

NSPCC Safeguarding and Child Protection Standards for the Voluntary and Community Sector

Children and young
people aged 0–18

2019 UK edition

NSPCC



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Acknowledgements

Many people and organisations have contributed to the development of these Standards and to the various revisions since they were first launched in 2011.

Contributors include a wide range of voluntary and community groups and organisations in England and Scotland; children, young people and young adults; parents and carers; commissioners of services; local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs); organisations like local councils for voluntary services; colleagues within the Department for Education; NSPCC delivery partners and ambassadors; and other individuals who have offered their time and expertise as critical friends of the project.

The NSPCC thanks them all warmly for their input, including the many colleagues within the NSPCC who have worked with the Standards since they were last revised and reviewed, and have provided comments and helpful feedback.

For this new edition, we are also very appreciative of the support of colleagues and partner organisations from the Safer Social Sector Partnership, led by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

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This 2019 edition of the NSPCC's national safeguarding and child protection Standards is designed to help non-statutory organisations in the UK to strengthen their safeguarding and child protection arrangements for children and young people aged 0–18.

Groups and organisations that have not yet put safeguarding and child protection measures in place may prefer to start with our Introductory guide to safeguarding and child protection for the voluntary and community sector. The Introductory guide can also be useful for groups and organisations that have some measures in place but have not reviewed them for some time. This can be found at nspcc.org.uk/vcs. Those working in a faith setting may also like to view our web-based resources on safeguarding and child protection in faith communities at nspcc.org.uk/faith.

The Standards are aimed at groups and organisations within the voluntary, community and faith sectors. However, they will also be helpful for other organisations working with children and young people, such as social enterprise organisations, not-for-profit organisations and small enterprises.

What are these Standards for?

The purpose of the Standards is to help ensure that work undertaken by groups and organisations with children and young people up to the age of 18:

- takes appropriate responsibility for protecting children and young people from abuse
- minimises as far as reasonably possible the risk that those taking part will suffer serious accidental injury
- is enjoyable, adventurous and rewarding for all involved
- complies with legislation and national guidance across the four nations of the UK.

They are relevant to organisations who work specifically with children and young people, and also to those who may work with these groups as part of their wider activities.

The Standards aim to set a minimum level of practice consistent with operating a safe organisation and should complement and underpin rather than replace other standards frameworks.

Child protection and safeguarding children and young people can present real challenges for voluntary, community and faith-based organisations. For example, media coverage of high-profile cases can raise anxiety for staff and volunteers who may have little practical experience of safeguarding and child protection. It can seem daunting to keep up to date with new and changing legislation and guidance. Commissioners, funders, local safeguarding partners/boards/child protection committees, and particularly trustees and management committees within organisations themselves all need evidence that adequate safeguarding and child protection arrangements are being put in place and rigorously followed.

Tackling concerns in a practical way

Any organisation can feel overwhelmed by the task of setting up safeguarding and child protection measures. Consequently, they may take an over-cautious approach to their work or may even avoid involving children or young people in their activities altogether.

These Standards aim to encourage organisations to be realistic and practical in their approach to safeguarding and protecting children and young people. This means creating a safe environment where children and young people, and those working with them, can take part in fun and adventurous activities – and take appropriate risks.

Providing a coherent response to a diverse sector

The wide diversity of organisations and groups within the voluntary, community and faith sectors makes it very difficult to design a one-size-fits-all approach to safeguarding and child protection standards. The needs and capacity of a small, recently established group, supported by volunteers, are very different from those of a well-established national organisation with many paid staff.

These Standards use as simple a framework as possible and seek to balance clarity with flexibility, referring to more detailed systems where needed.

Our Safeguarding Checklist on NSPCC Learning (nspcc.org.uk/vcs) is designed to complement these Standards. It provides a range of best practice guidance and example documents that your organisation can tailor to suit the needs of the children and young people you work with.

You should also refer to:

- local or regional safeguarding and child protection standards frameworks (available from your local authority or local safeguarding board/partnership/child protection committee)
- guidance for your specific community or sector
- national good practice guidance.

Providing a safer environment

Although it is vital to develop policies, procedures and processes to keep children and young people safe, this is not all that is needed. Child protection and safeguarding measures should sit within a range of other policies, such as those covering compliance and disciplinary measures, financial management, effective governance, quality assurance and an ethical framework. Child protection and safeguarding, like all aspects of a well-run organisation, is an ongoing responsibility that involves continuing commitment from all involved in order to create and maintain a safer environment for everyone.

Safeguarding adults

These Standards are concerned with the safeguarding and protection of children and young people up to the age of 18. However, these responsibilities to safeguard and protect do not, of course, stop when a young person reaches 18. Some young adults over 18 can still be at risk of abuse. This may be due to family or personal circumstances, to drug or alcohol use, or exposure to risks of exploitation, radicalisation or victimisation. Disability or issues around physical or mental health can increase a young person's vulnerability to such abuse in some circumstances. The principles of the safeguards described in this guide still apply to young people over 18, and indeed to adults of all ages, even though the legislative framework changes, and you should still take action if you are worried. UK Youth (www.ukyouth.org), Ann Craft Trust (www.anncrafttrust.org),

and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (www.scie.org.uk) have a wealth of useful information and resources relating to safeguarding adults.

What is meant by child protection and safeguarding?

