

Next Chapter Scotland Safeguarding Procedure

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This procedure explains how to respond to safeguarding disclosures, allegations or concerns.

As a volunteer, staff member, or someone involved with Next Chapter Scotland, you must know how to use the safeguarding procedure.

In this procedure, you'll find out how to use Next Chapter Scotland's Safeguarding Policy, when you recognise, receive, or report a safeguarding allegation, concern or disclosure.

What is safeguarding, and what are my responsibilities?

Safeguarding is what we do to promote the welfare of all people who use our service, and to protect them from harm., and to protect them from harm.

As a volunteer, staff member, or someone involved with Next Chapter Scotland, you have the same safeguarding responsibilities as everyone else.

You must report any safeguarding allegation, concern, or disclosure within 24 hours of finding out about it, or sooner if it's an emergency. If you're not sure about the concern, report it anyway.

What are safeguarding allegations, concerns, and disclosures?

A safeguarding concern, allegation or disclosure could be anything relating to a child's or adult's safety or welfare. Or it could be about the potential risk a person may pose to others.

It could include:

- A member or volunteer making a disclosure of abuse, neglect, or harm.
- Seeing, or hearing about, behaviour that failed to protect a child, young person, or adult.

- Seeing something in a person's Facebook posts which makes you concerned about abuse, neglect, harm, criminal behaviour or radicalisation.
- An ongoing or past investigation into you or someone you have a significant relationship with, which relates to any child or adult safeguarding allegation, concern, or disclosure. The investigation may have been carried out by the police, social services, an employer, or another organisation you volunteer for. Someone you have a 'significant relationship' with may include, but isn't limited to, a family member, partner, or member of the same household.

If you must deal with a safeguarding concern, it's extremely important that you understand your role, including what to say and how to behave. Remember, you should only share information with those who need to know, like the Safeguarding Lead. Having fears about sharing information mustn't stop you promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children or adults at risk.

Social Media Processes

Blocking/Muting a Member. Guidance for Group Admins:

Consistent Violation of Group Rules: If a member consistently violates the group's rules despite warnings and reminders, consider muting or blocking them. Ensure that this decision is made based on a pattern of behaviour rather than a single instance.

Hate Speech or Harassment: Any member engaged in hate speech, harassment, or bullying should be muted or blocked immediately. These behaviours are harmful and can create a hostile environment.

Disruptive Behaviour: If a member consistently disrupts discussions or intentionally derails conversations, consider muting or blocking them to maintain a positive and supportive atmosphere.

Privacy Violation: If a member repeatedly violates the privacy of others by sharing personal information without consent, they may need to be blocked or muted.

Spam or Self-Promotion: Mute or block members who engage in excessive self-promotion, spamming, or off-topic posts, particularly if they do not respond to warnings.

Deleting a Comment. Advice for Group Admins:

Violating Group Rules: Delete comments that clearly violate the group's rules, especially if they contain hate speech, offensive content, or personal attacks.

Off-Topic or Irrelevant Comments: Remove comments that are off-topic or irrelevant to the discussion to keep the conversation focused on the group's purpose.

Managing Safeguarding Concerns. Advice for Group Admins:



Safeguarding concerns are critical, especially in a group discussing sensitive topics. To manage potential safeguarding concerns:

Provide Resources: Share relevant resources and helplines for individuals dealing with urgent safeguarding issues. Ensure that members know where to seek help in case of emergencies.

Alert Administrators: Encourage members to report any posts, comments, or conversations that raise safeguarding concerns. Administrators should promptly review and address these reports.

Confidentiality: Emphasise the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respect for others' privacy within the group. Encourage members to avoid sharing sensitive personal information or discussing potentially harmful actions publicly.

Collaboration with Professionals: If a safeguarding concern arises, consider collaborating with professionals, such as social workers or mental health experts, who can provide guidance and support.

Clear Reporting Process: Establish a clear process for reporting safeguarding concerns, including who to contact within the group or external organisations if necessary.

Timely Response: Administrators should respond promptly to safeguarding concerns and take appropriate action, such as removing harmful content or contacting authorities if the situation warrants it.

It's essential for the Next Chapter Scotland Facebook Group administrators to exercise discretion, communicate openly with the community, and prioritise the safety and well-being of all members when making decisions about muting, blocking, or addressing safeguarding concerns.

Support Processes

Data management and security:

Data is managed in line with the charity's Privacy Policy and Information Governance Policy.

All email and CRM systems must make use of Multi-Factor Authentication.

Signpost to appropriate support:

When an individual contacts the helpline or engages with the service via our Outreach Services, they will share information with us about challenges they are facing. From the information they provide, it is important to signpost them, appropriately and comprehensively, to sources of support.

The information available on the Next Chapter Scotland website should be used as the basis for signposting. Should someone require signposting to an organisation not already listed on the website or, in the process of signposting it becomes apparent that information on the website is out of date, it is important that that is shared with the Chief Executive to ensure that the website can be updated.

It is essential that both informed consent and the development of self-advocacy skills are the heart of the support we offer. Next Chapter Scotland staff are supporting people to support themselves and, as such, time must be taken to ensure that the supported person fully understands every decision they are making.

Lived Experience

Should incidents occur that have the potential to be re-traumatising for individuals with lived experience of the criminal justice system, the Chief Executive, Chairperson and Safeguarding Officer (as appropriate in the circumstances) will “check in” with all lived experience team members and offer support as needed.

