



Registered Charity Number 1174004

SAFEGUARDING POLICY - CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE and VULNERABLE ADULTS

If anyone involved with Malvern Welcomes believes that a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk or has been abused, they have a responsibility to immediately contact **Worcestershire County Council on 01905 822666 (children)** or **Worcestershire County Council Adult Services Team on 01905 768053** from Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm.

If the situation is urgent, outside of office hours contact the **Emergency Duty team on 01905 768020** or the police on 999.

If possible, please discuss this beforehand with a member of the Management Team but do not delay if you believe the situation to be urgent.

If you have concerns about possible abuse, which you do not believe to be urgent, you should contact one of the safeguarding advisers to talk through the situation.

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20382/are_you_worried_about_a_child

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Designated Persons

E-mail - safeguarding@malvernwelcomes.org

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide those acting within the framework of Malvern Welcomes with guidance to make them aware of what action to take should they come across a safeguarding issue.

1) Introduction

Malvern Welcomes believes protecting children and promoting their welfare, and protecting vulnerable adults from harm, is everybody's business. We are also committed to protecting volunteers from abuse or allegations of abuse. We work in close conjunction with the Resettlement Team at Worcestershire County Council (WCC). Natasha is WCC Operations Manager for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, UK Resettlement Programme (UKRS), Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and (ARAP) Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

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All those associated with Malvern Welcomes are committed to working according to the principles of this policy.

Definition and relevant legislation

(i) Children: Definition of Children and Young People in Child Protection guidance:

England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland each have their own guidance for organisations to keep children safe. They all agree that a child is anyone who is under the age of 18. The law also gives extra protection to young people who are 16 to 17 years old, that is, over the age of consent for sexual activity.

It is important that anyone who comes into contact with children is able to recognise when a child may be at risk of significant harm.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development

- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care

The legislation and guidance underpinning this policy includes the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018¹ (updated 2023)

(ii) Adults: Malvern Welcomes is committed to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, as required by the key safeguarding legislation - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 ², Care Act 2014 ³ and guided by ‘Safeguarding Adults - A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work’ ⁴.

A vulnerable adult is defined as someone “Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of, or unable to protect him or herself, against significant harm or exploitation”. It is the view of Malvern Welcomes that this includes refugees and asylum seekers.

“Adult safeguarding” is working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect. It is an important part of what many public services do, and a key responsibility of local authorities. Safeguarding is aimed at people with care and support needs who may be in vulnerable circumstances and at risk of abuse or neglect. In these cases, local services must work together to identify those at risk and take steps to protect them.

Other legislation underpinning safeguarding policies includes the United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991, Human Rights Act 2000, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation), Sexual Offences Act 2003, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Equality Act 2010.

2) Training for Volunteers and the Safeguarding Lead

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> - **updated 2020**

² http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/pdfs/ukpga_20060047_en.pdf

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1/crossheading/safeguarding-adults-at-risk-of-abuse-or-neglect/enacted>

⁴ <http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/safeguarding-adults-a-national-framework-of-standards-for-good-practice-in-adult-protection-work/r/a11G00000017rbdIAA>

It is a statutory requirement that individual agencies/organisations are responsible for ensuring that all those in contact or working with children and young people and/or with adults who are parents or carers, in a paid or voluntary capacity have access to high quality training and support to ensure the safeguarding of children.

Malvern Welcomes will provide a mandatory induction which includes familiarisation with child protection and adult safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's safety or welfare.

The following website should also be consulted for West Midlands procedures:
<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents>

The training undertaken by all staff and volunteers will provide guidance on thresholds to be met for Safeguarding procedures to be put in place. The guiding principle in relation to any safeguarding concern is that the safety and welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount.

If in doubt, contact one of the people listed to discuss your concerns - **contact details on page 3.**

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***See also section 6 below Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse.**

To ascertain what level of support/intervention may be required, the following link may be accessed by the safeguarding lead when concerns are raised:
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7962/> levels of need guidance formerly threshold guidance.

