole organisation:

- Under 13 years parent/guardian consent
- 13-16 year olds joint young person and parent/guardian consent
- 16 years + young person consent
- 16 years+ MCA joint young person and parent/guardian consent where there is reasonable belief the young person does not have capacity to give sole consent as defined under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Our consent process ensures that children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families are made aware of the reasons why NCB may need to share information with other agencies. Our information sharing procedures are compatible with child and adult protection agency expectations.

## **Planning events involving children, young people and vulnerable adults**

There are a range of [participation planning tools](#) in the Participation section of NCB's intranet.

NCB staff are required to be familiar with these planning tools and to take advice from the Participation team and DSL to ensure delivery of high quality and safe activities.

All events require a **risk assessment** as part of the planning process or project Initiation. A risk assessment does not prevent us from doing something, it allows us to consider how to do it safely and with managed and considered risk that has been minimised as much as possible.

A **template risk assessment** is available as a guide on the Participation page of the NCB intranet along with a guide to planning events. This applies equally to events that take place in a physical space and those that take place virtually, through a digital platform.



### **Working with other organisations**

Our work is often in partnership with other organisations, in which case the NCB Safeguarding and other related policies will still be applicable for our staff, associates, volunteers. Where NCB is commissioned to support children, young people or adults to participate in an event that is **not** for NCB, we ensure that:

- If the event is for an external organisation, ensure the organisers have a consent procedure that outlines what the participants will be doing and how their input will be used. This information needs to be shared in a way that is appropriate for the participants to understand.
- If NCB is planning to also use any of the outputs from the engagement opportunity or event, then the participants need to also complete the appropriate NCB consent form.
- If the meeting is externally co-ordinated and delivered but a member of NCB is attending that member of NCB staff must see a copy of their risk assessment

### **Safer Culture**

The overarching elements of our core safeguarding principles come together to promote a safer culture and environment for all individuals engaged with NCB across a very broad spectrum. In operating with trust, respect and openness we ensure the visibility of our culture internally and externally and that we act with integrity and transparency in all that we do. Trustees, staff, associates and volunteers know fully they can raise concerns with confidence, in good faith and best interest for NCB as an organisation and any parties involved or affected. Where incidents do occur, we commit to raising them swiftly; respond appropriately and proportionally; report and record in full internally and externally as may be required. We also fully commit to learn from any incidents that occur and to take and share these teachings forward through ongoing review and enhancement of our principles to continue to develop as an organisation that holds the safety and fundamental rights of the communities we serve at our core.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Supporting Documents**

This policy provides an overview of NCB's overarching safeguarding measures and for detailed, corresponding specifics is to be used in conjunction with:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Consent Policy including for participation in NCB activities and for media purposes
- Serious Incident Reporting
- Complaints policy
- LEAP Home Visit Policy
- Risk Assessment for events and activities with children and young people
- Associates Framework Contract
- Engaging with Children and Young People - Safeguarding and Consent Procedures