Safeguards are measures that an organisation should put in place to help reduce the risk of children, young people and adults being harmed.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding. It refers to the action taken to protect specific children from abuse or neglect.

This should include policies, processes, procedures and measures to guide staff and volunteers in what to do if they are concerned that a child or young person may be at risk, and to empower children, young people and/or families to seek help if they are worried about anything.

Each UK nation has a framework of legislation, guidance and practice to identify children who are at risk of harm, take action to protect those children and prevent further abuse occurring. More information about this is available at nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.

Various recognised types and categories of abuse and neglect are experienced by children and young people. Further details can be found at nspcc.org.uk/childabuse and nspcc.org.uk/topics. The types are commonly broken down into physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. In addition, there are other variations and types of abuse, such as sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and other abuse associated with culture and belief.

There is a developing understanding that, as young people grow and become more independent, the risks they may be exposed to may lie outside their family environments and situations rather than, or as well as, the confines of their home. These environments or situations may exist digitally and online as well as in the offline world. This is the concept often known as contextual safeguarding.

A child protection response may be necessary in any case where a child or young person under the age of 18 may have been abused or may be at risk of abuse. For children and young people who are deemed by statutory services not to be at active risk of abuse, but are nonetheless assessed as being in need of additional support, 'early help' or preventative services may be offered. However the level of support available varies across the UK, and many areas are unable to provide the level of support that is needed.

How to use the Standards

1 Read through the Standards framework – this is a lot to do all at once, so you might want to start with just one section.

2 Do a self-assessment for your organisation, using the Safeguarding Checklist on NSPCC Learning – see nspcc.org.uk/vcs.

3 Read through the action plan generated for you by the Checklist.

4 Use the resources and information on NSPCC Learning to help you improve in the areas that need attention.

5 Agree a date to review your action plan and to do a new self-assessment.



Stay positive

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the amount of work that can be involved in meeting the Standards. Do it one step at a time and you will quickly begin to make progress.

All of us at the NSPCC wish you well in your work with children and young people.



Standard 1: Recruitment, induction and supervision

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Standard 1

Recruitment, induction and supervision

10

Safe practices are used to recruit staff and volunteers, introduce them to their role, and help them carry out their duties safely.

Why it matters

Your most important assets are the people who work in your group or organisation, whether paid staff or volunteers. A good recruitment process will help you choose the best people for the role – people who are well suited to your organisation and who are less likely to harm children and young people, intentionally or accidentally.

Good recruitment, induction and supervision processes help to show your staff, volunteers and those interested in working in your organisation how much you value the safety and wellbeing of those who use your group or service.

Public attention is often focused on the aspects of recruitment that concentrate on criminal record checks and procedures. These are obviously an important part of staff and volunteer selection, but they are only one aspect of recruiting and supporting people to work safely and appropriately with children and young people. On their own, vetting procedures will not be enough to protect children and young people, and they need to be carried out in the context of a wider set of practices and an organisational culture that supports safe practice.

How to meet this Standard

This Standard has 17 elements that are set out below. To be fully compliant, you need to have all the elements in place.



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Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers

Organisations should:

1. have a written safer recruitment and induction policy and procedure
2. have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders
3. have clear person specifications and role descriptions for all posts
4. advertise all posts with a clear safeguarding or child protection statement
5. provide an information pack for people interested in each post
6. use a standard application form
7. ask applicants to complete a separate self-disclosure form
8. have a process for shortlisting candidates for selection, involving more than one person
9. have a face-to-face interview or meeting with a panel of more than one person
10. have adopted a transparent scoring system for shortlisting and interviews.

Checks and references

Organisations should:

11. ask applicants to provide at least two references before appointment and for one of these to be from the most recent place worked or volunteered (assuming they have worked or volunteered before)
12. ask them to provide proof of identity and original copies of qualifications
13. complete all the checks that are relevant for the role. These may include right to work checks, criminal record checks, overseas checks and checks relevant to specific sectors/professions.

Inducting staff and volunteers

Organisations should:

14. have an induction process for all new staff and volunteers
15. provide safeguarding or child protection training for all staff and volunteers during their induction
16. have a trial period for staff and volunteers, with a review before they are confirmed in post.

Ongoing support and management of staff and volunteers

Organisations should:

17. provide regular supervision, support and annual appraisal for all staff and volunteers.

Involving children, young people and families in developing and achieving this Standard

- Ask children, young people and their families to help you develop the person specification for a new role.
- Ask them for ideas on what makes a good children's or youth worker in your project.
- Create a children's/service users' panel to be involved in the interview process.
- Ask children or young people to be part of a wider group of staff, volunteers and families to whom applicants are invited to give a presentation as part of their selection process.
- Get in touch with an existing advisory group of children and young people (for example, a young people's group for your sector or local area) and ask if they can help you with the recruitment process.

Involving children and young people in the recruitment and selection process can be a genuine help in ensuring that you get the right person for the job. However, this needs to be properly planned, resourced and supported to be useful for everyone involved in the process.

The following are some comments from a group of young people we talked to from the British Youth Council:

From personal experience in helping to interview candidates...I know how vital it is that young people's views are taken into consideration, particularly around whether the children feel they can trust the candidates and how candidates interact with people much younger than themselves.