3) Principles and Values

Malvern Welcomes is committed to the following principles:

- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be protected at all times and the safety and wellbeing of these groups should never be compromised.
- Where there is an allegation of or suspected abuse, the safety of the child/children or vulnerable adult involved must always take precedence.
- When following procedures and processes, positive outcomes for children, young people and vulnerable adults should be kept in sight at all times.
- Malvern Welcomes is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities to promote inclusive processes, practices and culture. It will therefore respond sensitively to the particular needs of families, children and young people, and vulnerable adults, from black and other ethnic minority backgrounds, whatever their sexual orientation, whatever their gender/gender reassignment, **whether or not they follow a religion,**

whatever religion they follow, and of disabled children and adults. We recognise that abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults occurs in all religions, all social classes and all cultures.

- This policy will be available to all those acting within Malvern Welcomes on the website.
- Children and families with whom we work will be informed about this policy.
- We recognise that the re-settled families with whom we work need clear guidance on how to respond to and report potential abuse.

4) Children and Young People

Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse

‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’, 2010 (updated in 2018) defines four categories of child abuse:

- **Neglect**
- **Physical Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation**

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 institution or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of, for example, maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, 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 from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is a form of **Significant Harm** which involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation are forms of **Significant Harm** which involve forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

It is illegal to:

- take, show or distribute indecent photographs
- pay for or arrange sexual services
- for a person in a position of trust (for example, teachers, care workers) to engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18.

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (eg food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes,

affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Government guidance on mandatory reporting: The guidance ⁵ states that a professional, volunteer or community group member who has information or suspicions that a child is at risk of FGM should consult with the one of the people listed on page 3, and should make an immediate referral to Worcestershire County Council Children's Social Care.

5) Adults

Adults with care and support needs - safeguarding duties

The adult safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 apply to an adult, aged 18 or over, who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) **and**;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; **and**
- 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 and support are the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent - including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Care and support include assessment of people's needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512906/Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_FINAL.pdf

purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations.

Different forms of abuse and neglect of adults

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional/organisational abuse
- Neglect

6) Preventing Violent Extremism in Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

CONTEST:

Extremists are known to target individuals for recruitment. Violent extremists can offer a very persuasive rationale and are often very charismatic to attract people to their cause. The Home Office leads on the Counter Terrorism Agenda and the national strategy is called CONTEST. The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence ^{6 7}.

- **PURSUE** - To stop terrorist attacks.
- **PROTECT** - To strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.
- **PREPARE** - To mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.
- **PREVENT** - To stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Channel - Multi Agency safeguarding process, which provides support to those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent agenda links closely with that of safeguarding.

PREVENT

⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-and-security-bill>

Preventing individuals from being drawn into serious and organised crime. Malvern Welcomes requires key staff and volunteers to undertake Prevent e-learning and guidance:

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individuals-at-risk-of-being-drawn-into-serious-and-organised-crime-a-prevent-guide>

As an example of those vulnerable to being drawn into inappropriate groups or criminal behaviour, the Home Office cites the need for a sense of belonging. “Membership of a subculture can provide a strong sense of belonging to individuals who have had a disruptive upbringing. Individuals may be drawn into serious and organised crime in order to provide a sense of belonging to their family, friends, or even community”.

Note: There are a range of existing local and national programmes that partners can refer individuals to, including gangs programmes, Troubled Families programmes and the Channel programme (where the individual is also at risk of being drawn into terrorism).

7) Online Activity

Any online activity carries potential safeguarding implications - please refer to our Social Media and Digital Communications Policy -

<http://www.malvernwelcomes.org/about-us/charity-documents>

8) Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

Roles and Responsibilities

(i) What to do if you're concerned a child may be experiencing abuse

Re-settled families should consult their allocated supporter if they are concerned about abuse. If they are worried that their supporter is, or might be, in any way involved in abuse they should contact the Safeguarding Designated Person whose details appear at the beginning of this document.

If anyone involved with Malvern Welcomes is concerned about immediate actual or potential abuse, they should immediately contact Worcestershire County Council on 01905 822666 from Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm. If the situation is urgent outside of office hours contact the Emergency Duty team on 01905 768020 or the police on 999.

If the situation is less urgent, you should contact one of the people listed above to talk through your concerns.

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20559/refer_to_childrens_social_care/1657/are_you_a_member_of_the_public_and_worried_about_a_child

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20641/are_you_a_professional_and_worried_about_child

The responsibility for investigating potential abuse rests with the Local Authority and Police.

