



## **Northumberland Green Hub Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults & Children**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The aim of the Northumberland Green Hub network is to provide a physical and online space for people to meet, learn, share and collaborate on issues of climate change, the environment and sustainability.
- 1.2 All Northumberland Green Hub members are volunteers including the members of the Steering Group.

### **2. Purpose of the Policy**

- 2.1 Northumberland Green Hub is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of children and adults at risk whilst taking part in our group activities and in the wider community. This policy helps everyone involved in our network:
  - a) be aware of our legal responsibilities
  - b) understand the safeguarding risks in Northumberland Green Hub
  - c) know what to do if they have a concern about the wellbeing or welfare of any child or adult at risk who comes into contact with our network organisation.

### **3. Policy Statement**

- 3.1. Safeguarding refers to the activities undertaken to protect children and vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.
- 3.2. As Northumberland Green Hub's activities are based in England, this policy is written to comply with the UK government guidance and legislation as it relates to England.
- 3.3. This policy covers the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm. The main differences regarding age relate to capacity and consent, the different forms of harm that could be involved and the different agencies who may be able to assist.
- 3.4. For the purposes of this policy a child is anyone under the age of eighteen.
- 3.5. Northumberland Green Hub is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone who participates in its activities, particularly those who may be more vulnerable. To do this, we will:
  - a) appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will lead on this, while also recognising that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
  - b) include safeguarding considerations in risk assessments connected with Northumberland Green Hub's activities.
  - c) provide access to and require safeguarding training for all Steering Group members to be refreshed every year. All NGH members will be informed of the policy and of the training available to them.
  - d) keep a record of training completed.

## 4. Implementing this Policy

4.1. The role of the Northumberland Green Hub DSL is to:

- a) act as a central point to whom any safeguarding concern will be reported.
- b) decide what action (if any) is required, including whether to share any information with the parent or carer of the individual concerned, and / or with another organisation or agency. If the DSL is unsure what action to take; they will follow advice from the NSPCC\* Helpline in the case of a child or young person, or from Northumberland County Council in the case of an adult' [See Contacts Section 14].
- c) keep an accurate record of any concerns raised and any action taken, and to store records securely and confidentially.

*\* National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.*

4.2. The DSL for Northumberland Green Hub is a Steering Group Member. All Steering Group Members have a contact phone number, so that they can contact the DSL if required. [See Contacts Section 14]

4.3. If the DSL is not present at a Northumberland Green Hub event, then the relevant event organiser or another trained Steering Group Member will be the point of contact for any concerns.

4.4 In all cases the DSL will be informed as soon as possible if anything arises.

## 5. Our Code of Conduct

5.1. When working with vulnerable adults and children we are acting in a position of trust. We recognise that keeping our community safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our Steering Group and NGH members to behave according to the following values:

- a) All adults and children at risk have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- b) We recognise that children and some adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- c) We listen to and respect everyone in the Hub community.
- d) We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.
- e) We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.

## 6. Safe Working Practice

- 6.1. Avoid working alone. Ensure that you are never in an enclosed or isolated space alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Work in pairs if possible or take your activity into a shared or public space.
- 6.2. Maintain appropriate boundaries. Physical contact with young people should be of the kind that they can initiate or cease whenever they wish (high fives rather than hugs).
- 6.3. Do not single out a young person or vulnerable adult for special treatment or individual attention.
- 6.4. Do not give a young person gifts or money, even to access transport or buy food at your event.
- 6.5. Do not arrange to meet a young person alone outside of the event or activity. Do not offer a young person a lift in a private car unless their parent or carer is also present.
- 6.6. Do not give out or accept personal contact details from someone under 18. This includes "friending" on social media through personal accounts.

- 6.7. Especially if working with a group of people on more than one occasion, establish a clear code of conduct that will ensure a safe non-threatening environment and provides a basis for challenging unwanted behaviours or attitudes.

## **7. Risk Assessment**

- 7.1. In preparing for any activity, the Steering Group will anticipate and take steps to mitigate any risks. The DSL and event organiser(s) will conduct a risk assessment in advance, which will include a safeguarding component if the event or activity is to include those most vulnerable i.e. children and/or adults at risk.
- 7.2. The NGH Event Risk Assessment Template will be prepared / updated prior to an organised event or activity.
- 7.3. From a safeguarding perspective the following questions will be considered when doing a risk assessment:
- a) What factors might make some participants more vulnerable (e.g. age, disability etc)?
  - b) Does the environment present any additional risks (e.g. equipment, physical hazards, opportunity for interactions with vulnerable participants in private)?
  - c) How will participants know who they should speak to if they have any concerns?
  - d) If working with another organisation e.g. a school or third-party organisation, is the event organiser / DSL aware of their safeguarding arrangements (e.g. who is their DSL or equivalent)

## **8. Reporting Concerns**

- 8.1. Any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult must be acted upon promptly and reported to the DSL or other designated person for that event or activity.

## **9. Record Keeping**

- 9.1. When there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a vulnerable individual all relevant details must be recorded. This must be done whether the concerns are shared with the police, relevant local authority or another agency.
- 9.2. If you are worried, do something about it. You will be protected by the law if you are following the reporting process set out in this policy, and you are sharing information in good faith that you think someone is being abused
- 9.3. Keep an accurate record of:
- a) the date and time of the incident/disclosure
  - b) the date and time of the report
  - c) the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details
  - d) the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details
  - e) the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses
  - f) the name, age and any other relevant information about the person who is the subject of the concern (if a child, including information about their parents or carers and any siblings)
  - g) what was said or done and by whom
  - h) any action taken to look into the matter
  - i) any further action taken (such as a referral being made)
  - j) the reasons why NGH network decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).
- 9.4. All records will be kept securely and confidentially.

## 10. Photography

10.1. Sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate our achievements work, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of the NGH network. To do this safely, and to comply with Data Protection legislation, we will:

- a) always ask for consent from an adult to having their photograph taken, and will not take photographs if they are unable to give consent.
- b) always ask for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image.
- c) always explain what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images.
- d) make it clear that if an individual or their parent or carer later withdraws consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published.
- e) not show the names of vulnerable individuals whose images are in our published material and only use first names if we do need to identify them.
- f) never publish personal information about vulnerable individuals and disguise or blur any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo).

## 11. Definitions

### ***Abuse and Neglect***

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting, by those they know, or more rarely, by a stranger.

There are four major categories of abuse affecting children and vulnerable adults.

#### *11.1. Physical Abuse*

- a) Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to the individual.
- b) Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

#### *11.2. Emotional Abuse*

- a) Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development or wellbeing.
- b) It may involve conveying to children and vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- c) It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the individual. These may include interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult participating in normal social interaction.
- d) It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- e) It may involve serious bullying, causing children and vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- f) Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

### 11.3. Sexual Abuse

- a) Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening.
- b) The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children and vulnerable adults in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children and vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### 11.4. Neglect

- a) Neglect is the persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development.
- b) Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.
- c) Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- d) It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, an individual's basic emotional needs.
- e) Self-neglect also occurs in young people and adults

## 12. What to do if a child or vulnerable adult discloses something of concern

12.1. You may have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult because of something you have seen or heard, or an individual may disclose something to you.

12.2. If a child or vulnerable adult discloses something of concern to you:

- a) Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to the local authority. You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child, or adult who is deemed to be at risk. Information should always be shared if you think a child or adult at risk is suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse.
- b) Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- c) Accept what is said.
- d) Reassure the individual, but only as far as is honest, do not make promises you may not be able to keep e.g.: *'Everything will be alright now'*, *'You'll never have to see that person again'*.
- e) Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child or vulnerable adult refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'*.
- f) Do not interrogate the individual; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- g) Do not ask leading questions (e.g.: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- h) Do not ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat the information for another person present.
- i) Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- j) Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards. Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the child or vulnerable adult (do not paraphrase).
- k) Record statements and observable things rather than interpretation or assumptions.

12.3. Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the network DSL, the designated person for an event. Or contact a Northumberland Green Hub Steering Group member if you cannot reach the DSL immediately, who will decide what to do, taking advice if required.

### 13. Resources & Support

#### 13.1. Children

The main guidance document issued by the government is “Working Together to Safeguard Children”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

#### 13.2. Adults

- a) The Office of the Public Guardian's policy on protecting vulnerable adults of abuse or neglect is very useful:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-policy-protecting-vulnerable-adults>
- b) The Ann Craft Trust provides a helpful summary of guidance available.  
<https://www.anncrafttrust.org>

### 14. Contact Details

#### Northumberland Green Hub Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

**Lesley Long**

**Mobile : 07967 726498**

**Email:** [lesleylong29@gmail.com](mailto:lesleylong29@gmail.com)

#### Northumberland County Council – Safeguarding Multi-Agency

If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult who is at risk of neglect or abuse in Northumberland contact:

**Onecall at 01670 536 400** to report abuse or neglect.

**Textphone:** 01670 536 844

**Email:** [safeguardingreferrals@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingreferrals@northumberland.gov.uk)

Safeguarding adult referrals should be made online:

See: [Safeguarding Adults Enquiry Form](#).

#### Emergency Services: Police, Fire, Ambulance

In an emergency where a life is at risk, call 999

Non-emergency, phone: 101

#### To Report a Crime

In an emergency, contact the police by calling 999.

If the person is not in immediate danger, contact the police by calling 101.

#### NSPCC Helpline

Can be contacted on 0808 800 5000 (365 days a year, 24 hours a day)

#### National Domestic Violence Helpline

**Freephone**, 24 hours a day, for advice: 0808 2000 247

<http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

#### Elder Abuse UK Helpline

Phone for advice: 080 8808 8141

<https://wearehourglass.org/>

#### Northumberland Domestic Abuse support services [NDA]

**Website:** <https://www.nda.services/>

#### Victim Support

**Phone:** 01434 60 80 30

If you leave a message out of hours, we will do our best to get back to you the next working day

**Opening Hours:** Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm – excluding Bank Holidays

## 15. Basic Online Training for Northumberland Green Hub Network Members

- a) <https://elementstraining.teachable.com/p/safeguarding> Currently FREE for voluntary \* community organisations in Northumberland. Fee Free depends on continued funding availability.
- b) Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults – Alison Online Learning – FREE with Certificate  
<https://alison.com/course/safeguarding-children-and-vulnerable-adults>
- c) NSPCC Child Protection and Safeguarding  
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/introductory-basic-courses>

## 16. Review of this Safeguarding Policy

16.1. Northumberland Green Hub will revise this Policy as often as may be appropriate to ensure the contents remain accurate and valid in the light of changing circumstances, practices and statutory requirements.

16.2. At a minimum, this Policy will be reviewed annually.

Approved and adopted: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Next review in September 2026, prior to the AGM.

Signed by Julia Chambers

Member of the NGH Steering Group



Signed by Lesley Long

Member of the NGH Steering Group



Signed by Liz Clark

Member of the NGH Steering Group



Signed by Mike Powell

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