Quick Guide for Volunteers – Introduction to Safeguarding Adults and Children

Thank you for volunteering at RNID.

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The RNID Safeguarding Commitments

We have a zero-tolerance approach to any mistreatment or abuse. Everyone who works on behalf of RNID is committed to safeguarding across all our work.

We believe safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We all have a duty to prevent abuse, consider safeguarding in all activities and report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person.

We have 6 policy commitments:

1. *Promoting a safe and trusted environment and a culture that prioritises safeguarding*
2. *Safely recruiting and supporting all people within RNID*
3. *Responding promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation*
4. *Treating the victims of abuse and other safeguarding concerns with respect, care and dignity*

5. *Treating people who are alleged to have committed the abuse with respect, care and dignity*
6. *We will encourage a culture of learning throughout the organisation*

For more information on how RNID meets each commitment, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator.

What is safeguarding?

All children and adults have a right to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity.

Safeguarding is the actions taken to promote the welfare and well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and to protect them from harm, abuse, and neglect.

What is abuse?

Abuse is any action taken by another person that causes harm or distress. Abuse can happen anywhere at any time – in a public place, in a person's home, online or in a care setting.

Often the people who commit abuse are taking advantage of a special relationship. They may be a paid carer, family member, friend who we expect to trust. Sometimes abuse isn't intentional but happens because someone doesn't have the skills or support needed to care for someone. That doesn't make the impact of it any less, but it can help to understand how it happened.

Types of Child abuse and neglect

1. Physical Abuse
2. Sexual Abuse
3. Emotional Abuse
4. Neglect

Types of adult safeguarding abuse and neglect

1. Physical
2. Domestic violence
3. Sexual
4. Psychological
5. Financial / material

6. Modern Slavery
7. Discriminatory
8. Organisational
9. Neglect -omissions
10. Self Neglect

For more information on each of these types of abuse please click here.

What is my role as a volunteer?

Your role is important, and you are likely to come across adults at risk, and children in the course of your volunteering activity with RNID.

Your safeguarding responsibilities are

- To report appropriately where you are concerned that a beneficiary, person supported, staff member or colleague is at risk
- To attend training and understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to report it
- To work within our values framework and follow the relevant Code of Conduct
- To promote a culture in which the safety and well-being of all people who come into contact with the charity are paramount

Do not investigate safeguarding concerns, just REPORT IT.

If you have a concern about an adult or child and they are in immediate danger, contact emergency services, then report to your Volunteer Coordinator or the RNID Safeguarding Lead. If the adult or child you are concerned about is not in immediate danger, report your concern to your Volunteer Coordinator or the RNID Safeguarding Lead.

How do I keep myself safe?

As a volunteer, you also have a right to be safe from harm in RNID, including from staff, other volunteers and from people we support. You should always ask for support or report your concerns as a volunteer, even though you do not have the same legal rights as employees.

If you feel unsafe at any time carrying out your volunteering role, contact your volunteer coordinator. You will receive advice, guidance and training on how to carry out your volunteering role safely.

Ask your volunteer coordinator for the following policies and related guidance:

- Personal safety when working in services policy
- Lone Working policy

How I might become aware of suspected or likely abuse:

You may become aware of abuse or suspected abuse through

- Your own observations and concerns
- Being told by another person that they have concerns
- The abused person telling you
- The abuser telling you

Remember:

- Do not delay in reporting your concern
- Do not investigate
- Report to the RNID Safeguarding Lead via your Volunteer Coordinator
- Carefully record anything you observe or are told

Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Volunteers

During your volunteering work:

- Treat every child or adult with dignity and respect regardless of differences of ethnicity, religion, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, class, and economic circumstances
- Report any incidents or concerns where it is suspected that a child or adult at risk is, or is likely to be, at risk of harm. This includes reporting if it is suspected that a child or adult at risk may be under the influence of radicalisation or extremism
- Do not make suggestions to individuals or offer inappropriate or offensive advice that could be considered abusive.
- Do not commit any form of psychological abuse, such as verbally or physically intimidating, threatening, humiliating, degrading, shaming, blaming, or coercing a child or adult
- Do not give personal gifts or cash to children or adults at risk
- Do not initiate, or respond to, sexual contact with children or adults at risk
- Do not develop relationships with children and/or adults at risk outside of the scope of RNID-related work.
- Do not befriend the people they support on social media
- Do not offer cigarettes or alcohol to children or adults at risk

- Do not use personal electronic devices such as mobile phones or tablets to take any photographs or videos of children or adults at risk
- Do not post information about children or adults at risk on social media
- Do not post anything to social media which would bring RNID into disrepute.
- You are responsible for the interaction between yourself and a child even when it appears that a child or adult at risk is acting in a provocative manner. It is your responsibility to set appropriate boundaries that protect the best interest of the child or adult at risk.
- Do not keep or promise to 'keep secrets' if a child or an adult at risk requests this disclosing harm or abuse
- Make sure that all events and activities involving any children/ adults at risk are in the best interests of the children/ adults involved.

Where do I find further information?

If you need advice or further information you can email safeguarding@rnid.org.uk

You can also seek advice or support from one of the named designated safeguarding leads:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Kate Reynolds – Head of Contact RNID & Safeguarding Kate.Reynolds@rnid.org.uk Tel: 020 8078 8307
Designated Deputy Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) Rachel Cox - Information Manager – Contact Centre Rachel.Cox@rnid.org.uk Tel: 020 8078 2996 Liz Chase - Service manager Liz.Chase@rnid.org.uk Tel: 020 3227 6070
Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) Vicki Andrews - Operations Lead, South & Central England Vicki.Andrews@rnid.org.uk 020 3227 6027

Gerard McCoy – Operations Lead, Scotland & Northern Ireland
Gerard.McCoy@rnid.org.uk
0141 3415 330

Paul Chappell – Operations Lead, Wales & North England
Paul.Chappell@rnid.org.uk
029 2033 3034

Key words and phrases

Child
In England, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland and Wales, a child is defined as 'any person under the age of 18, whether living with their families, in state care or living independently'. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, p.7 & The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995).

In Scotland, 'a child is generally defined as any person under the age of 18'. However, there may be circumstances where people aged 16 and 17 years are classed as adults and advice should be taken on a case-by-case basis on which laws apply in Scotland. (National guidance for child protection in Scotland, 2021).

Safeguarding Children
Even children who are not connected to RNID will be protected by our procedures if an RNID member of staff or volunteer has a concern to

- 'Protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- Prevent impairment of children's health or development
- Ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.' (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

Adult at risk
In England, Isle of Man and Wales an adult at risk is defined as a person over the age of 18 who

- 'Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect'. (Care Act 2004, section 42)

In Northern Ireland an adult at risk is defined as a person over the age of 18:
'Whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal circumstances and/or life circumstances'. (HSCB Northern Ireland).

In Scotland an 'adult at risk' is someone who:

- is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests
- is at risk of harm
- and because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected (Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007)

Safeguarding Adults
'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances'. (Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018 s.14.7).

Safeguarding concern

- A concern about the wellbeing or safety of a child or adult because of something that has been seen or heard, or information that has been given.
- A worry about the well-being or safety of children or adults connected to RNID through employment, volunteering or as beneficiaries. For example, during an RNID event, a child reports they are having problems at home with their parents constantly arguing and the child is fed up with listening to the noise every night.
- A worry about the well-being or safety children or adults in connection with other people outside of RNID staff, volunteers, RNID supplier etc. For example, if a child reports to RNID staff that they are having problems at home with parents and is afraid to return

Safeguarding allegation

- An allegation made about a safeguarding concern against a RNID staff or volunteer, or staff and volunteers from a RNID Supplier. For example, RNID staff physically abuses a person we support when at an event.

Person subject of the concern

- the person who is the victim of the safeguarding concern or allegation.

Person of concern

- the person alleged to have committed the safeguarding concern or allegation.

Event/ Activity-specific Safeguarding Officer

- Is the person appointed by the relevant team Manager to take responsibility for safeguarding at an RNID event or activity.