

RRN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Last reviewed: 14/02/2026



1 Aims

RRN works with refugees and asylum seekers and aims to help them overcome challenges they face and settle into their new communities in the Hampshire area. To achieve these aims RRN works with landlords willing to provide accommodation for those arriving under the Resettlement Programme and other government schemes. RRN's community volunteers work with families once they arrive in their new homes and the charity provides ESOL lessons, employment support, training grants, equipment and household items when needed. Additionally, RRN runs a drop-in centre and regular day trips for young unaccompanied minors and group activities for specific groups of young people.

RRN is committed to safeguarding children and young people who receive RRN's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.

This policy outlines the steps RRN will make to safeguard a child or young person if they are deemed to be at risk. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of RRN in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the child's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

This policy is intended to support staff, trustees and volunteers working within RRN to understand their role and responsibilities. . All staff, trustees and volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all employees and volunteers of RRN to:

- understand the principles of safeguarding
- be clear about their responsibilities
- ensure the necessary actions are taken where a child or young person is deemed to be at risk

Copies of this policy are available from the CEO and on <https://www.ruralrefugeenetwork.org>. Staff, trustees and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy and/or made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

2 What does Safeguarding mean?

The term “safeguarding” describes the putting in place and maintenance of procedures that aim to keep people safe. For the purposes of this policy, a child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

‘Safeguarding means protecting the 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 wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.’

Care and Support Statutory Guidance (Care Act 2014), Department of Health and Social Care

Relevant legislation and guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government)
- The Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004
- Guidance and procedures issued by the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

RRN will ensure that its safeguarding practices are consistent with current statutory requirements and local safeguarding arrangements.

RRN believes that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe.

Trauma-informed and culturally sensitive safeguarding

RRN recognises that many children and young people accessing its services may have experienced trauma, displacement, loss or persecution. Cultural differences, language barriers and fear of authorities may affect a child’s willingness or ability to disclose safeguarding concerns.

Staff and volunteers will adopt a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approach, using professional interpreters where required, and ensuring that safeguarding responses are respectful, proportionate and focused on the child's best interests.

RRN adheres to the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work (see Care Act guidance). Although originally drafted for adults, these principles apply across all safeguarding work, including children's safeguarding. These principles guide all aspects of our work and ensure children's safety is central to all decisions and actions:

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- Accountability

We recognise that children have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Children's views, wishes and feelings will be sought and taken seriously in all safeguarding matters, consistent with their age, maturity and understanding.

Where a child has sufficient understanding to make an informed decision about a matter affecting their safety, we will obtain their consent wherever possible. If a child is not able to fully understand the implications of a decision, consent will be sought from the child's parent or carer, unless doing so would increase risk of harm to the child. Professional judgement should inform how and when consent is sought, and decisions must always prioritise the child's best interests.

We seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people and a lead trustee for safeguarding.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.

- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Safer working practice

All staff, trustees and volunteers are expected to work within RRN's Code of Conduct and maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times. This includes:

- Avoiding being alone with a child or young person in unobservable or isolated settings where possible
- Maintaining appropriate physical contact at all times
- Not forming inappropriate relationships with children or young people
- Not giving personal gifts, money or transporting children alone without prior agreement and risk assessment
- Maintaining clear boundaries in relation to personal contact, including social media and messaging

Any concerns about boundary issues should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3 Who do I go to if I am concerned?

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties for RRN is Nadia Potts.

All staff and volunteers should contact Nadia Potts immediately with any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding. Her contact details are given below. A detailed record of the concern must be kept using the form in the appendix.

Nadia Potts will make decisions about notifying children's services and consider alternative actions, where necessary. In an emergency, however, immediate steps might have to be taken by those with concerns.

Escalation of concerns

If a staff member, volunteer or trustee feels that a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately addressed, they have the right and responsibility to escalate the concern. This may include contacting children's services, the police, the NSPCC or the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership directly.

RRN supports a culture of openness and will not penalise anyone for raising safeguarding concerns in good faith.

4 What should I do if I am concerned?

Staff, trustees and volunteers who have any safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond

- If you consider someone is in harm, risk of harm or needs urgent medical attention dial 999 for emergency services
- Get brief details about what has happened and what they would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct an investigation. It is appropriate to ask questions to clarify matters that are not clear to you but avoid asking direct questions. In the course of your interaction, reassure them that the matter will be taken seriously, listen patiently and where language barriers exist ensure that appropriate interpreting support is used so that they can fully understand and participate in safeguarding discussions.
- Seek consent to take action and to report the concern. Do not promise to keep it secret if consent is not given. Consider whether they may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this. It should be clearly explained that issues raised will be shared with the safeguarding lead and possibly others if deemed necessary. In some cases the responsibility to ensure the safety of the child and/or others will dictate that the matter needs to be reported regardless of issues of confidentiality. In situations where you consider that the person is at risk of harm and the matter requires an urgent response there may not be time to give any or any detailed consideration to the issues of capacity, confidentiality and consent.

