



RSGB Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. Policy

Every child or vulnerable adult who participates in amateur radio activities should be able to take part in a safe, enjoyable environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in amateur radio.

The RSGB recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual harm and from bullying.

The RSGB is therefore committed to:

- protecting children and vulnerable adults who receive our services and those who take part in activities we have organised, and
- supporting Affiliated Clubs and Members in protecting children and vulnerable adults who take part in amateur radio activities they have organised.

In order to fulfil our responsibilities we will:

- publish and implement procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, which will include details on reporting concerns
- publish guidance and provide training for employees and volunteers who require it
- arrange for appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks on employees and volunteers who are assessed as requiring them
- share any concerns with the relevant agencies who have a need to know

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all RSGB employees and volunteers who deliver our services to, or organise activities involving, children or vulnerable adults. This might include, for example, Youth Committee meetings, Foundation and Intermediate Practical Assessments, UK Amateur Radio Examinations, the RSGB Convention or YOTA camps.



Affiliated Clubs and Members are encouraged to adopt the policy for amateur radio activities involving children or vulnerable adults that they have organised. This might include, for example, Club meetings, taking part in contests, organising DXpeditions or delivering training.

In this policy, the term 'safeguarding disclosure checks' is to be read in the local context.

It is important to note that there are variations in the legislation applicable to, and the agencies involved in, the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The key principles contained in this policy are applicable to all but it is important that RSGB Staff and Volunteers familiarise themselves with the details applicable to their location:

- England & Wales: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- Scotland: <https://www.mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland/>
- Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/disclosure-and-barring-protecting-children-and-vulnerable-adults>

3. Definitions

A **child** is someone under the age of 18.

A **vulnerable adult** is someone aged 18 or over:

- who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability and
- who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse can be:

- **Neglect**: where children or vulnerable adults are not protected from danger, seriously impairing health and development.
- **Physical**: where children or vulnerable adults are hurt or injured.
- **Emotional**: where children or vulnerable adults are frightened by threats or taunts or are given responsibilities beyond their capabilities.
- **Sexual**: where children or vulnerable adults are used to satisfy sexual desires

Bullying is a broad term and can encompass several types of abuse:

- Physical (e.g. kicking, hitting, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities)



4. Procedures

Procedures to be followed are provided as follows:

- Annex A: Procedure for Assessing the Risk of Abuse to Children or Vulnerable Adults
- Annex B: Procedure for Arranging Appropriate Safeguarding Disclosure Checks
- Annex C: Procedure for Employee and Volunteer Training
- Annex D: Procedure for Reporting Concerns

5. Further Advice

Guidance for RSGB employees and volunteers is provided at Annex E.

If any RSGB employee, volunteer or member requires advice relating to this policy they should contact one of the following:

- The General Manager gm.dept@rsgb.org.uk
- The Chair of the Youth Committee youth.chair@rsgb.org.uk
- The Board Liaison Member for the Youth Committee <http://rsgb.org/main/about-us/board-of-directors/>

6. Authority

This policy was agreed by the RSGB Board at its meeting on 20 April 2018

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the RSGB Board when any significant change occurs and no less than once every three years.

Annex A: Procedure for Assessing the Risk of Abuse to Children or Vulnerable Adults

Whenever we organise activities involving children or vulnerable adults there is the potential for them to suffer abuse. There is no one-size-fits-all assessment as the activities, timing, location and people involved will all have an effect on the magnitude of the risk. The first step in minimising the likelihood of abuse occurring is to carry out a risk assessment.

Step 1: What are the activities?

In the context of the RSGB and its Affiliated Clubs activities involving children or vulnerable adults can be wide and varied. The following is not an exhaustive list but provides some typical activities where a risk assessment may be appropriate:

- Youth Committee meetings,
- Training courses,
- Foundation and Intermediate Practical Assessments,
- UK Amateur Radio Examinations,
- the RSGB Convention,
- YOTA camps
- Club meetings,
- Radio contests,
- DXpeditions
- SOTA activations

Useful questions to ask:

- Will there be children or vulnerable adults present?
- Will the activity be repeated on 4 or more days in any 30 day period?
- Will adults be supervising children or vulnerable adults overnight?
- How many adults will be taking part?
- Will children or vulnerable adults ever be alone with an adult?
- Will parents/carers be present?

Step 2: Who are the children or vulnerable adults?

The numbers of children or vulnerable adults involved, their specific circumstances and their relationship to others present all have a bearing on the risks involved. Useful questions to ask:

- How many children or vulnerable adults will be present?
- Do you have parental consent for children to attend?
- Do you have parental consent to take photographs?
- Do the children or vulnerable adults have any special needs?

Step 3: What safeguarding controls are already in place?

It may be that all adults involved are used to working with children or vulnerable adults or the activities may take place in a well-controlled environment, like a school or college. In those circumstances little more may be required. Useful questions to ask:

- How many adult helpers/supervisors will be present?
- Is the adult helper/supervisors to child or vulnerable adult ratio sufficient to ensure they are cared for and bullying is prevented?
- Do all adults involved have sufficient awareness of the guidance available?
- How many of the adults involved already have appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks?
- How many adults have received formal safeguarding training?
- Does the host have safeguarding policies and procedures in place?
- Is there a first aider available if the activity can result in minor injuries?

Step 4: What else is needed?

Following on from Step 3 and taking into account all of the information you have gathered so far, you need to consider what is needed, and what is in place. Useful questions:

- If there is nothing in place or arrangements are limited, what else is needed?
- Do you need to arrange for adults to have appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks?
- Do you need to raise awareness of the guidance available?
- Do adults need formal training?
- Do you need to seek parental permission?
- Do you need to arrange for parents/carers to be present?

Step 5: Record your assessment and keep it up to date.

Having worked through the steps above you should have a fairly clear picture of what level of risk exists, what controls are already in place and what else needs to be done (if anything). It is therefore a good idea to capture all of that information so you can be sure you have covered the requirements, you can monitor progress with any actions and can demonstrate to any external authority that you are taking positive steps to fulfil your responsibilities.

Annex B: Procedure for Arranging Safeguarding Disclosure Checks

The Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks Guidance for Volunteering, formerly CRB, published in 2008 states that the decision as to whether to make an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is a matter for the employer.

Our legal advice is that “Employer” in this context means the RSGB for headquarters staff and volunteers that are directly appointed or registered by the RSGB (e.g. Committee Chairs, Honorary Officers, Registered Assessors and Exam Secretaries). Clubs and independent training providers are seen as the ‘employer’ for trainers.

It goes on to state that the decision should be part of an overall risk management process. The decision should, it states, be made “carefully” and “because there is a strong and demonstrable reason for doing so and not just in case”.

The “test” for assessing whether a person is recommended and eligible for an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is if:

- a) they engage in a “regulated activity” (in this case, any form of teaching, training or instruction of children and/or vulnerable adults) **AND**
- b) they carry out this activity **EITHER** frequently (i.e. once a week or more) **OR** intensively (i.e. 4 or more days in any 30 day period) **OR**
- c) they supervise young people or vulnerable adults overnight (e.g. during contests, DXpeditions or YOTA events).

After careful consideration of the advice it is clear that:

- Some RSGB Committee Members and some trainers may fall within the definition above, depending on who they interact with and how their activities are structured.
- The role and scope of Registered Assessors do not normally fall within the definition above but RSGB headquarters still take up references before registering assessors. Some Registered Assessors are also trainers and may therefore qualify for an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check.
- The role and scope of examination Invigilators do not normally fall within the definition of a regulated activity. Some examination Invigilators are also trainers and may therefore qualify for an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check.

Notwithstanding the above, it may be that RSGB Committee Members or trainers already have appropriate safeguarding disclosure check due to their activities outside of amateur radio. The RSGB will respect existing checks that are still valid.

All RSGB Committee Chairs must review their activities. If a Committee activity falls within the definitions described above then a risk assessment must be undertaken by the Committee Chair to determine whether an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is warranted. There should be consideration of how well the risk is mitigated by the attendance of parents or other responsible adults.



All clubs and independent training providers should review their teaching schedules. If a trainer's teaching commitment falls within the definitions described above then a risk assessment must be undertaken by the club or independent provider to determine whether an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is warranted. There should be consideration of how well the risk is mitigated by the attendance of parents or other responsible adults.

If the risk assessment causes the assessor to decide that an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is warranted then it is their responsibility to initiate the check. The General Manager is available for advice in such cases. Please send a copy of your risk assessment to gm.dept@rsgb.org.uk in the first instance.

Where the Committee Member or trainer requiring an appropriate safeguarding disclosure check is an RSGB member, RSGB Headquarters will organise and fund an agreed check on their behalf. Non-members will need to make their own arrangements.

Annex C: Procedure for Employee and Volunteer Training

The RSGB believes that for most employees and volunteers this policy, the associated procedures and guidance will be sufficient to raise awareness and provide reasonable protection from abuse for children and vulnerable adults.

There are a small number of cases where more formal training is appropriate and therefore mandatory:

- The Chair of the Youth Committee
- The Board Liaison Member for the Youth Committee
- Any RSGB employee or volunteer who has been assessed as requiring an appropriate safeguarding disclosure checks in relation to the services they provide, or the activities they organise, in relation to amateur radio.

Where training is required, it will be funded by the RSGB and will be provided via suitable on-line courses, for example:

- NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/child-protection-introduction/>
- High Speed Training: <http://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/safeguarding-people/introduction-to-safeguarding-children-training-course.aspx>

The training is available to all employees and volunteers but it will only be funded by the RSGB when it is mandatory.

Annex D: Procedure for Reporting Concerns

The following action should be taken by anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult in:

1. The amateur radio environment; e.g. the club premises
2. The home or other settings

Non-action is *not* an option in Child Protection.

Concerns about poor practice and possible abuse

Child abuse is a sensitive and difficult issue but abuse has occurred within amateur radio and may occur within other settings (social activities). Recent inquiries indicate that abuse that takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in amateur radio training are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adult's or peers behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a vulnerable adult. Poor practice includes any behaviour, which infringes an individuals' rights and/or is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable and should be treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Action to take if you are suffering abuse

If you are the victim of abuse you **MUST** do something about it – start by talking to someone you trust. Your family is a good place to start but you may feel more comfortable speaking to someone like a teacher or carer, your doctor, or someone at the RSGB. Your concerns will be treated in strict confidence.

If you are under 18 and you have no one you can talk to, you can call Childline on 0800 1111.

If you are in immediate danger, call 999.

Actions to take if you become aware of abuse

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or vulnerable adult.
- Tell the child or vulnerable adult he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child or vulnerable adult says seriously
- Ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult – if the child or vulnerable adult needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a Child Protection or Adult Safeguarding issue.
- Avoid leading the child or vulnerable adult and keep any questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- Re-assure the child or vulnerable adult but do not make promises of confidentiality or

outcome which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.

- Parents and carers should be contacted **ONLY** after advice from Social Services (or equivalent local agency).
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.
- Report concerns to the person in charge or designated person immediately, unless the concern is about the person in charge. If in doubt, report your concerns to one of the RSGB contact points noted in the Safeguarding Policy.
- The person in charge should be clearly identified at all times. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, then report your concerns directly to the Social Services (or equivalent local agency) or the Police. These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Social Services (or equivalent local agency) is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Social Services (or equivalent local agency) or the Police that this is a Child Protection referral.
- Confidentiality should be maintained on a strictly 'need to know' basis and relevant documents stored in a secure location.
- Please remember that it can be more difficult for some children to disclose abuse than for others. Children from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe 'white people', including those in authority roles, do not really care about their well-being. They may feel they have good reason to question whether your response will be any different.
- Disabled children and vulnerable adults will have to overcome additional barriers before feeling they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care or residence. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices, which block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators, which in an able bodied child would concern us.
- When working with these groups you need to be extra vigilant and give extra thought as to how to respond.

Recording of information, suspicions or concerns

Information passed to the Social Services (or equivalent local agency) Department or the Police must be helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record. The report should contain the following information:

- The child's or vulnerable adult's name, address and date of birth
- The nature of the allegation
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child's or vulnerable adult's account, in their own words if possible, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Any observations that have been made by you or to you
- Any times, locations, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- Your knowledge of and relationship to the child or vulnerable adult

Whenever possible, referrals to Social Services (or equivalent local agency) Departments should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

Keep a record of the name and designation of the Social Services (or equivalent local agency) member of staff or Police Officer to whom, concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed.

**Further information can be obtained from the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline
0808 800 5000**

For deaf users Textphone 0800 056 0566

These numbers are available 24 Hrs are free and completely CONFIDENTIAL

**THESE GUIDELINES ARE DESIGNED TO HELP YOU IN WHAT IS A COMPLEX ISSUE.
ALWAYS REMEMBER WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
COMMONSENSE PREVAILS!**

Annex E: Guidance for Staff and Volunteers

It is possible to reduce situations in which abuse can occur and help to protect Committee Members, volunteers, trainers, invigilators and club members by promoting good practice. The following are more specific examples of good practice, which should be taken when working within your club or organisation.

- Always be public and open when working with children and vulnerable adults.
- Avoid situations where a teacher/instructor/club members, individual child or vulnerable adult are completely unobserved.

Everyone should also be aware that as a general rule you should not:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child/vulnerable adult
- Take children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short
- Take children or vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation and/or the child's/vulnerable adult's parents/carers.

Adults should never:

- Allow or engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a bedroom with a child or vulnerable adult
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to visit or stay at your home unsupervised

It may sometimes be necessary for volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly if they are very young or have a disability.

These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and prior consent of parents/carers and the children and vulnerable adults involved.

There is a need to be responsive to a child's or vulnerable adult's reactions – if a child or vulnerable adult is fully dependent upon you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is physical contact or lifting or assisting a child or vulnerable adult to carry out particular activities.

If you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult, he/she seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you



have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents or carers should be informed of the incident.

In terms of on-line safeguarding the RSGB will follow the guidance of social media providers and apply the same principles outlined above as appropriate to on-line interaction with young people and vulnerable adults.