... there are a large number of young people who might not actively seek opportunities, such as sitting on a panel, but whose views are just as valid as any other young person's – and these are the most difficult to target. Perhaps turning to social media could be a way of reaching out, or alternatively running small workshops in areas where a large number of these young people might be found (including but not limited to foster homes, youth centres, etc).

Further support

Please refer to the supporting materials and links available with our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs). This resource contains a range of information, best practice guidance and templates that you can adapt to your organisation's needs.

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A photograph of three young people (two women and one man) smiling and looking to the right. The man is in the foreground on the left, wearing a brown jacket. The woman in the middle has dark hair in a braid, wears glasses and a grey hoodie. The woman on the right has long blonde hair and wears a brown jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and grass.

Standard 2: Protecting children and young people

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Standard 2

Protecting children and young people

14

Measures are in place to protect children and young people who are identified as being at possible risk of abuse and neglect.

Why it matters

Abuse and neglect can be very harmful to children and young people. This is why there is a legal requirement on all organisations to protect those at risk from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation (see nspcc.org.uk/childprotection for more information about this).

In an ever-increasingly digital world, groups and organisations need to consider online risks as well as those that exist offline.

Some children and young people may need particular support, for example if they have a disability or are experiencing complex circumstances, such as caring for a parent or sibling. Some may have had previous harmful experiences that have affected their self-confidence and sense of self-worth. More information about the children and families who may be at particular risk of abuse is available from NSPCC Learning – see nspcc.org.uk/topics.

For your child protection and safeguarding arrangements to be effective, they must be supported and owned at the highest level in your group or organisation.

It is most important that senior managers and trustees promote a culture of taking safeguarding seriously, making it clear that safeguarding is part of their duty of care to their organisation. More information about the responsibilities of trustees is available from nspcc.org.uk/vcs.

How to meet this Standard

This Standard is broken down into 15 elements that are set out below. To be fully compliant, you need to have all the elements in place.



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Written statements and procedures for dealing with abuse and allegations

Organisations should:

1. have developed a written safeguarding/child protection policy statement
2. ensure the safeguarding or child protection policy statement is signed by the most senior person in their organisation
3. have a written procedure for situations where a child/young adult may be at risk of abuse or neglect
4. have a written procedure for situations where allegations of abuse are made against an adult in the organisation
5. have a written procedure for situations where allegations of abuse are made against a young person in the organisation.

Safeguarding and child protection leads

Organisations should:

6. have a nominated safeguarding/child protection lead for children and young people
7. make sure the nominated safeguarding/child protection lead can easily be contacted and make arrangements for cover if they are not available
8. ensure someone at the top level in the organisation takes responsibility for safeguarding and child protection; if the organisation is a charity, this should include a lead trustee for safeguarding.

Additional procedures and codes of behaviour

Organisations should:

9. have a written behaviour code for everyone involved in the organisation
10. have a whistleblowing procedure.

Informing, listening to and supporting the workforce and users of your service or project

Organisations should:

11. ensure staff, volunteers, families, children and young people can easily access information about how the organisation keeps children and young people safe
12. have a system for taking children and young people's views into account
13. regularly audit their safeguarding and child protection arrangements
14. provide ongoing support and training so that all their staff and volunteers are competent in safeguarding and child protection
15. make sure that everyone feels comfortable about raising concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing.

Involving children, young people and families in developing and achieving this Standard

- Ask children and young people what they think your organisation should be doing to show that it is committed to keeping them and others like them safe.
- Ask for input on the development and review of the procedures. For example, if a child or young person knew about a friend being abused, and they told someone about it, what response would they expect?
- Seek their views on what should be in a code of behaviour and encourage them to use it and to speak out if they feel that it is not being respected by others.
- Ask them to help design leaflets and posters.
- Have leaflets, posters and magazines around that deal with child protection and safeguarding; make sure they are attractive and appealing to those for whom they are intended.
- Consider having a committee of children and young people in your organisation or find out if there are existing groups whom you could consult with.
- Involve parents and carers as much as possible. This helps to create an open and welcoming atmosphere and reassures them that your group/organisation has nothing to hide.
- Recognise that children and young people often prefer to approach a friend or family member rather than an adult leader if they are worried.



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The following is part of what the young people from the British Youth Council said on the subject of what would help them feel able to talk about worries, and how they would like leaders to pass on any concerns:

If someone is having a tough time and needs to talk about it with someone, it is very important that they have a space they can go to and feel like they are not in danger, be that verbally or physically.

I would like to be informed about every step of the process – the last thing I would want is for my words to be misconstrued or taken further than I would like, more quickly than I can process.

I would like to be involved in the process of what was being said to other people; so that I knew what I had said was being told correctly.

Further support

Please refer to the supporting materials and links available with our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs). This resource contains a range of information, best practice guidance and templates that you can adapt to your organisation's needs.

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Standard 3: Preventing and responding to bullying

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Standard 3

Preventing and responding to bullying

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Effective measures are taken to minimise the risk of bullying and to stop it when it occurs.

Why it matters

The harmful impact of bullying on the wellbeing of children and young people can be serious and prolonged and have a big impact on a child or young person's wellbeing.

As is the case with child protection and safeguarding, we all have a part to play in dealing with it, including the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines bullying as: "when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable".

Bullying can occur in any group of children or young people, and sometimes between adults. It can take many forms and may be perpetrated online or using mobile devices, (cyberbullying).

More information about bullying and cyberbullying is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childabuse](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/childabuse).

Bullying can become serious enough to be a child protection issue and, if so, it should be dealt with under relevant procedures.

Many of the young people to whom we spoke while preparing these standards said that they believed that bullying often occurs as a result of a lack of awareness about differences, for example, in culture, religion, disability or other aspects of a person's background.

This suggests that effective anti-bullying work is closely related to, and cannot be considered in isolation from, how we celebrate and welcome difference.

Everyone in your group should feel that they belong, and no one should feel left out. You should actively encourage people with different backgrounds and abilities to participate, and you should encourage the group to respect the varied perspectives and experiences of individual members.

How to meet this Standard

This Standard is broken down into 11 elements that are set out below. To be fully compliant, you need to have all the elements in place.



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Preventing bullying

Organisations should:

1. have a written anti-bullying policy
2. have a code of behaviour that sets out 'dos and don'ts' on how to behave
3. have regular discussions about bullying with the children and young people they work with
4. have a policy and procedure for complaints.

Responding to bullying

Organisations should:

5. ensure that staff, volunteers, families, children, young people and carers can easily access information about how the organisation deals with bullying
6. have a written anti-bullying procedure for responding to bullying
7. ensure that their policies and procedures address cyberbullying.

Welcoming new members and encouraging diversity

Organisations should:

8. operate a welcome policy for new children, young people and their families and carers
9. have a welcome policy that aims to attract members from diverse groups
10. provide a welcome letter or pack for each new child or young person.

Training and supporting staff and volunteers

Organisations should:

11. provide support for all staff and volunteers on dealing with bullying.

Involving children, young people and families in developing and achieving this Standard

- The young people with whom we spoke felt strongly that, rather than being imposed upon the group by adult leaders, codes of behaviour and anti-bullying procedures should be written by young people themselves, with support from their adult leaders.
- Equally, they felt that children and young people should encourage each other to use and uphold the code and its procedures; they believed that adult leaders alone cannot create an anti-bullying culture in a young people's group or organisation, and that it was not realistic to expect this.
- However, neither of these points means that leaders can opt out. Adult leaders are ultimately responsible for making sure that appropriate behaviour is maintained; children and young people need the reassurance that this is happening.
- Mentor schemes can play a valuable role but the young people involved need ongoing training and support.
- You could ask children and young people to audit the effectiveness of your code of behaviour, including its anti-bullying aspects.
- You could involve children and young people in designing posters, leaflets and publicity materials that promote a safe and welcoming group culture.
- Parents and carers appreciate feeling that adult workers and helpers in groups/organisations listen to them and take their concerns seriously. This shows that the organisation cares about individual children and young people and are attentive to their needs.



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The following is part of what the young people from the British Youth Council said on the subject of welcoming diversity and dealing with bullying:

...if two young people are given the opportunity to sit and do something they both enjoy doing, whatever that may be, they are more likely (in my opinion) to begin seeing underneath the prejudice they had developed.

In my experience, many bullies can only be reasoned with on a one-to-one basis, away from peer pressure, and with a person to whom they show respect, i.e. an authority figure or a liked youth worker.

Sometimes the best approach is to come to the session with a...basic code of conduct that is non-negotiable and then create a team charter, which is discussed and owned by the young people themselves.

I think that running cultural sessions can help to instil mutual respect...a fun spin to community cohesion through doing rather than just listening... when a couple of refugees from Afghanistan joined a youth group I was involved in, inviting the local Mosque's education officer in to talk about Islam really helped us to understand the two boys better – their background, their beliefs.

...there should be a way for them to access online information about bullying and how to deal with it.

...training young people in peer mediation and conflict management is key to allow them to own the process themselves.

Further support

Please refer to the supporting materials and links available with our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs). This resource contains a range of information, best practice guidance and templates that you can adapt to your organisation's needs.

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Standard 4: Running safe activities and events

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Standard 4

Running safe activities and events

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Arrangements are in place to ensure that the physical risks associated with the activities undertaken by children and young people in the group or organisation are identified and managed.

Why it matters

When working with children, we should recognise that they need and want to take risks when they play. Children cannot grow and thrive without learning to cope with the possibility that things can sometimes go wrong.

As providers, we need to successfully manage risks and keep children and young people safe, while simultaneously providing the benefits of adventurous and healthy activities. In this way, we can enable those we work with to take control of their own activities and thus learn to negotiate some of life's risks and challenges.

How to meet this Standard

This Standard is broken down into 19 elements that are set out below. To be fully compliant, you need to have all the elements in place.



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You may find these principles helpful:

1 Distinguish between serious risks to children's health (like head injuries, spinal injuries, burns and scalds) and more minor injuries that are simply part of growing up for active children (like grazed or bruised knees). Focus most of your energies on preventing serious accidents, such as those that lead to hospital admission.

2 Understand that accidents are closely linked to children's ages and stages of development. This will help your group to understand how children and young people can suffer accidental injury – and to keep one step ahead as they grow and develop.

3 Think about which accidents are most likely to cause serious injury to children and young people. This will help you to focus on preventing the most common serious accidents for those in your group (like hot drink scalds at a stay-and-play session for children and their carers). It may also enable you as an organisation to model safe behaviour, which young people and families can maintain on an everyday basis.

4 Take account of the fact that children's understanding of risk and consequences develops over time. While helping children to develop skills to recognise and manage risks, you need to protect them from serious harm that they may not yet understand. For example, children aged under nine find it hard to judge the speed of traffic, so will need help from an adult crossing the road. But there is a lot you can do while out walking with younger children to help them build road safety skills.

5 Weigh up the risks and benefits of activities and, where there are clear benefits, consider options that will recognise both. Some activities can lead to injuries but can also be great fun and can yield benefits in terms of children's health, confidence and wellbeing. Rather than banning them altogether, is there a way of supporting and educating children to learn how to do them safely?

6 When working with young people with additional care and support needs, it is important to understand whether and how their needs impact on their capacity to assess risk and live independently. It is also important to use this knowledge in such a way as to maximise their choices and independence.

You should also ensure you follow government legislation and guidance on health and safety, which is available from [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).

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Risk evaluation and management

Organisations should:

1. have an accident prevention policy and plan
2. ensure that their policy allows for a balance of risk and benefits to activities under consideration
3. have an up-to-date risk assessment of the venue where the group meets
4. carry out risk assessments in advance of outings and special events
5. demonstrate on risk assessments that they have taken action to manage the risks that they identify
6. discuss with children and young people why safeguards are in place.

Equipment safety checks

Organisations should:

7. carry out regular checks on equipment used by children and young people, staff and volunteers in their organisation.

Information and consent

Organisations should:

8. gain consent to activities from parents and children and young people as appropriate
9. ensure that the registration form for each member of their group asks for details about the child or young person's needs (like medical, dietary, allergies, care and support needs)
10. keep details of information that might be needed in an emergency in an accessible but secure place.

In case of an incident

Organisations should:

11. make sure everyone has access to first aid
12. check and refill their first aid boxes regularly
13. have a simple procedure for reporting accidents and 'near misses'
14. have an accident book or standard accident forms kept securely in a file
15. put in place and clearly display adequate insurance arrangements.

Training and supervision

Organisations should:

16. provide guidance to staff, volunteers and service users on the safe use of equipment
17. supervise children and young people if they are using equipment that could be dangerous
18. provide training on accident prevention and health and safety for all staff and volunteers.

Legislative requirements

Organisations should:

19. ensure that they comply with all relevant health and safety legislations and requirements as detailed by the Health and Safety Executive ([hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)).

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Involving children, young people and families in developing and achieving this Standard

- You may be able to involve children and young people in discussing the building where the group meets. For example, ask their views on the exterior of the building and its lighting, heating and toilet facilities.
- You can also involve them in discussions about the importance of encouraging each other not to get involved in dares and to support each other in keeping safe.
- It is likely to be much easier to manage risks to people using your group/service if you involve them in the risk assessment and they understand why specific rules exist about what to do during events, trips or activities. They can attend meetings about trips and outings and help to think about what they need to do to enjoy themselves safely.
- If you are considering activities with inherent risks, use these as opportunities to encourage and educate children and young people through discussion and training about how they can recognise and minimise risk while still taking part in the activity.
- Think about whether the context of your activity enables you to run events with families on issues like fire safety or road safety – perhaps in conjunction with the local fire and rescue service or road safety team.



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The following are some comments from the young people from the British Youth Council on the subject of running safe activities and events:

Ownership of health and safety is important and trying to pass that onto the young people is good practice. The example I would use is tramlining: while one person is on the equipment, you should get other people around to ensure they do not fall off, e.g. spotters. If you can get your young people to take responsibility and take into account the risks around you, this will be a valuable skill while at the same time ensuring you monitor the overall picture.

Making activities safe presents two options, either you put safety measures in place to minimise, not eradicate, the risks of any accidents or you prohibit the activity. The latter should be a last resort because this can make groups harder to deal with if you are constantly telling them not to do something.

Further support

Please refer to the supporting materials and links available with our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs). This resource contains a range of information, best practice guidance and templates that you can adapt to your organisation's needs.

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Standard 5: Recording and storing information

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Standard 5

Recording and storing information

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Arrangements are in place to ensure that personal or sensitive information about children, young people and families is recorded appropriately and stored securely.

Why it matters

In this Standard we use 'personal data' or 'personal information' to mean information from which a living person can be identified. We refer to 'sensitive information' as personal data about matters like someone's ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal record.

Keeping records about the children, young people and families you work with is important for a number of reasons:

- Keeping essential information about children and young people's care needs and contact details of parents and carers is vital as part of keeping children and young people safe and promoting their welfare.
- Keeping written records about your activities helps you demonstrate the positive impact your services are having on children and young people.
- Having clear and accurate records are vital if you are ever in the position of having to make a referral to a child protection or adult safeguarding agency because you believe that



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However, you must follow data protection legislation. This includes:

- **obtaining personal data for a specific purpose**
- **making sure you get consent to keep personal data**
- **making sure the personal data you keep is adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose for which you are collecting it**
- **making sure the data you keep is accurate and up to date**
- **only keeping personal data for as long as you need it.**

Therefore, this means:

- you need to be clear about why you are recording and keeping information about people
- you should maintain a balanced and proportionate approach to the amount and level of written information you hold
- you need to give careful thought to how you record interactions with or about children, young people and families, especially if related to safeguarding or child protection

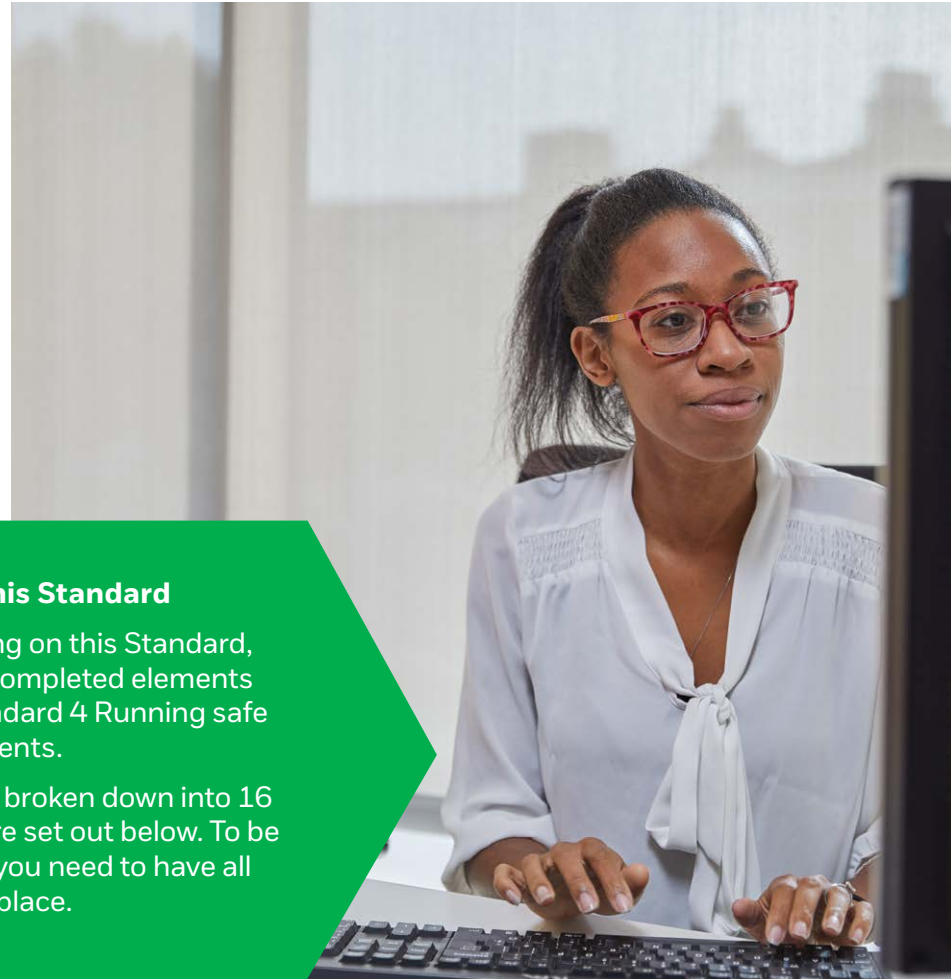
- you should store such information securely, whether paper-based or electronic
- you should set time limits on the period for which records are held and should put in place clear procedures for disposing of them safely.

More information about this is available from our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs) and the Information Commissioner's Office – see ico.org.uk.

How to meet this Standard

Before embarking on this Standard, you must have completed elements 9 and 10 of Standard 4 Running safe activities and events.

This Standard is broken down into 16 elements that are set out below. To be fully compliant, you need to have all the elements in place.



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What to record and how to do it

Organisations should:

1. keep a record of each contact that they have with a child or young person and their family/ carer
2. clearly distinguish between fact and opinion in their records
3. keep personal information, other than the individual's name, separate from information about other people
4. ensure that all records are signed and dated by the person who makes them
5. set time limits for making records.

Access to records

Organisations should:

6. explain to children, young people and families/carers they work with that records are kept and the reasons for this
7. have a policy for granting children, young people and families access to their records.

Storing records securely and conveniently

Organisations should:

8. store hard copies of personal records and portable electronic equipment securely
9. protect their records by security measures like usernames, passwords and encryption.

Recording concerns and passing them on

Organisations should:

10. record any concerns that a child or young person may be in need or at risk of abuse
11. place records of concerns and their response to them on the child or young person's file
12. confirm in writing any referrals to a statutory agency within 48 hours.

Disposing of records

Organisations should:

13. have a clear policy on time limits for retaining records
14. destroy personal records securely.

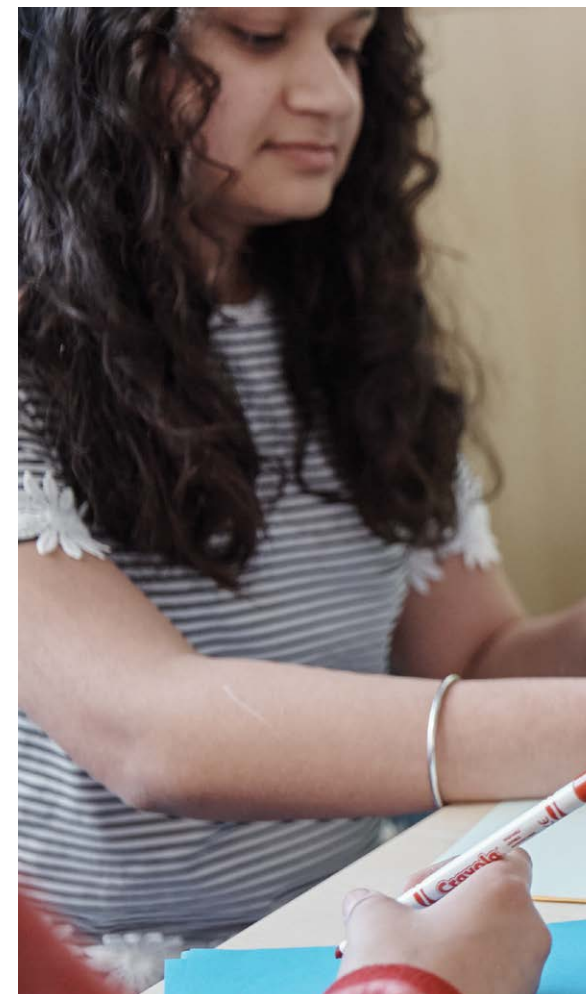
Support and training for your workforce on record keeping

Organisations should:

15. ensure their workforce is aware of expectations on the recording and storage of information
16. support their workforce to meet these expectations.

Involving children, young people and families in developing and achieving this Standard

- You could ask children and young people to help you design a leaflet for other people in the group about why you need to keep records, what they are used for and how service users can access them.
- In many organisations that need to keep more than a very basic record of a child, young person's or family's attendance, it is possible to write the record jointly with the person or their family, or to share with them what you have written as part of recapping at the beginning of the next session. The jointly produced records could form a workbook for the person or family to take with them at the end of their involvement with you. However, if they do this, remember to consider whether there could be any issues around other people gaining access to the material while it is in their possession.
- In group work situations, you may find it appropriate to make a short, jointly agreed record of each session as part of the group programme. If needed, you could then add in detail afterwards for each person who was present.
- If a record relates to a child or young person who has done some individual work with you, remember that you need to give careful thought to the consent issues involved in sharing this record with a parent or carer.
- If a child or young person is granted access to records that they have not co-produced with the worker, you may need some preparation and support for them before, during and after the time that they are reading the records, especially if they contain potentially upsetting information. Consider the child or young person's age, level of development, their physical, mental and emotional health, their support networks, and their capacity to read and understand the material to which they are being given access. Offer them the chance to have someone with them when they look through the records, and make sure that, even if they want to look at them alone, there is someone available for them to talk to if they need it.
- Records of work with children and young people should enable the reader to hear the voice of the child clearly – they should not just be about the worker giving information or offering their opinion. If there is a difference of view between the worker and the person who is the subject of the record, this should be reflected. The record should be person-centred and focused on the needs and wishes of the child or young person who is involved in the work.



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The following are some comments from the young people from the British Youth Council on the subject of record keeping:

...all should at least be given the option to find out what kinds of records are being held, to ease their mind and ensure fair treatment.

You should try to explain the data collection purposes etc to children and families as a way of showing them that it's a two-way relationship based on trust and transparency – this could make it easier for young people and/or their families to voluntarily give extra information that changes or becomes relevant over time.

My main wish would be that the child be the first port of call for any dealings with parents or guardians. Given that it is their data, not the guardians', they have a right to know who will be viewing it and a right to vocally oppose this.

Further support

Please refer to the supporting materials and links available with our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs). This resource contains a range of information, best practice guidance and templates that you can adapt to your organisation's needs. .

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A photograph of three people sitting at a wooden table in a meeting room. On the left, a woman with long brown hair wears a patterned shirt. In the center, a bald man in a light-colored polo shirt looks down at papers. On the right, a woman with dark hair in a white sleeveless top also looks down. A fourth person's arm is visible on the far right. The table has a yellow mug, a green mug, and some papers. A large purple rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

Standard 6: Sharing information and working with other agencies

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Standard 6

Sharing information and working with other agencies

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Policies and practices that support effective information sharing and working with other agencies are embedded in the organisation's safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

Why it matters?

Sharing concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing helps professionals build a clearer picture of the child's life and gain a better understanding of any risks the child is facing.

Information sharing is a vital part of making sure that a child or young person and their family receive the right support at the right time and prevents a concerning situation from becoming more serious.

We all have a responsibility to make sure that concerns about children and young people's welfare are shared appropriately. More information about this is available from NSPCC Learning – see nspcc.org.uk/responding.

Consent to share information

You should always seek consent from a child or young person to share information they have given about themselves or others. **However, if consent is not given, you can and should still share information with relevant professionals if you are protecting a child from significant harm.**

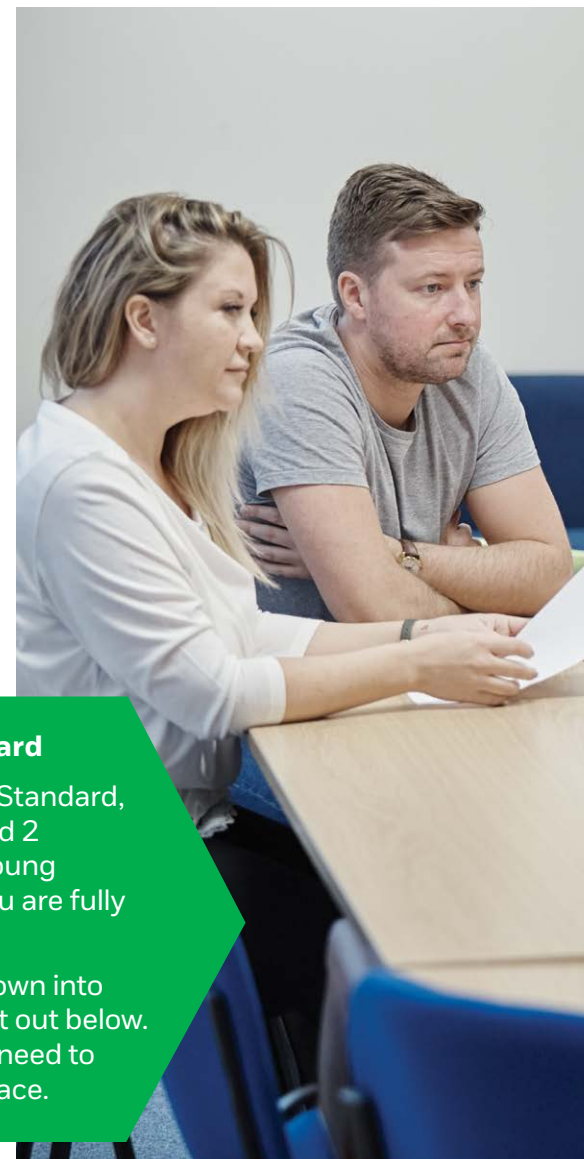
If you are not sure what to do, contact the NSPCC helpline for advice by calling 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.

More detailed information about consent to share information is available from NSPCC Learning – see nspcc.org.uk/responding.

How to meet this Standard

Before embarking on this Standard, you should revisit Standard 2 Protecting children and young people and ensure that you are fully compliant with it.

This Standard is broken down into eight elements that are set out below. To be fully compliant, you need to have all the elements in place.



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The elements of Standard 6

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Organisations should:

1. have written guidelines and procedures on sharing information
2. ensure their information-sharing procedures are compatible with local safeguarding and child protection agency expectations
3. ensure that children, young people and their families are made aware of the reasons why the organisation may need to share information with other agencies and have given their consent for doing so when appropriate.
4. provide guidance to staff and volunteers about how to identify children and families who may benefit from early help and refer them to the right agencies for support
5. make up-to-date information about local services available to staff, volunteers, young people and families
6. proactively make links with other organisations who come into contact with the children they work with.
7. provide guidance to staff and volunteers about how to work with children's services as part of a multi-agency response to carrying out assessments and providing support for children and families
8. ensure that relevant members of their workforce are confident about escalating concerns about children and young people with local safeguarding and child protection agencies if they are not satisfied with the response.

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Involving children, young people, young adults and families in developing and achieving this Standard

- If your organisation is involved in an early help assessment, you need to make it clear to the child or young person and their family that this can only happen with their consent, which they are free to withdraw at any time.
- You also need to involve children, young people and families in the preparation of any reports or feedback to multi-agency review meetings. They should never be surprised by any information that is shared and should have been made well aware of this, unless doing so would have compromised the child or young person's safety.
- When your organisation is reflecting on its work and considering changes to services, you should always take account of the perspectives of children, young people and families.

The following are some comments from the young people from the British Youth Council on the subject of sharing information and working with other agencies:

I think that if someone is the subject of a report, they should be free to view the report before it is sent to the other service and the young person should be able to make an informal statement giving their side of the story.

I think some people are reluctant to accept help, at least initially. So explaining how the support would be structured would be the place to start: who you'd be dealing with, how regularly, what form the support would take...sometimes it's feeling as though you're a burden to others that puts you off, so convincing young people in particular that they're not alone, that organisations want to help them and that asking for help makes them human are important steps.

Further support

Please refer to the supporting materials and links available with our Safeguarding Checklist (see nspcc.org.uk/vcs). This resource contains a range of information, best practice guidance and templates that you can adapt to your organisation's needs. .

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Where to go from here

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Congratulations! You have completed the Standards framework and have taken further significant steps in terms of making your organisation a safe place for children and young people.

Child protection and safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility for organisations and needs to be continually worked on, developed and reviewed. Once you have satisfied yourself that you are compliant with the Standards, you can use the Safeguarding Checklist to undertake regular reviews, and access further support on NSPCC Learning (nspcc.org.uk/vcs). You can also sign up to our weekly or monthly [email alerts](#).

If you are worried about a child, even if you are unsure, contact our professional counsellors for help, advice and support. Call us on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

For the children and young people you work with, make sure that they know about Childline (childline.org.uk or telephone 0800 1111). This service offers free, confidential advice and support whatever the child or young person's worry, whenever they need help.

You can also contact learning@nspcc.org.uk if you need further advice or clarification about the information in this guide.

All of us at the NSPCC wish you well in your work with children and young people.



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Everyone who comes into contact with children and young people has a responsibility to keep them safe. At the NSPCC, we help individuals and organisations to do this.

We provide a range of online and face-to-face training courses. We keep you up-to-date with the latest child protection policy, practice and research and help you to understand and respond to your safeguarding challenges. And we share our knowledge of what works to help you deliver services for children and families.

It means together we can help children who've been abused to rebuild their lives. Together we can protect children at risk. And, together, we can find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening.

But it's only with your support, working together, that we can be there to make children safer right across the UK.

nspcc.org.uk/learning

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EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR