

# Friends of the Earth's Safeguarding Policy

## Guidelines for Local Groups

### These guidelines

These guidelines set out our responsibilities and commitments around working with children, young people and vulnerable adults which are laid out in Friends of the Earth's Safeguarding Policy. **It is essential that all local groups understand and follow these guidelines in order to be in line with the safeguarding policy.**

Definitions of all the main terms, including "abuse" and "children, young people and vulnerable adults" are in Appendix 2.

For any local group safeguarding concerns or queries, contact Neil Kingsnorth, Head of Activism at [neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk](mailto:neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk) or on 01925 264308.

### What is safeguarding and why does Friends of the Earth need a policy?

Safeguarding means taking steps to ensure the people we interact with are safe and secure. When we work with children, young people and vulnerable adults we must protect these groups of people from physical, verbal or psychological abuse.

We also have legal obligations - under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 - that must be addressed when we work with vulnerable people.

In all these cases we need to prevent harmful and abusive situations, and if we have concerns about possible abuse, to know how to report it and take action to safeguard the victim.

### What does having a safeguarding policy mean for our local group?

Local groups' activities sometimes involve working with vulnerable people. It's essential that you follow these guidelines and have read them thoroughly so you understand what's involved and can apply the Safeguarding Policy with confidence. Doing so will protect you and Friends of the Earth as well as vulnerable people.

### What should we do if we suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult is the subject of abuse?

***You need to report any cases or suspected cases of abuse immediately.***

If at any point you suspect that abuse is or may be happening, it's critical that you act. There are two things you should do:

1. Act to stop the abuse and reassure those affected
2. Act to report the abuse

The diagram and text below set out what to do.

### **1. Stopping it and reassuring**

If you are in contact with the victim of the abuse, you should reassure and explain that what has happened is not acceptable, and it is against our rules. Explain that this will need to be reported, in confidence. You should of course take into account the wishes of the victim in the way you report the concern, but the concern must still be reported.

Do not be tempted to investigate the matter yourself - your responsibility is to report your concerns before any investigation takes place.

You should also take any action to reduce the risk of the abuse recurring or continuing.

If in any doubt as to what to do, there will be people you can speak to, see below in 'reporting the abuse'.

### **2. Reporting the abuse**

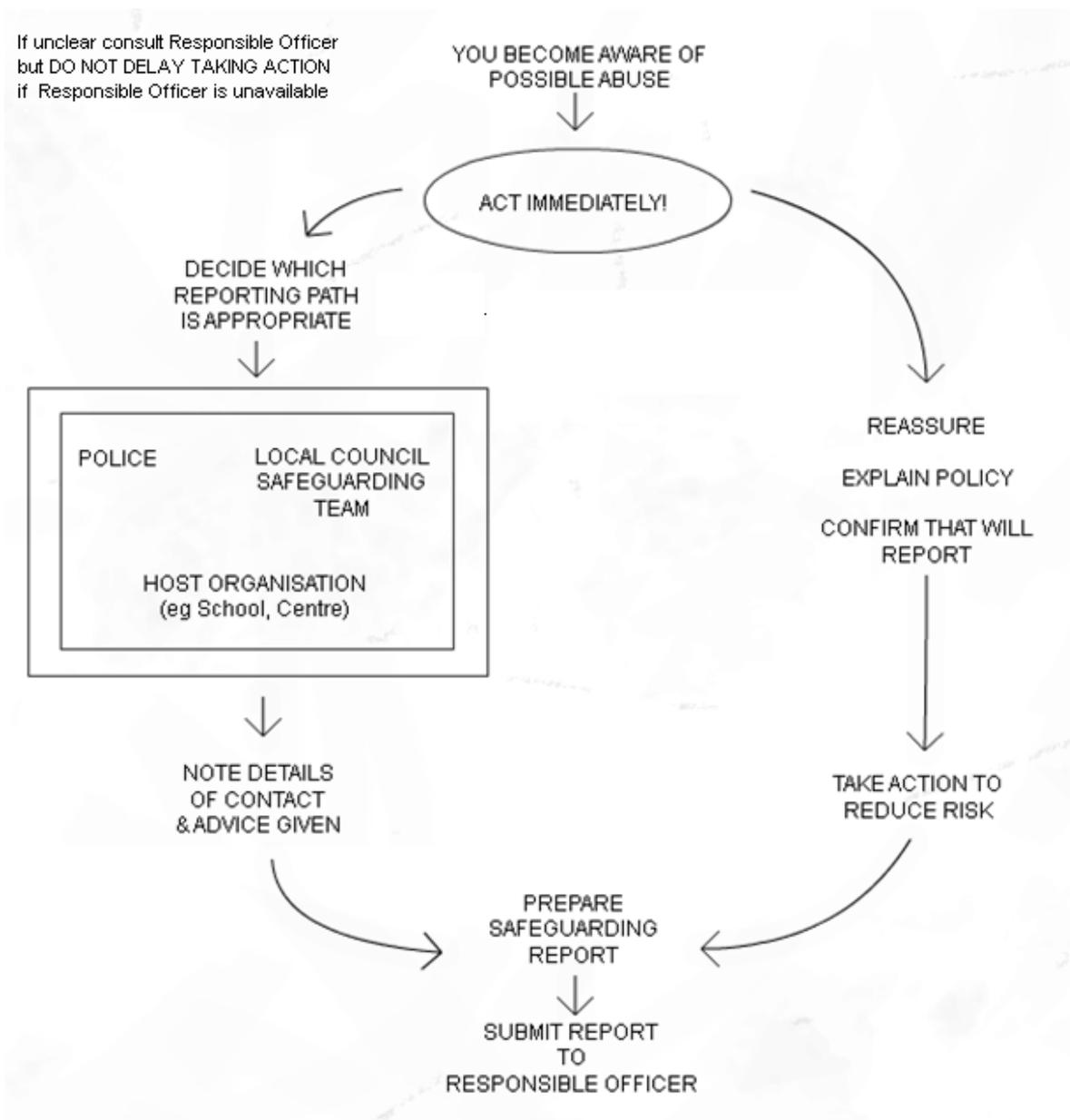
If the incident takes place on the premises of a host organisation (such as a School or Community Centre), you may report the incident to the relevant Senior Manager or person responsible for safeguarding issues. Otherwise, contact either the Local Council Safeguarding Team or the Police. Contact details for the local authority safeguarding team are available [via your local Council](#). Contact details for local Police [are available here](#).

Make a note of the organisation and contact details of the person you speak to.

As soon as possible after making contact with the safeguarding authority, you should prepare a report setting out the details of what you have witnessed and the details of how you reported the incident. Include details of any actions you know have been taken to reduce the risk of further harm. You can use the form in Appendix 1 below.

You should then forward the report to Neil Kingsnorth, Friends of the Earth's Head of Activism who will notify Friends of the Earth's Responsible Officer - the single point of contact with statutory authorities in relation to any safeguarding concerns. Neil Kingsnorth can be emailed at [neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk](mailto:neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk) and you can telephone him on 01925 264308. If leaving a message please include all of your contact details.

You will receive a response with details of what the next steps are and how we'll work with you on them. Friends of the Earth's Activism Development team will be on hand to support you through any follow up steps.



## Do you need a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check when working with vulnerable people?

You need to have a CRB check if you're involved frequently, intensively or overnight with an organisation which works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. You don't need a CRB check for one off or infrequent work.

The places where frequent or intensive involvement might require a CRB check are:

- schools
- childcare premises including nurseries
- residential homes for children
- children's hospitals

- children’s detention centres
- adult care homes or residential care or nursing homes

If you think you might need a CRB check, please contact Neil Kingsnorth, Head of Activism at [neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk](mailto:neil.kingsnorth@foe.co.uk).

## A set of basic rules for working with vulnerable people

Here are some rules to make sure you’re acting in line with our policy:

1. You must never be alone with a vulnerable person (child, young person or vulnerable adult) at any time. If it is necessary to work directly with just one vulnerable person make sure you are with at least one responsible adult.
2. Don’t engage in, and don’t allow others to engage in, inappropriate behaviour or contact (this includes physical, verbal, sexual, including horseplay), or deliberately put yourself or others in compromising situations.
3. Photographs: ensure you follow our written policy on the use of images of children and young people on websites and in other Friends of the Earth publications. Most importantly, **you need to get written permission from parents or guardians of children before you take any pictures**, explaining clearly what the pictures will be used for and where they will be used. You can read the full policy at: [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/organisational\\_policy/policy\\_statement\\_on\\_the\\_us.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/organisational_policy/policy_statement_on_the_us.pdf).

## Young people joining your group:

It’s fine for young people – age 14-18 to join your group, as long as you obtain parental permission before granting them membership, or before they join you on campaigning activities. There are detailed guidelines on young people joining local groups at [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/guides/draft\\_guidelines\\_for\\_local.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/guides/draft_guidelines_for_local.pdf).

## Letting the public know we have a policy:

At all events and activities that involve children, young people and vulnerable adults we have an obligation to let them know what they can do if they feel threatened or uncomfortable. Group members are asked to read the following statement out at such activities:

**“We want everyone to feel safe and secure. If at any point you feel anyone does anything you find upsetting, please mention this to an adult you trust.”**

## Joining the Youth and Education Network

If you will be working with children or young people on behalf of Friends of the Earth when their parents are not present (e.g. in a school or at a youth club), you need to join the Youth and Education Network - [www.foeyouthandeducation.co.uk/join](http://www.foeyouthandeducation.co.uk/join). This is not necessary for children’s activities on stalls.

# Appendix 1

## Safeguarding Reporting Form

Name of individual that safeguarding concern is about

.....

D.O.B/ age (if known) .....

Contact details (if known) .....

.....

.....

Describe your concern:

What action has been taken to address the risk of further harm:

REPORTING DETAILS - Who was this reported to? HOST ORGANISATION / LOCAL COUNCIL / POLICE

Name:

Position:

Contact details:

Date and time reported:

What advice were you given?

Name of person completing the form: .....

Contact details:

Forward the completed form to The Responsible Person: Carol Hughes, Head of Human Resources. Contact: email [carol.hughes@foe.co.uk](mailto:carol.hughes@foe.co.uk)

# Appendix 2

## Definitions

**Children and young people** are legally defined as anyone under the age of 18 (16 in Scotland).

For children and young people, safeguarding is “ the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.” (Source: [Working together to safeguard children, 2006](#))

**Vulnerable adults** are individuals over 18 (16 in Scotland) who: “may be in need of services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness: and who may not be able to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.” (Source: “[Who Decides](#)”, Lord Chancellor’s Department - 1997) .

Health and social care service users are therefore the main group of people who benefit from such protections, but this can also apply to others people such as homeless service users or victims of domestic violence.

**Safeguarding** is the process of protecting children, young people and adults from abuse. The government’s report on protecting vulnerable adults “[No Secrets](#)” (2006) describes different types of abuse:

**Physical abuse:** where someone uses force to cause pain, injury or impairment - this includes hitting, handling or ill-treating someone.

**Psychological or emotional abuse:** – behaviour which has harmful effect on the person’s psychological health or any form of mental cruelty that causes distress. This includes threats of harm, humiliation, intimidation, coercion and harassment as well as the denial of basic human and civil rights such as self-expression, privacy and dignity.

**Sexual abuse:** where an individual is coerced or pressurised into sexual activity against their will, or by means of a controlling relationship which takes advantage of vulnerability.

**Financial or material abuse:** where someone takes advantage of the individual’s trust to steal, defraud or misappropriate money or property by exploiting the person’s vulnerability.

**Neglect and acts of omission,** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. It can also include failing to take measures to keep a person safe.

**Discrimination:** discriminatory abuse, including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

(Source: [“No Secrets” 2006](#))

**Abusive behaviour is often a combination of the types set out above. Any such behaviour towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult must be reported as a safeguarding issue.**

## Appendix 3

To view the full formal Friends of the Earth policy on safeguarding that applies to all friends of the Earth activities and which this guidance relates to, email [localgroups@foe.co.uk](mailto:localgroups@foe.co.uk).

### **Further reading and resources**

NSPCC Inform – Child protection resources

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/informhub\\_wda49931.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/informhub_wda49931.html)

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) – resources on safeguarding adults

<http://www.scie.org.uk/adults/safeguarding/index.asp>

Churches Agency for Safeguarding

[www.churchsafe.org.uk/](http://www.churchsafe.org.uk/)

## Appendix 4 - Policy statement

Friends of the Earth are committed to protecting children and young people and vulnerable adults from harm or abuse. We recognise the legal responsibilities and the duty of care that we have towards children, young people and vulnerable adults in particular. We aim to be a respected, trusted organisation where everyone involved in our work feels safe to participate in any of our activities.

Any abusive behaviour towards children and young people or vulnerable adults is unacceptable and inconsistent with being employed or involved with Friends of the Earth and it will be addressed as a potential disciplinary issue for employees, a breach of the Volunteer Charter or a breach of the Local Groups partnership agreement. Such behaviour may also be reported as a criminal offence.