



Fabian Society safeguarding policy and procedure

Policy statement

The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount and all Fabian Society members, volunteers, elected officers and employees have a duty to protect children and adults at risk and promote their welfare. The Fabian Society believes that it is always unacceptable for anyone to experience abuse of any kind, including through social media or other online activity. Children and adults at risk have a legal right to protection from all forms of abuse.

The Fabian Society is committed to safeguarding practices and procedures which protect children and adults at risk and to providing a welcoming and safe environment in which they can engage with our activities. The society will take all safeguarding concerns seriously and will value, listen to and respect children and adults at risk, encouraging them to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in their best interest.

Scope

The policy applies to all members, volunteers, elected officers and staff – and also to people who take part in activities organised by the society.

Our commitment to safeguarding

We will seek to:

- Protect children and adults at risk from abuse whilst they participate in any activity organised by the society
- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk
- Create a culture in the society where children, adults at risk, carers, and others who may have a concern are encouraged to report their concerns or the abuse that has happened to them or others
- Ensure that all staff, members, volunteers and elected officers clearly understand their safeguarding duties and responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk and ensure that they are provided with the knowledge and support to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults at risk
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in place
- Make sure the procedures are widely promoted. Failure to comply with safeguarding policies and procedures will be addressed without delay using this policy and the society's complaints procedure
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and provide support to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- Work with all partner organisations (including the Labour party and statutory agencies) with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for those who we are aiming to protect from abuse

- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Prevent the employment, deployment or election of unsuitable individuals through effective recruitment, selection and vetting and complaints procedures
- Ensure there is a safeguarding governance structure in place with assigned roles and responsibilities including a strategic lead for safeguarding within the management team and executive committee to ensure that safeguarding runs as a thread throughout all our activities

Definitions and terminology

Child: Anyone under the age of 18

Adult at risk: Someone aged 18 or over who: (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it. People may move in and out of this category as circumstances change.

Abuse: Maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult at risk by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be perpetrated by an adult towards an adult at risk, an adult towards a child, a child towards another child or a child towards an adult at risk.

Safeguarding and promoting welfare: Protecting children and adults at risk from maltreatment, preventing harm to their development, ensuring they grow up or live with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes.

Harm: The ill-treatment or impairment of the health or development of an individual, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

Safeguarding concern: When there is information that a child or an adult at risk has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, by their own or someone else's behaviour.

Safeguarding allegation: Where a person who is associated with the Fabian Society has: (a) behaved in a way that has harmed a child or an adult at risk, may have harmed a child or an adult at risk, or behaved in a way that might lead to a child or an adult at risk being harmed; (b) possibly committed or is planning to commit a criminal offence against a child or an adult at risk or related to a child or an adult at risk, or; (c) behaved towards a child or an adult at risk in a way that indicates they are, or would be, unsuitable to work with children or adults at risk.

Poor practice: Sometimes, concerns may relate to poor practice, where an adult's or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing distress to a child or young person. In the application of this policy, poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes the principles of this policy or the society's code of conduct with respect to safeguarding. Where poor practice is serious or repeated this could also constitute abuse and should be reported immediately.

Aim of policy

1. To detail how staff, members, volunteers and elected officers should respond if:

- They suspect that a child or adult at risk is suffering abuse;
 - A child or adults at risk makes a disclosure or reports that they, or someone else, has been abused;
 - The behaviour of an adult or child towards a child or adult at risk gives them cause for concern;
 - They discover or are exposed to child sexual abuse images online or via electronic devices;
 - They identify a breach of the society's code of conduct with respect to safeguarding
2. To detail the action that will be taken by the society when a safeguarding concern or allegation is reported or child sexual abuse images are found or reported.

The code of conduct

The safeguarding section of the society's code of conduct outlines the behaviours required of staff, members, volunteers and elected officers, and of visitors and other non-members who engage with children and adults at risk through the society's activities. Following the code of conduct helps to protect children and adults at risk from abuse and/or inappropriate behaviour.

Any breach of the code of conduct should be reported to a named *safeguarding lead*. Staff, members, volunteers or elected officers who are found to have breached this code of conduct may be subject to the society's disciplinary procedures. Serious breaches of the code of conduct may also result in a referral being made to the police or a local authority if it is thought the breach amounts to a risk of harm to a child and/or constitutes a crime (ie a safeguarding allegation). Representatives of other organisation who are thought to have breached the code while working with or alongside the society will be reported to the appropriate safeguarding officer within that organisation.

Safeguarding procedure

Staff members, volunteers, members and elected officers can keep children or adults at risk safe from harm by following the four simple safeguarding principles of:

Recognise that a child or adult at risk is being harmed or at risk of being harmed

Respond appropriately to what you are being told or what you see

- Abuse or harm (either your concerns or disclosures made to you)
- Behaviour that gives cause for concern
- Electronic images

Report concerns you have to a named *safeguarding lead*

- Report immediately or as soon as you can
- If there is immediate risk of harm or medical attention is needed – dial 999

Record your concerns correctly

- Make an accurate written record (facts not opinion)

It is not the responsibility of a member of staff, volunteer, party member or elected officer to decide if abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting them.

Members of the public, the police service and/or local authority services can report safeguarding concerns to the society (via the *designated safeguarding officer*). Reports made to another individual or section within the society must be referred to the officer.

Confidentiality must not be promised to a child or adult at risk. Sharing information with a named *safeguarding lead* is usually necessary to protect the person's wellbeing. Information should not be shared with others who don't need to know.

A *safeguarding lead* must be contacted before information is shared with an external organisation except in cases where there is a risk of immediate or serious harm and an emergency referral is necessary. The lead will manage the process of sharing information with the police, local authority services and/or any third-party organisation.

Executive committee member for safeguarding

A member of the of the executive committee will be appointed as *lead EC member for safeguarding*. Their role is to ensure these policy and procedures are adhered to and kept under review; and to monitor the society's overall performance on safeguarding. They do not have a role in individual cases (with the exception of cases involving senior employees/EC members).

Safeguarding lead

Named *safeguarding leads* will be appointed who are visible and available to members and staff (and especially to children of adults at risk). At least one member of the Young Fabians executive must be a named safeguarding lead. Leads are responsible for:

- Promoting the society's safeguarding policy, procedures and code of practice
- Acting as a named point of contact for staff, volunteers, members and elected officers to go to for safeguarding advice or if they have a safeguarding concern;
- Escalating safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding officer

When a *safeguarding lead* receives a safeguarding concern from a member of staff, volunteer, member or elected representative of the party they will record the concern and refer it to the *designated safeguarding officer* at the earliest opportunity. Where there is an immediate risk of harm or where the information contained in the concern requires immediate action the safeguarding lead must contact the police and/or local authority children services before contacting the general secretary.

Safeguarding leads are not *designated safeguarding officers* for the society and their role is to be a conduit for concerns to be reported to the designated safeguarding officer. Safeguarding leads do not hold responsibility for, or manage, safeguarding investigations.

Designated safeguarding officer

The *designated safeguarding officer* will manage any investigation and respond to any safeguarding concern. They will ensure that appropriate referrals are made to statutory agencies and that effective internal action is taken to keep people safe.

When a safeguarding concern has been reported the officer will:

- Assess the information received; and determine what further information may be required
- Identify any risks to individuals contained within the information provided; decide if immediate action is needed to remove, reduce or control the risks identified; take such action if it is required
- Decide whether the information in the safeguarding concern constitutes a safeguarding allegation against a member of staff, volunteer, member or elected officer
- Decide whether a referral to the police and/or a local authority is required
- Decide whether to share information with the Labour party (taking account of privacy laws which allow information sharing in the context of safeguarding)
- Decide whether other further action is needed – including monitoring the situation or triggering a disciplinary investigation
- Record all decisions made with a rationale

Investigation of safeguarding allegations

If after an initial assessment the designated safeguarding officer does not consider the matter constitutes a safeguarding allegation then they must decide if an investigation is required to determine if the behaviour/incident was related to poor practice or misconduct that breaches the society's code of conduct, using the society's complaints procedure. All decisions and the reasons for them must be recorded.

If the *designated safeguarding officer* confirms the information provided constitutes a safeguarding allegation, an initial plan will be determined, which includes:

- The actions to be taken to address any immediate safety of any relevant child or adult at risk involved, for example those that are the subject of the safeguarding allegation or other children or adults at risk that the individual has contact with through work or family
- The criteria for referral to children's social care, adult social care and/or the police
- What information, if any, to share with the individual who is the subject of the safeguarding allegation, and when to do so
- Whether any immediate decision must be taken about suspension of the individual subject to the allegation, pending further enquiries and/or investigation
- What further information may be required for clarification
- Identifying who else is aware of the safeguarding allegation and who has been spoken to
- Consideration of support arrangements for the child, adult at risk and family members concerned
- Arrangements for support for the person who is the subject of the safeguarding allegation and the person who raised the allegation

Any referrals to statutory services must be made by the officer by the next working day, or immediately in the case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the officer to ensure the authority responds, to follow the procedures of the agencies and to ensure that comprehensive records are maintained. If an external investigation is required the subject of the allegation should only be informed that an allegation has been made in coordination with the statutory agencies.

All statutory investigations are to be undertaken before any internal disciplinary procedures are progressed (with the exception of decisions to suspend). An internal investigation of a safeguarding

allegation will only be appropriate in exceptional cases (eg where statutory agencies are not willing or able to investigate but the officer still believes there is a case to answer).

An external or internal investigation will result in conclusions regarding the allegation, and may also determine required actions and lessons learned. As well as potential actions for external agencies, and for the society as an organisation, the society will determine whether to take further action against any individuals, under its complaints procedure (or any other policy – eg employment policies).

Following the investigation, the designated safeguarding officer will determine who needs feedback following the conclusion and the nature of that feedback in accordance with the principles of data protection and confidentiality. This might include feedback to the child, adult at risk, his/her parents/carers, and/or the person who raised the concern initially, and relevant officers/managers. The officer must provide in writing feedback to the person who has been subject to the investigation, clarifying the outcome and any implications for them.

If a safeguarding concern or allegation is raised that involves the *designated safeguarding officer*, the general secretary or a senior elected officer, it is the responsibility of the chair, treasurer, lead executive committee member for safeguarding, and the general secretary to agree how to proceed (excluding any them who is subject of the allegation or concern). In other respects this procedure will be followed in the normal way.

Suspension of membership, position of responsibility or employment

In some cases, the Fabian Society will decide to suspend an employee, member, volunteer or elected officer who is the subject of the allegation. The act of suspension does not indicate a person's guilt, it is a neutral act. An individual must not be suspended automatically when there has been an allegation or without careful thought. Suspension should be considered in any case where:

- There is reason to suspect a child or adult at risk is at risk of significant and the allegation warrants investigation by the police
- The allegation is so serious that if substantiated might be grounds for expulsion or dismissal
- There are concerns that the person about whom the allegations are made may put pressure on or interfere with potential witnesses
- The person by carrying out their normal activities or responsibilities may pose a risk to others

The power to suspend membership, position of responsibility or employment because shall be made by the general secretary or executive committee officers, taking into account the recommendation of the *designated safeguarding officer* and the views of relevant senior managers or elected officers and outside agencies. The *designated safeguarding officer* will be responsible for deciding how and when to feedback to the person who made or received the allegation, and what information to give to relevant others who may know the accused individual concerned.