



The  
**Wildlife**  
Trusts

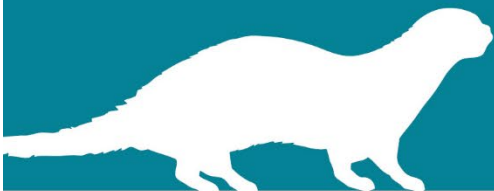
# Safeguarding Framework for The Wildlife Trusts

**Version: 6**

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## Background

Ensuring that all who visit our sites and engage with our organisation have an enjoyable and safe experience, is an absolute priority for The Wildlife Trusts. This includes our visitors, members, volunteers, staff and trustees.

We recognise that there are some people who may need additional help and support, including children, young people and adults at risk; as a movement we are committed to our Safeguarding responsibilities, as well as ensuring safety and wellbeing is at the heart of our engagement with all people. We want to inspire and encourage everyone to spend time outdoors, develop a connection with nature and play their part in nature's recovery in our local communities.

The Wildlife Trusts have additional responsibilities to protect the children and adults at risk that use our facilities or services, that we work with in any way.

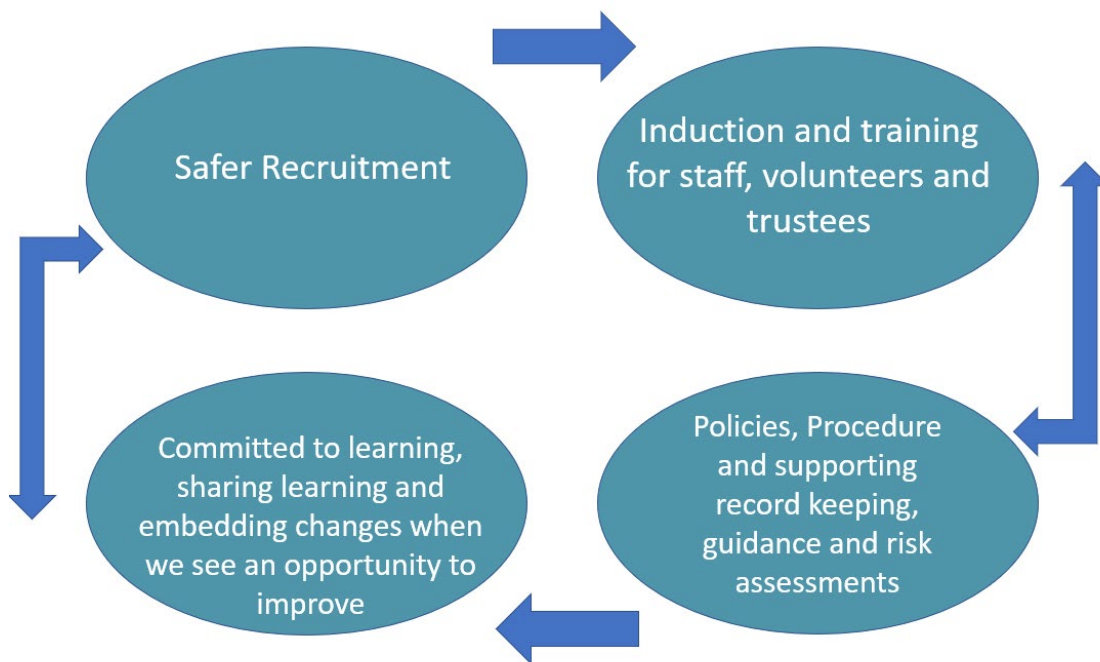
We must ensure that our people (staff and volunteers), regardless of role can identify and act upon instances that may amount to a Safeguarding issue. As part of this responsibility, we must actively work to prevent abuse or neglect occurring within the federation by ensuring we:

- Recruit the right people to work with children and adults at risk accessing our sites or services
- Equip our staff and volunteers to be able to recognise and act upon any behaviour or incidents that cause concern

UK legislation is in place to Safeguard Children and Adults at risk and our independent Trusts are required to comply with the legislation, in keeping within the guidance provided by their Local Authority and Police. The Charity Commission is clear, that as individual Trusts and as a federation, we carry this responsibility.

*Protecting people and Safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities. It is a fundamental part of operating as a charity for the public benefit (Charity Commission, November 2021).*

## The four pillars of a Safeguarding Framework for The Wildlife Trusts



Together the four pillars provide a robust approach and a 'golden thread' of practices and arrangements that work to keep the children and adults at risk that we work with safe from harm.

1. **Safer Recruitment** – the crucial first step in promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk; a set of practices to help make sure staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and adults at risk. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm, as well as sending a clear message that we prioritise the safety and welfare of those in our care. Promoting safe recruitment practices will help to deter some inappropriate individuals from applying for a post at Trusts.
2. **Induction and Training** - to ensure this is a key priority and our people understand what Safeguarding means, how legislation applies to us, how to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect, and using our procedures, how to raise a concern with the Safeguarding Leads within our federation and when necessary, the Local Authority or Police.
3. **Policies and Procedures** – when working with children and adults at risk we must have clear policies demonstrating how we will keep them safe and a procedure detailing how we will respond to any concerns

4. **Commitment to Learning** – given the diverse nature of our staff, volunteers and communities, as well as the different and challenging environments that the movement operates across, concerns and incidents are an inevitable part of engagement. It is impossible to anticipate and mitigate against every risk, therefore there will always be opportunities to learn and embed changes to improve safeguarding arrangements. We must be open to this learning and operate with a degree of transparency to share these opportunities across the federation.

## The Standards of a Safeguarding Framework for the Federation

To provide alignment, assurance and collective commitment in this important area, all Trust staff or volunteers, as well as any groups run for/or on behalf of The Wildlife Trusts, who work with children or adults at risk, commit to have the following in place:

1. **To display a [Safeguarding Commitment Statement](#) on Trust websites.**
  - Trusts may wish to use or adapt the example above or create their own.
2. **To embed the principles of Safer Recruitment (detailed through either a Policy Statement, HR Policy or within the Safeguarding Policy), through the job application process, for both staff and volunteers:**
  - Advertisement of job vacancies and roles with a reference to the Trusts Safeguarding commitment
  - Best practice advice is to use application forms with particular reference to previous work with children and adults at risk (for jobs that involve working with these groups). CV's could also be considered if Trusts follow up submissions with supplementary questions relating to previous work with children or adults at risk, as well as the other principles of safer recruitment
  - Ask successful candidates if they have any unspent criminal offences in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders act (Exceptions) order 1975 and or (Northern Ireland) 1979.
  - Always take up two written references, one from the most recent employer or place of education, character references could be used too (for staff or volunteers working with children or adults at risk)
  - Where possible, undertake interviews face to face, based on the job description if the role requires working with children or adults at risk
  - Ensure at least one person in each Trust, who has oversight of the recruitment process, has undertaken Safer Recruitment training
  - Keep appropriate records of interviews to evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable
  - Appointments only to be confirmed subject to; DBS check (for both staff and volunteers, when the role is eligible), confirmation of ID, satisfactory references and confirmation of right to work in the UK.

## 3. Induction and Training

- All staff and volunteers to receive Safeguarding information during induction and how this may relate to their role (e.g. where to find Trusts Safeguarding information, who their Designated Safeguarding Lead is, who and how to contact them etc). A basic awareness training session is highly recommended for all staff and volunteers; but this is at Trusts discretion, due to the varying and irregular nature of different volunteering roles across the federation.
- All staff and volunteers recruited into roles where they will meet children or adults at risk through the nature of their role, to receive basic Safeguarding awareness training (online or face to face)
- Staff or volunteers in roles working directly with children or adults at risk to undertake more detailed training e.g. 'Introduction to Safeguarding' or 'Working with Adults at Risk' training with RSWT Strategic Lead, in-house training by the Trust, or the equivalent with their local Safeguarding Adults Board or Children's Partnership or other accredited providers
- Designated Safeguarding Leads to undertake Level 3 or DSL Training with their Local Authority, or a trusted provider such as NSPCC or NCVO.

#### **4. To have in place the following Policy, Procedures and Guidance**

- Safeguarding Children's Policy including local area contact details and arrangements
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy including local area contact details and arrangements
- Procedures guiding staff, volunteers and trustees on how to raise a concern about a child or adult at risk with their Safeguarding Lead, and where necessary how to share that information with local safeguarding teams
- Code of Conduct to set out the Trusts expectations of staff and volunteers
- How the Trust will keep children and young people safe online (either separate guidance or included within policy or procedure documents)
- Safer Recruitment Policy Statement or details within Safeguarding policies about how the Trust will ensure they are recruiting suitable people to work with children and adults at risk
- A system to record and safely store confidential Safeguarding concerns, referrals and details about cases
- How an allegation against a staff member, volunteer or trustee would be managed (either a stand-alone document or within Safeguarding procedures)
- Whistleblowing Procedure (either a stand-alone document or within Safeguarding procedures )
- A process for reporting both routinely, and by urgent exception, on Safeguarding issues to the Trust board and any relevant committee of the board.

There are templates and guides on the Safeguarding Wildnet page under Files if you wish to use them. Trusts must incorporate local arrangements and their local authorities contact details within their Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

#### **5. Commitment to Learning**

- Ensure that the Trust has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and they are a member of the Safeguarding Community of Practice, to receive regular updates

(and notify the RSWT strategic lead if/when that person changes) and ensure this is shared within the Trust

- Have a Lead Trustee for Safeguarding on the Board for oversight and to champion this important area
- Review Policy, Procedure and guidance annually and ensure that opportunities for learning are explored with every Safeguarding incident or failure to follow procedure, to provide assurance that Safeguarding arrangements for the Trust are both effective and robust.
- Notify other Trusts, using the confidential Safeguarding solution provided by RSWT (currently in development), if there are concerns about a particular volunteer regarding their conduct or suitability to work with children or adults at risk. This is to prevent these individuals applying for a role at a different Trust and opportunities to potentially safeguard children or adults at risk being lost.

## Management and auditing of the Framework

The following process outlines how as a federation we will ensure thorough implementation, support and transparency with Trust boards:

- All Trusts will have the support of the RSWT Strategic Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Community of Practice, in committing and working towards this framework. Templates and guidance documents are available via the Safeguarding Wildnet Group (under Files) and 1:1 support sessions with the Strategic Safeguarding lead are available to support Trusts.
- Trusts should seek to align Safeguarding arrangements within six months from the point of adoption of this Framework, or within six months of any future updates.
- After a period of six months (from the Framework being adopted by the federation), Trusts will be asked to take part in an informal audit with the Safeguarding Lead to discuss how the Framework has been implemented at their Trust. Further support will be offered to any Trusts who require it.
- In the future it is anticipated Trusts will be asked to provide a statement each year demonstrating how they are meeting the Framework, and five Trusts chosen at random will be asked to provide evidence to demonstrate this.
- Any further decisions or changes to the Framework or management of the Framework, will be made through collaboration and consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Trustee Lead Communities of Practice.