Engagement and Training Processes

Arrangements:

All events are to be arranged in advance, with the purpose for the visit clearly understood by all involved parties.

A risk assessment must be completed prior to each event.

Where an event is being hosted by another organisation, safeguarding processes should be discussed in advance.

Pathways of support:

All individuals will be provided with the following avenues of support, in case the event causes them any upset or concerns:

- **Samaritans** have a free 24/7 phone line, they can provide confidential emotional support. Call- 116 123
- **SANEline** offer a national out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance, and information. Call 0300 304 7000 (4:30pm-10:30pm every day)
- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** calls and chats are taken by trained staff who are there to listen, support, inform and signpost. Call - 0800 58 58 58 (5pm-midnight every day)

- **Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT)** have a free phone line, they can provide support for people with convictions. Call - 0808 808 2003

Information Sharing/Consent

Everyone's right to confidentiality must be respected. All personal data must be treated with care and kept securely; this means not disclosing it to others unless there is a legal reason to do so, and we have informed the subject that we will do this in the privacy notice, or we have the informed consent of the subject, or the person with legal responsibility for them. Disclosing personal data to unauthorised people could place the subject at risk of harm and may be a breach of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

There are circumstances when we may share personal data without the consent of the subject. The GDPR (article 6.1.d) permits the sharing of personal data without the consent of the data subject to safeguard the data subject, or others from harm. Safeguarding concerns must always be shared with the local authority and also with the police where this is necessary to protect the data subject or others. The data subject should be informed that the data has been shared unless this would place the individuals concerned at further risk.

Under Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018, personal data may also be shared with the police without the consent of the subject in order to prevent, detect or prosecute a crime. As a voluntary organisation we are not obliged to share data with the police but may choose to do so. The request must be in writing and specify the data required and why this is needed. The responsible manager must weigh up the impact of not sharing the data against the duty of confidentiality that we owe the subject. If we decide not to share the police must obtain a court order to access the data. All requests to share data must be recorded, including whether the data was shared and the reason/s for this.

For further information see the Information sharing policy or discuss with the Safeguarding Lead.

How do I make a report?

If you've seen something you're concerned about, or you've received a disclosure or allegation, you need to contact the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. You must get in touch within 24 hours, or sooner if it's an emergency.

If there's an immediate risk of harm, you'll need to contact the emergency services first. Find out what we mean by an immediate risk of harm further down this page.



If you're not sure about the concern and whether you should make a report, report it anyway.

Process

Is there an emergency? Is there an immediate risk of harm?

If yes:

1. Inform the emergency services, i.e. the police. Then contact the Safeguarding Lead
2. Complete a written report and email it to:
kalpana@nextchapterscotland.org.uk
3. The Board will record and manage all allegations, concerns and disclosures.

If no:

1. Complete a written report. Make sure to include membership numbers, and details of any actions taken.
2. Contact the Safeguarding Lead.
3. The Board will record and manage all allegations, concerns and disclosures.

What do I include in a report?

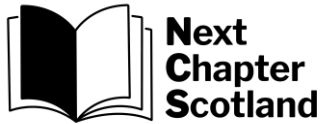
When you make a safeguarding report, you should include as much information as possible, including:

- Who you are, your contact details, your country or region, and your role in Next Chapter Scotland, if appropriate.
- Who or what you're making a report about, including names.
- Where and when the events of the report happened.
- Any action you or someone else has taken about the allegation, concern, or disclosure before making this report.

It would be helpful if you could also include:

- A short, clear summary. If you're sending an email, you could use bullet points and notes, as long as they follow a logical order.
- Any previous concerns you've had about the person you're making the report about. Or any incidents that have taken place and may be relevant.
- any supporting documents and correspondence.

When you're reporting your concerns, remember:



- You must state very clearly if you're concerned about the person's immediate safety.
- To keep facts and opinions separate.
- To mention any help given to, or needed by, the person.

Reporting a concern, allegation or disclosure can be stressful, so please let the team know if you're struggling with this.

Contacting our Board

If you have a concern, contact our Safeguarding Lead, Kalpana Ratnam-Roarty on: kalpana@nextchapterscotland.org.uk

More helpful information, including the contact details for each Local Authority, can be found on the Act Against Harm website: <https://www.actagainstharm.org/>

What happens next?

Our Board aim to respond to all concerns and emails within 1-2 working days. We'll always respond within 5 working days. And we'll deal with any emergency concerns immediately.

Once we've received your report, our Safeguarding Lead will review it. They'll assess the risk and decide on what action to take. They'll respond to the report differently depending on its nature, severity and complexity, and the people involved.

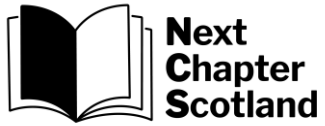
When appropriate, safeguarding concerns will be reported to the relevant Local Authority.

If the team decide to open a case to address the concern, we'll give you, as the person who reported the concern, a safeguarding reference number for this.

Our Safeguarding Lead may ask you, or another appropriate volunteer, to help with next steps. This could include speaking to the people involved. We'll make sure you're appropriately supported to do this. You can find out more about this in the honest conversations section below.

Depending on the concern, we may not be able to give you specific details about the outcome of a case. But we'll let you know when we've closed the case.

Depending on the circumstances, we may be required to report the outcomes of a case to our funders.



Connected Policies

Safeguarding Policy

Child Protection Policy

Media Policy

Lone Working Policy

Alias Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.