Most guidance for services for children, like safeguarding and health care, emphasise how important it is to **listen to the wishes of the child**. However, **authorities have a duty to act in the best interests of the child, which may mean contradicting their wishes**. Legislation in England and Wales asks that due consideration is given to the wishes and feelings of a child as far as reasonable before making decisions on what services to provide or action to take.

The guiding principle must be that the safety of the child or young person is paramount. Any child or young person making a disclosure of abuse or potential abuse should be advised that the information has to be passed on to the appropriate authority.

See also the government guidelines ‘What to do if you are worried a child is being abused’ for helpful information and guidance, including definitions and indicators of abuse.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

The Child Protection Process

If the receiving local authority agrees that the safeguarding referral warrants further investigation, a strategy meeting or discussion will be held to consider how best to carry this out. This is generally convened within 24 hours or sooner if there is immediate concern.

Further information about the processes and meetings that occur as part of a formal investigation can also be found in “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused - Summary” freely available on the internet (link noted above).

(ii) What to do if you’re concerned a Vulnerable Adult may be experiencing abuse

Where anyone associated with Malvern Welcomes is concerned that a Vulnerable Adult, who is a person over 18 years of age, is being abused by relatives, family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends, associates, or strangers, a telephone call should be made to: **Worcestershire County Council Adult Services Team on 01905 768053**

(iii) Whistleblowing - what to do if you are concerned that another volunteer or trustee may be acting wrongly

Malvern Welcomes will not tolerate inappropriate relationships between volunteers and the vulnerable people we serve.

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation. It is a vital process for identifying risks to people's safety. Sharing information or talking through a concern can be a first step to helping an organisation identify problems and improve their practice.

Concerns should be raised with either of the Designated Safeguarding Persons (contact details at the beginning of this document) who will investigate the concerns and feed back to the Trustees (NSPCC.org may provide further guidance on whistleblowing if required). This should be reported by the Trustees to the Home Office as a sensitive issue. Advice should be sought regarding whether the adult or child seen to be at risk should give consent for this referral to be made.

The Designated Safeguarding Person will be responsible for following up the referral with the Children's or Adult Services Team to check on progress / any action taken.

9) Safe Recruitment

Malvern Welcomes takes all reasonable measures to ensure that all volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are verified as suitable, in line with Malvern Welcomes policy of non-discrimination on grounds of age, religion or belief, race, colour, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability. Training will be provided for all staff and volunteers and for host families. See Section 2 above.

Measures include:

- verification of identity through passport/birth certificate/driving licence/other means of ID (ie where individual has biometric residency permit or other international form of ID).
- taking up DBS checks on volunteers who will have direct unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable families:
 - where volunteers have recent DBS checks from employment or other voluntary work the date and number are recorded and it may be decided that a new check is not necessary.
 - where a volunteer is recently arrived in this country, in exceptional circumstances it may be deemed unnecessary to take up DBS checks.
 - any decision not to take up DBS checks will be recorded with reasons and agreed by the safeguarding lead and deputy, and the volunteer co-ordinator.
- seeking personal references for all volunteers.
- all volunteers to be interviewed by at least two members of an interview panel drawn from the Management and Volunteer Coordination Teams and who are conversant with our policy and the principles of safer recruitment.

10) Reviewing, updating and dissemination of Policies

Malvern Welcomes' policies in relation to safeguarding are reviewed annually, any necessary updates added, and training needs noted and referred for action. The Designated Persons are responsible for ensuring these are reviewed / updated / disseminated.

The policy is available on the Malvern Welcomes website.

11) Guidelines for safeguarding in practice

- Malvern Welcomes wants to keep families and volunteers safe so safeguarding practice is central in all our work.
- Malvern Welcomes feels that regular reflection on the work we do is important. We want to encourage all volunteers to keep asking questions about why and how we are keeping everyone safe. There will be regular reminders and references to safeguarding at Family Support Group meetings and meeting of the ESOL team.
- Malvern Welcomes aims to support volunteers so they don't work in isolation.

- Family leads

Family leads play an important role in safeguarding so Malvern Welcomes will facilitate regular meetings of Family Leads to reflect on their work and to support each other.

- Family Leads will maintain a good understanding of the network of volunteers engaging with the family who they support. This information will be gained from families and volunteers.
- This network, level and types of support will change over time according to the needs of a family.

Reviewed May 2025