

# Draft Guidelines for Local Groups on Involving Young People in Group Activities

All local groups are required to adhere to Clause B4 of the Partnership Agreement, which states:

A Friends of the Earth local group should ... ensure that all its activities are lawful and/or in line with Friends of the Earth's policies and guidelines. In particular local groups and individuals representing local groups engaging in supervised and unsupervised activities with young people should be aware of and comply with our Child Protection Policy. Download from [www.foe.co.uk/community/youth](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/youth) or telephone 020 7566 1676.

Friends of the Earth's Child Protection Policy specifically states "If you are visiting a school or a youth club and **working with young people** as a representative of Friends of the Earth you must have an appropriate security check (also known as disclosure) carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)."

These policies are in place because we cannot take risks where child protection is concerned and therefore must always adhere to best practice.

**We do acknowledge however that we have not yet extended our Child Protection Policy to talk specifically about situations whereby young people might wish to join a local group as an active member. Therefore, in the absence of this, we have drafted the following FAQs as good practice guidelines for groups to follow.**

## Can young people join our group?

Yes. There is no general legal restriction on volunteering by children for not-for-profit organisations.

## Should we seek parental consent?

Yes, we advise that parental consent should be sought when involving young volunteers. Parental responsibility continues until the age of 18, although the nature and extent of this responsibility is less clear between 16 and 18. However, it is clear that 14-16 year olds do definitely require parental permission to join a local group and that under-14s should be accompanied by their parents or an appropriate adult. Ideally, we'd recommend that you seek parental consent for 16-18 year olds also.

Both the young person and their parent or guardian should fully understand what being involved in the group means and what its activities entail. Provide clear information about the group and for each activity/action/event, including details on the tasks the young person might be asked to do. Make sure that they are aware of time commitments, where the activity will take place and how it will be supervised.

## Are we insured if young people are involved in our group activities?

Yes, provided that your activity is one those permitted by the Public Liability and Employer's Liability insurance policies. For details of these policies, please see [http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local\\_groups/resource/insurance.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/insurance.html). If your group wants to carry out any activity not specified on the "permitted activity" list, with or without young people, please contact our Activist Information Officer on 020 7566 1677 or via [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk) to explore whether cover can be extended.

## Is there anything else we should do?

There is also an enhanced duty of care with respect to Health & Safety towards young volunteers, reflecting their relative immaturity. This means that risk assessments cannot take responsible behaviour for granted, and are likely to require increased supervision, more explicit instructions and so on.

All organisations working with young people should have in place principles of good practice relating to the protection of the young people. Therefore, if you do have young people join your group, we'd advise you to make sure that everyone in the group understands the principles of the Child Protection Policy and the need for any special arrangements (e.g. seeking parental consent etc).

## Any further queries?

Please contact our Activist Information Officer on 020 7566 1677 or via [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk)