

Sustrans volunteer guidance note

Safeguarding & I Bike

Safeguarding is relevant to everyone

Sustrans recognises its responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk and promote their welfare, by a commitment to working and volunteering practices which protect them.

As a volunteer with children & young people you could witness, suspect or be informed about something that you need to report. Reporting your concerns could help prevent a child or young person from experiencing harm.

Therefore, it is important that all volunteers know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern. You also need to be aware of what your safeguarding responsibilities are, how to protect yourself and what Sustrans does to promote safeguarding.

Explaining the terminology

Children and young people - anyone under 18 years old.

Adults at risk—adults aged 16 years or over, who:

- ◆ are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
- ◆ are at risk of harm; and
- ◆ 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.

Abuse – is a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, verbal or financial, or it may be an act of neglect. It may consist of a single act or repeated acts and can increasingly happen online. Abuse can be carried out by both adults and children.

Safeguarding - ‘Safeguarding’ is the word that applies to the work Sustrans does to provide a safe and positive environment for people.

What you can expect from us

Sustrans seeks to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:

- ◆ valuing, listening to and respecting them
- ◆ recruiting members of staff and volunteers safely, ensuring that all necessary checks are made
- ◆ sharing guidance about safeguarding good practice with members of staff and volunteers
- ◆ providing effective management for members of staff and volunteers by providing relevant supervision, support and training
- ◆ sharing information about concerns with those with a statutory responsibility for their protection (the police and/or social services, for example)
- ◆ having robust safeguarding policies and procedures (one for children and young people, one for adults at risk) which are reviewed annually.

How we recruit safely

The opportunity to volunteer with Sustrans is subject to the return of a satisfactory disclosure check and references, for any person whose role involves unsupervised or regular supervised contact with children. Currently in Scotland, disclosure checks are not required for the type of activities volunteers undertake with adults at risk. This is reviewed regularly when new projects/groups are established and may change accordingly.

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Guidance, training and support

Please familiarise yourself with the information given in this note and speak to your Volunteer Co-ordinator if you have any questions.

Additional training can be arranged for volunteers that have contact with children, young people and/or adults at risk as part of their role.

If you have contact with children or adults at risk your Volunteer Co-ordinator will also discuss this with you at induction and regular catch ups. These sessions are another opportunity to ask any questions you might have.

A code of conduct for yourself

To keep yourself and others safe please follow the code of conduct below:

1. Report any safeguarding concerns.
2. Consider safeguarding in all risk assessments for Sustrans' events.
3. Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child or adult at risk in contact with your volunteer activities.
4. Ensure all contact with children or adults at risk is in an open environment so that one-to-one unobserved situations do not arise.
5. Ensure the focus of any volunteering with children or adults at risk remains based on their volunteering and not on becoming friends.
6. Do not offer to do things of a personal nature for any child or adult at risk who is capable of doing these things for themselves.
7. You should not exchange personal contact information of any kind with children or adults at risk. If a child or adult at risk contacts you via social media they should not be accepted as friends and you should inform your staff supervisor.
8. Never take children or adults at risk into your home or go unaccompanied into their home.
9. Do not have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or adults at risk.

10. Do not tolerate bullying, inappropriate behaviour or use of prohibited substances. Report any instances to your staff supervisor.

If someone discloses abuse to you

Do:

- ◆ stay calm and try not to show shock
- ◆ listen carefully
- ◆ be comforting and sympathetic
- ◆ tell the person that:
 - ◇ they did right to tell you
 - ◇ you are treating the information seriously
 - ◇ It was not his/her fault
 - ◇ you will inform the appropriate Sustrans staff member

Don't:

- ◆ press the person for more details
- ◆ promise to keep secrets and not report the disclosure
- ◆ make promises you cannot keep (eg "this will never happen to you again")
- ◆ contact the alleged abuser
- ◆ be judgemental (eg "why didn't you run away?")
- ◆ break the confidentiality of the alleged victim, by speaking to anyone other than your staff supervisor or relevant Sustrans staff member about the incident.

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What to do if you have a concern

If you have witnessed, been told about or suspect abuse, this should be reported immediately. If someone discloses abuse to you and you do not think the allegation is valid then it must still be reported, any issues or concerns should be raised.

In an emergency, where an individual is at risk of significant harm, call the emergency services first.

Who to contact

Talk discreetly, face to face or by telephone, with:

1. The I Bike Officer you volunteer with or
2. An I Bike Volunteer Co-ordinator
Julie Arbuckle **07866010766** or
Annie Cousins **07788 688 561** or
3. Sustrans Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
Charlotte Gardiner **07502 323 680**
(based at Sustrans Scotland, Edinburgh Office) or
4. If you have a safeguarding concern **outside of office hours** then you should call the Out of Hours
Emergency number: **0844 8 480 226**.

What to report

We would encourage you to write down on paper what you have been told by the child as close as possible to the event/ disclosure and keep this to be passed on to the person you are reporting to. Please use the form overleaf as guidance. If you need further copies of this form just ask your Volunteer Co-ordinator or DSO.

What happens next

Your I Bike Officer will contact Charlotte (DSO) as soon as possible with the above information, as well as alerting the child's teacher as soon as possible - they are the child's '**named person**' so would be the ones taking any action in terms of contacting the police if the disclosure was at the school or during school hours. You will be updated as appropriate in due course of the actions taken following the concern being raised.

All safeguarding concerns are considered on a case by case basis, to take into account the specific circumstances involved and to ensure the most appropriate course of action is followed.

If the concern was raised against a volunteer the placement may be terminated or suspended. This is not automatic and alternatives will be considered. A risk assessment of the situation and the volunteer's role and responsibilities will determine the final outcome.

However difficult it may seem, we all have a duty to make suspicions of abuse known. Failure to do so can be interpreted by a victim as approval of or condoning the abuse. It could also result in a failure to meet duty of care obligations and a missed opportunity to prevent abuse from occurring.

Remember, a child, young person or adult at risk of harm may not be able to alert anyone themselves, perhaps through fear or a failure to understand that the action is abusive.

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Form to report concerns about a child or young person

Date form completed
Form completed by (please include your role and local authority area)
Date and time of incident
Name of child/young person
Age/ gender
Location of disclosure
Anyone else present
Context (eg in class/during an activity/ on led ride/at the end of school day)
What was observed or what the child or young person said (try and quote exactly if possible)
Any relevant/ connected background information/ what was said to the child about confidentiality
Who else you have informed (eg class teacher/ Police)