

Lindridge Parish Hall Management Committee Safeguarding Guidance Note

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Every organisation, small group and individual should be aware of their responsibility, in work and society.

Village halls have a responsibility for safeguarding.

Here is an explanatory note with links to helpful resources including Information Sheet No 5 – Safeguarding - and a model hire agreement for you to adopt if it suits.

Please do not worry if there are steps here that you have not taken in the past – the important thing is that we take this opportunity to improve the understanding and practice of these issues in village halls and ACRE is committed to doing this with practical and effective measures.

First a simple statement

Safeguarding refers to measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults at risk to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

This guide from the Ann Craft Trust explains, [what is my role in safeguarding](#)

Designed to cover organisations large and small it can look a bit daunting but village halls can be positive if they think:

- Does the village hall have a safeguarding policy?
- Does our committee offer a route to report problems and to discuss the policy?
- Do the minutes act as a record?
- Does the safeguarding nominee know where to report issues? (your local safeguarding board at the County Council)
- Does our hire agreement set out the responsibility of hirers?

What is expected of a village hall committee?

The committee may not work directly with children or adults at risk, but it is responsible for the contracts that it makes with hirers, and will be expected to find out what the relevant law is, how it applies to their building and users of the hall (volunteers, staff, contractors) and to comply with it where appropriate.

Of key importance to both the smooth operation and meeting any challenges, is good communication between the activity providers and the village hall management committee.

Good relationships and understanding are vital. One way of maintaining good communication links is by ensuring that groups have a representative on the village hall management committee.

1. All the committee should be aware of:
 - a. The legal responsibilities of the committee in relation to safeguarding
 - b. Charity Commission expectations
 - c. The contact details of their local Safeguarding Board/Partnership and other local agencies that can offer support and advice on safeguarding in their respective County.

<https://www.safeguardingworcestershireshire.org.uk/>

<https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/>

2. All committee members need to take the following actions:
 - a. Sign the hall's Declaration of Acceptance of Office (model available from your local ACRE Network member)
 - b. Appoint a person (or 2) to be the safeguarding lead(s) responsible for ensuring safeguarding practices and procedures are in place
 - c. Comply with DBS criteria for obtaining suitable checks where needed.
 - d. Support the responsible person to develop relevant policies and to regularly review them
 - e. Check that the Hall Hiring Agreement is in line with the safeguarding policies
 - f. Ensure safe recruiting practices are in place
 - g. Understand actions to be taken should it be necessary to report an incident.

On DBS

The law doesn't say when a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure Check 'must' be carried out, but it does specify when a DBS check 'can' be applied for. Organisations may produce their own guidance stating when they want DBS checks to be requested

The government issued a Q and A sheet – here are two answers for you.

1). I'm organising a group of volunteers. I understand that there isn't a legal requirement for me to have my volunteers DBS checked, but should I do so anyway?

Many of the roles that volunteers will carry out in their local communities do not raise safeguarding issues and do not need a DBS check.

You can have a look at the DBS eligibility guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>) to confirm whether the activities your group propose to do are captured.

If your group's activities are captured, under normal circumstances we would advise that having volunteers DBS checked is a prudent safeguarding step.

There is, however, no legal requirement for you to have a DBS check. Regardless of whether you choose to have volunteers DBS checked, you should ensure your group follow simple, practical precautions such as working safely in pairs, keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts to safeguard all involved.

2). Are DBS checks transferrable between the organisation that obtained them and the new voluntary group or charity?

If someone has a check from their current or previous role with children or adults, then new voluntary groups can make a practical decision about accepting this for their new role. Although ordinarily a check for a role with children would not be sufficient for working with adults, groups may consider this is a reasonably safe thing to do, based on the information on the check and the surrounding circumstances. Some individuals may have linked their DBS check to the Update Service, which shows whether their certificate is still valid or if there is new information that could be disclosed.

A note on coffee mornings, etc

There is a reasonable expectation that vulnerable individuals will attend such events from time to time. It would be sensible if at least one person holds a DBS check. This person can then act as the one who takes Mildred to the loo or helps if she becomes disorientated. But once again, adopting a sensible approach, such as working in pairs, will help.

How to decide who needs a DBS check

This link will help you decide if a member of staff or volunteer is eligible for a DBS check and what level to apply for: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>

Things to consider:

- Who your organisation provides services for –children/adults/both?
- What the role involves
- How often it is performed
- When you need to consider if it is supervised work
- Where the role is performed

There are 4 different disclosure levels:

- **Basic Disclosure** - This gives details of any recent and/or serious unspent criminal convictions. (Any role can have a basic check)
- **Standard Disclosure** - Gives details of spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions. This covers positions involving regular contact with children and vulnerable adults.
- **Enhanced Disclosure** - Gives details of spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions. Also includes options for police to share any information they hold and deem relevant. This covers positions which regularly care for or are solely in charge of children and roles that provide health and social care services for adults.
- **Enhanced and Barred List Check** – Gives details of spent and unspent convictions, as well as any cautions. It includes options for police to share any information they hold and deem relevant and checks the applicant against the barred lists. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, it is only acceptable to ask someone to declare spent convictions if they'll be volunteering with children or adults with vulnerabilities.

It is important to **only do a DBS if there is a requirement**, and to do the correct level of check based on the role and activities of that person. **Are the organisers of your activities “unsupervised” when they are looking after vulnerable people?**

The government guidance is good.