

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy status: Current	Date approved by Board of Trustees: June 2020
Policy owner(s): Annamarie Hassall, Director of Practice and Programmes Emma Smith, Head of Governance & Data Protection Heather Devine, Head of Human Resources	Review frequency: Annual Next review date: June 2021

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
- 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

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 Trustee, all NCB staff (permanent, temporary, full or part-time), our associates and volunteers.
- 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 (2017):

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 sub-committees to execute its statutory obligations, and to ensure organisational sustainability and security. These are the Finance, Risk and Audit (FRAC); Major Grants and Contracts (MGCC); Selection (SC); and Fundraising Advisory (FAC) committees. 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 report as part of NCB's Compliance reporting to the FRAC and 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 (effective from January 2020).

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 Governance and Head of Human Resources 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 DSO, Head of Governance or Head of Human Resources 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 complaints 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 HR 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 Management 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 with the 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.

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 and Guidance, including for use of photography and film
- Serious Incident Reporting
- Complaints policy
- LEAP Home Visit Policy
- Risk Assessment for events and activities with children and young people
- Associates Framework Contract

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 duties and responsibilities. All posts are recruited under the direction of our Human Resources department to ensure all requirements are met and are undertaken with parity and consistency with standard guidance and conditions from the off-set. Particular tasks throughout recruitment may be delegated to relevant managers, but these are monitored by the HR Team and, where applicable, other senior staff members to ensure standards are met in following safe recruitment processes.

All posts are reviewed by NCB's Designated Safeguard Lead and Head of HR to determine which require DBS or Access NI checks, with this clearly set out in corresponding job descriptions and recruitment and application packs. The process is commenced with ID checks at interview stage with the endeavour to then swiftly process and have clearance by the time the successful candidate takes up the position. Where circumstances do not enable this, the recruit is required to complete a self-declaration of suitability and the Head of HR and relevant line-manager will agree a plan to place restriction 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 HR and NCB's DSL will consider this objectively and non-judgmentally as fitting with our culture. 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 thorough induction processes that go beyond the responsibilities of the role and bring 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/online safety;

Harassment and Bullying; Equality and Diversity; 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 annual appraisal 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.

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 of 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.

Policy agreed by: NCB Board of Trustees

Date: 17th June 2020

Next review due: 30th June 2021

Contacts:

Liz Railton, Vice-Chair of the Board & Trustee Safeguarding Lead

Annamarie Hassall, Director of Practice and Programmes and NCB's Designated Safeguarding Lead
ahassall@ncb.org.uk

Emma Smith, Head of Governance and Data Protection
emma.smith@ncb.org.uk

Heather Devine, Head of HR
hdevine@ncb.org.uk