Useful contact numbers are detailed below

If you feel that your own personal safety is at risk, leave the situation immediately and refer the matter to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

2. Report

- Report the incident/concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Nadia Potts.

3. Record

- Make a clear note of matters that are reported, as soon as reasonably possible after the event and ensure that these records are available to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the process of reporting the concern.
- As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed.
- Whilst it is important to remember that your role is to support and help in these circumstances and that your role is not to undertake an investigation it is also important that if matters are disclosed to you about abuse or the identity of an abuser that you adhere closely to the guidelines on recording the information you have gathered. It is particularly important to make a note at the time or shortly after the time of the disclosure and to sign and record the time and date of that note.
- RRN's standard forms for recording concerns and making notes of what occurs should be used or referred to for guidance. These should be available to RRN staff and volunteers. Records about safeguarding concerns should be kept confidential and in a safe place. Access should not be given to any unauthorised person for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

4. Refer

- In making a decision whether to refer or not to refer the matter, the designated safeguarding lead should take into account:
 - the child's wishes and preferred outcome
 - whether the child has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
 - the safety or wellbeing of other children or vulnerable adults
 - whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
 - whether a crime has been committed
- This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to:
 - the police if a crime has been committed and/or
 - social services
 - family/relatives as appropriate (advice on this should be sought from children's services)

In all circumstances the Designated Safeguarding Lead should report the matter to the trustee responsible for safeguarding and to the Chair of the Board.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more than one person. Staff and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns. RRN is committed to learning from safeguarding concerns and incidents. Where appropriate, safeguarding cases will be reviewed to identify lessons learned and improvements to practice, training or procedures.

5 What are my roles and responsibilities?

All staff, trustees and volunteers are expected to report any concerns to the named person for safeguarding. If the allegation is against one of RRN's members of staff, volunteers or trustees seek advice from the safeguarding lead without delay. If the allegation is against the named person for safeguarding the trustee responsible for safeguarding should be contacted without delay.

Allegations against staff, volunteers or trustees

Any allegation or concern that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where required, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer and follow local procedures.

If the concern relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported directly to the trustee responsible for safeguarding without delay.

Staff and volunteers should try to ensure that the child is involved at all stages of the safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted. There may be circumstances in which this is not possible in part or in full, however, staff and volunteers should aim to keep the vulnerable person involved wherever possible.

6 Why is it important to take action?

It may be difficult for children to take action to protect themselves and to report abuse. They rely on you to help them.

7 Confidentiality and information sharing

RRN expects all staff, volunteers, trustees to maintain confidentiality at all times. In line with Data Protection law, RRN does not share information if not required.

It should however be noted that information should be shared with authorities if someone is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people can make all the difference to preventing harm.

8 Recruitment and selection

RRN is committed to safe employment and will undertake Disclosure and Barring checks when recruiting volunteers and members of staff.

9 Training, awareness raising and supervision

RRN ensures that all staff and volunteers receive basic awareness training on safeguarding. RRN's safeguarding training manual provides detailed guidance to follow.

Online safety and digital safeguarding

RRN recognises that children and young people may be exposed to safeguarding risks online, including bullying, exploitation, grooming or exposure to harmful content.

Staff and volunteers should:

- Use only approved communication channels when contacting children or young people
- Avoid private or informal online contact where possible
- Ensure appropriate consent is obtained before taking or sharing photographs or videos
- Report any concerns about online behaviour or digital communications to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any online safeguarding concerns will be managed in line with this policy and reported to relevant agencies where appropriate.

10 Radicalisation

If a member of staff, a volunteer or a trustee suspects that a family or individual they are working with is vulnerable to radicalisation they should raise their concerns with the CEO, Nadia Potts and/or the trustee responsible for safeguarding in order that they can consider whether to make a Prevent referral.

[See Prevent duty guidance on www.gov.uk website.]

11 Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead and **nominated child protection lead:**

Name: Nadia Potts

operations@ruralrefugeenetwork.org

07392762929

Trustee/Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection:

Katherine Lawrence

research@ruralrefugeenetwork.org

07758600345

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

We are committed to reviewing this policy annually.

This policy was last reviewed on **14th February 2026.**

Signed



Safeguarding Lead on Board of Trustees

Dated 14/2/2026

Appendix - Safeguarding Reporting Form

This form can be downloaded from the policies section of the website.

This form must be used to record safeguarding concerns.

In an emergency please do not delay in informing the police or social services. All the information must be treated as confidential and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

The form should be completed at the time or immediately following disclosure, but after all necessary emergency actions have been taken. Please complete the form as fully as possible.

Your details – the person completing the form

Name

Position

Telephone

Email

Details of the person affected

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Date, time and location

Details of the incident (please describe in detail using only the facts)

Other present or potential witnesses

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Additional relevant information (please detail anything else that you believe to be helpful or important) including whether you think the person has the relevant capacity to make informed decisions, whether you believe someone else (adult or child) may be at risk and what the person has said about what should happen next.

Signed

Print name

Signature

Date and Time

Action Taken:

Referral made to:

Time: