

Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose and Commitment

The New Forest Folklore Society is committed to creating and keeping spaces that are safe, inclusive, and respectful for everyone who engages with our activities, including children, young people, and adults.

We recognise safeguarding as both a legal framework and a community responsibility. While statutory safeguarding duties sit with designated authorities, we believe it is the responsibility of our organisation and its members to recognise concerns, act appropriately, and raise them to the correct bodies.

Our approach is rooted in respect, consent, and ethical leadership, ensuring that all spaces, whether physical or virtual, are nurturing and protective of personal dignity.

2. Scope of This Policy

This policy applies to all activities organised or facilitated by The New Forest Folklore Society, including:

- In-person gatherings, and events
- Online meetings, forums, and digital spaces
- One-to-one interactions
- Communication via phone, email, or social media

It applies to all organisers, volunteers, facilitators, and participants, regardless of age, ability, background, or belief.

3. Definitions and Safeguarding Principles

Safeguarding refers to the protection of a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse or neglect. It includes recognising harm, responding appropriately to concerns, and promoting a culture of care, ethical boundaries, and accountability.

Safeguarding applies differently in law to children and adults, and these must not be conflated.

Child Safeguarding

Child safeguarding refers to the legal and practical measures taken to protect children and young people under the age of 18 from abuse, neglect, and significant harm.

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Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a statutory duty to investigate where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration.

Key points:

- Child safeguarding does not depend on disability, vulnerability, or consent
- Local authorities and police may act on reasonable suspicion alone and do not require proof
- Responsibility for assessment and investigation lies with the local authority
- Anyone may raise a concern about a child Children are entitled to protection regardless of spiritual, cultural, or community context.

Adult Safeguarding

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs, and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- Is unable to protect themselves from harm because of those needs

This definition reflects section 42 of the Care Act 2014.

Adult safeguarding applies only where all three criteria are met. Not all concerns involving adults form safeguarding in law.

Data Protection

We are committed to protecting your personal data and processing it in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We only collect and use personal information where we have a lawful basis to do so, such as to provide our services, fulfil legal obligations, or with your consent. We implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard your data and respect your rights, including the rights to access, correct, delete, restrict, or object to the processing of your personal information. If you have any questions about how we handle your data or wish to exercise your rights, please contact us using the details provided in this policy.

4. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Vikki Bramshaw and Vicki Burgess are the Designated Safeguarding Contact for The New Forest Folklore Society.

The Safeguarding Contacts are responsible for:

- Receiving and recording safeguarding concerns
- Assessing whether a concern meets the threshold for statutory referral
- Making referrals to statutory agencies where needed

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- Maintaining secure safeguarding records
- Providing guidance to organisers and volunteers

The Safeguarding Contact does not investigate safeguarding concerns. Investigation and intervention are the responsibility of statutory bodies.

5. Safer Working and Community Practices

We are committed to maintaining safe, ethical practice in all settings, including:

- Online spaces and private communications
- One-to-one interactions
- In-person events and activities.

When it comes to lone working, please consider carefully whether you need to be DBS checked and that it is best practice not to undertake unsupervised one-to-one work with children or adults who meet the legal definition of an adult at risk.

Clear boundaries, consent, and transparency are essential to all our work.

6. Statutory Safeguarding Reporting

6.1 What Requires Statutory Reporting

A concern must be referred to statutory services where there is reason to believe that:

- A child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm
- An adult at risk, as defined by the Care Act 2014, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Financial exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Organisational abuse

Proof is not needed. Reasonable suspicion is sufficient.

6.2 How Statutory Concerns Are Reported

Statutory safeguarding concerns will be referred by the Safeguarding Contact

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to:

- The police, where a crime may have occurred or there is immediate risk
- Local authority children's or adult safeguarding teams
- The NSPCC, for concerns relating to children

If a person is in immediate danger, 999 should be called.

7. Non-Statutory Reporting and Community Concerns

Not all concerns constitute safeguarding in a legal sense. However, they may still require action to protect individuals and the community.

Non-statutory concerns may include:

- Boundary violations
- Inappropriate behaviour that does not meet safeguarding thresholds
- Bullying, coercion, or misuse of spiritual authority
- Harassment, abuse, and harm
- Conflict affecting safety or wellbeing
- Behaviour that makes someone feel unsafe or uncomfortable

These concerns should still be reported to the Safeguarding Contact or event organiser and will be managed through:

- Community agreements or codes of conduct
- Mediation or conflict resolution processes
- Behavioural boundaries or restrictions
- Reporting to the police
- Support and signposting

Non-statutory concerns are recorded and reviewed to show patterns or escalation risk.

8. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing with:

- Vikki Bramshaw and Vicki Burgess

We encourage use of The New Forest Folklore Society, Safeguarding Concern Form to support accurate record-keeping.

All concerns, whether statutory or non-statutory, will be taken seriously and handled with care and discretion.

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9. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis to safeguard individuals. Safeguarding records are stored securely and kept for **x years** in line with our insurance policy, GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where safeguarding concerns require statutory raising with the Local Authority or Police.

10. Accessibility and Inclusion.

We are committed to making safeguarding accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of our community, including:

- Disabled and neurodivergent members
- LGBTQ+ participants
- People from marginalised or minoritised backgrounds

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to changes in safeguarding law, guidance, or community need.

Policy Review Date:

Next Review Due: