



Safeguarding Policy

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The Steeple Woodland Project must ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from those who may wish to exploit them or put them at risk of exploitation.

Key Principles

1. The safety of children, young people and adults is of paramount importance
2. All children and adults, regardless of who they are, can exercise their right to protection from harm or abuse when engaging with the Steeple Woodland Project
3. All suspicions and allegations will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
4. Steeple Woodland Project has a safe process for recruiting volunteers which adheres to best practice, in line with the standards set out in *Cornwall and the IoS Safeguarding Adults and Children* policies (see <https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp>)
5. Steeple Woodland Project will undertake risk assessments for specific activities and cases
6. All leads and volunteers at Steeple Woodland Project understand how to report concerns through the appropriate channels, and this Policy serves to embed practice

Policy Statement

Steeple Woodland Project recognises that, when working with children, young people and adults, it is the individual's welfare that is paramount, and the Project's overriding aim is to conduct its activities in a way which will uphold their rights. The Project will ensure that measures are in place to minimise the risk of any individual being abused or exploited through their activities with the Project. Safeguarding measures are underpinned by all relevant legislation and policy, including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2021
- Cornwall & IoS Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures
<https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp>

Volunteer Guidelines

1. All volunteers with the Steeple Woodland Project Group will be given the Volunteer Policy along with the Volunteer Agreement, which includes the Project's Code of Conduct
2. All volunteers sign the Volunteer Agreement to confirm that they have read and understood the Volunteer Policy, and will adhere to its requirements.



3. Any cause for concern regarding safeguarding that arises through the activities of volunteers at the Steeple Woodland Project will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). If there are serious and immediate concerns for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult those concerns will be raised directly with the police.
4. Anyone infringing the Code of Conduct will, at the discretion of the DSO, be asked to leave the organisation. The DSO will report any significant cause for concern to the appropriate Authority.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for Steeple Woodland Project is: Lorna Coad (tel: 07709 176900).

For prospective volunteers, and in line with information detailed in the Volunteer Policy, the DSO will:

- Provide advice and guidance
- Manage and oversee individual cases
- Be notified of and evaluate the significance or relevance of any unspent convictions of prospective volunteers
- Liaise with police, probation officers and others as necessary about case progress
- Be notified of and evaluate the significance or relevance of any employment suspensions, resignations or sackings of prospective volunteers

When a safeguarding concern is raised, the DSO will liaise with the Chairman and/or Officers of the Project regarding child, young person or adult safeguarding concerns.

Where an adult who is the subject of a safeguarding concern refuses to give permission for their information to be shared, a risk assessment will be carried out immediately, to assess whether or not the Adult's consent needs to be overridden. This is legally permissible when any of the following criteria are met:

- The adult lacks mental capacity to consent to sharing their information
- The alleged abuser is a member of Staff or a Volunteer
- The impact of the abuse is so severe as to be in violation of the person's vital interests
- Other children or adults are at risk from the alleged abuser
- The person is not withholding their consent voluntarily, i.e. they are being coerced or are in fear of reprisals

Where permission is given, or where one or more of the above criteria are met, the DSO will pass on details to the relevant local authority contacts.

If the DSO is not available, the Project Chairperson or an Officer will provide support and advice. If the allegation of abuse concerns a Project member or volunteer the DSO (or, if the concern is about the DSO, the Project Chairperson or an Officer) must contact the relevant agency for advice. Advice can be obtained from:

- MARU (Multi Agency Referral Unit) for concerns regarding children and young people



Tel: 0300 1231 116

multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

- Adult Safeguarding Triage Team or Access Team for concerns regarding adults (18 and over) including adults who may be self-neglecting

Tel: 0300 1234 131 option 3, or Adult Safeguarding Triage Team Tel: 01872 26433

adultsafeguardingconcerns@cornwall.gov.uk

The action taken may vary according to the situation. For example, if a person is injured, medical attention may be required immediately or if a crime is suspected the police must be informed immediately. Contact the emergency services on 999.

In all cases, information must be shared with the DSO (or, in their absence, the Project Chairman or Officers).

Action must always be taken as soon as possible, as delay can put a child, young person or adult in serious danger.

Child abuse - For the purposes of this policy and our related procedures, the term 'child' means any person under the age of 18 years, or 16 years if married. Child protection guidance refers to anyone under the age of 18.

Child abuse is described as "A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children."

Source: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Adults - Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect. (Care Act guidance 14:2)
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect

Abuse and or Neglect - 'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. This could be a single act or repeated over time and may be deliberate or happen by mistake. The individual may not fully understand the consequences of what is happening to them.'

Source: Cornwall & IoS Adult Safeguarding Policy 2017

Although abuse or neglect can be very broad, the following types of abuse or neglect are listed by the Care Act 2014:

- Physical
- Domestic
- Psychological
- Sexual
- Financial or material
- Modern Slavery



- Neglect and acts of Omission
- Discriminatory
- Organisational
- Self-Neglect

Exploitation and radicalisation - Children and adults at risk may be exploited for personal gain or by radicalisers who promote terrorism and violence, either via personal contact or through internet sources. Although not specified as a form of abuse within the Care Act 2014 or Children's Act, it is important to recognise the possibility that concerns about young people and adults at risk related to 'radicalisation' must be shared via Safer Cornwall (<https://safercornwall.co.uk/preventing>)

Confidentiality

Any potential or actual safeguarding concern will require the sharing of sensitive information. This will always be done in accordance with Steeple Woodland Project procedures on confidentiality (see the Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy).

The confidential nature of discussions between staff or volunteers and service users is normally protected, but safeguarding concerns can override this where there is cause to believe criminal activity may have taken or be taking place and/or where it is considered that there is a risk of harm to an individual.

Information must only be shared with relevant persons, as outlined in this and associated policies.

Responsibility for Reporting

Steeple Woodland Project members and volunteers, along with members of the public, have a responsibility to take action if the welfare of a child, young person or adult causes concern.

Members and volunteers must recognise that if the words, actions or behaviour of a child, young person or adult gives them reason to believe that there may be an issue, it is their responsibility to report their suspicions to the DSO. Members or volunteers should understand that they will not be expected to investigate further or make any decisions about the next steps.

The responsibility of responding to, and investigating referrals for situations where children, young people or adults are thought to have experienced, or may be at risk of abuse or neglect lies with the Police and the relevant Local Authority (Cornwall Children's or Adults Services).

Guidance for Volunteers

When a child, young person or adult wants to confide:

- Listen carefully, allowing them to tell their own story, clarifying details where necessary using "Tell, Explain, Describe" questions rather than investigation questions
- Take what they are trying to tell you seriously; they are saying it for a reason



- Reassure them that they are doing the right thing by talking about what has happened
- Try to remain calm and do not show too much emotion
- Explain, where appropriate, what you need to do next, using phrases such as:
 - *What you are saying is important and I will treat it as such*
 - *It's not your fault*
 - *I'm glad you were able to talk to someone*
 - *I will help you as best I can*
 - *This is so important I need to talk to someone about it*
 - *Thank you for sharing this with me, I'm going to take this forward now*

- Do not promise you can keep it a secret - this must and will be reported
- Do not make a judgement on your own about whether the child or adult is telling the truth
- Do not interrupt or jump to conclusions
- Do not ask leading or suggestive questions
- Do not ask them to repeat the information to someone else
- Do not ask to see marks/bruises that will involve them removing any clothing
- Do not say it will be OK - it might not be for that child, young person or adult

To ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults, individuals associated with Steeple Woodland Project will:

- Work safely and take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. They will avoid any contact which would lead any reasonable person to question your motivation and intentions
- Never give personal contact details to children or young people, including mobile phone numbers
- Work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Never be in regular or unsupervised contact with children without the appropriate pre-employment checks in place
- Keep other Project members informed of where they are and what they are doing whilst engaged in Project activities
- Be mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Whilst engaged in Project activities, will not:
 - Use profane or inappropriate language
 - Dress inappropriately, in a way that is likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative



- Will not take photographs without prior permission from those being photographed or, if children or vulnerable adults are included, permission from their parent or responsible adult, to include explanation of the purpose to which photographs will be put. If photographs are to be used on the Project website, the press or social media, permission should be obtained specifically for use in this way.