

Date of policy	18/03/2026
Date to be reviewed	17/03/2027
Chairperson 's signature	<i>David Hutchinson</i>

This policy is to be read in conjunction with :

Health and Safety Policy
Child Protection Policy
Adults at Risk Policy

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Purpose.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and Adults at Risk from the risk of abuse or neglect.

1.2 Mickleton Village Hall Association (MVHA), which incorporates our trustees, committee members and our volunteers has a duty of care and is committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises including children, young people and adults at risk involved as visitors and/or as participants in all activities and events. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees, volunteers, and staff.

1.3 Policy principles.

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect children, young people and adults at risk, from abuse or neglect. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. People who are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age, or illness.

MVHA has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

We recognise that under the Care Act 2014, we have a duty for the care and protection of adults at risk of abuse. We also recognise our responsibilities for the safety and care of children and young people, under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

We are committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

We are aware of the work of Durham Council local authority safeguarding Board/Partnership and other support organisations on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of children, young people and adults at risk. This policy is about preventing abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

We are committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person or adults at risk is paramount.

- All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

1.4 This policy is made available to all adults who book the hall for any activities, covering expectations on those adults, including any trustee, committee and/ or volunteer members who run events or activities on behalf of the Hall. (see our Hall Hire Conditions)

1.5 In most cases children will be accompanied by an adult (a parent or carer), who will take responsibility for them. Young People, (defined as school age or above for the purposes of this policy), and adults at risk may attend activities independently and will need additional protection accordingly.

1.6 This policy includes child and adult protection procedures, recruitment and selection of a Safeguarding Lead officer (voluntary and unpaid post), Code of Behaviour, Whistle Blowing and monitoring.

1.7 In addition to our own policies and procedures the Committee ensure that they are fully conversant with and following the Government and Durham County Council current expectations and recommendations for safeguarding.

1.8 **Safeguarding Lead Person.**

At least one committee member will be named for Child Protection and safeguarding, (currently the safeguarding lead person is **Tessa Evans**, contact 07407 283296, email tfenoughty@icloud.com). The lead person is the main point of contact for hirers or anyone regarding matters related to safeguarding at the hall. The Committee has a responsibility for ensuring that safeguards are fully in place and that policies and procedures are current and fit for purpose. The second named safeguarding person is David Hutchinson, Chairperson

1.9 For the purpose of this policy the relevant authority will be informed through Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership **First Contact phone line 03000 267 979** or email firstcontact@durham.gov.uk for concerns regarding Children and Young People. For Adults contact Durham Safeguarding Adult Partnership and call Social Care Direct 24 hours a day on 03000 267 979 or for text messaging on 0753 745 3102. A trained officer will listen carefully to any concerns, give advice, and accept a safeguarding adults report if necessary, anonymously, if necessary.

1.10 Safeguarding policies are subject to annual review and the procedures are updated as and when necessary, (i.e. when regulations or recommendations change or in the light of any case reviews).

2. Procedures for Safeguarding

2.1 Any event/activity organised and run by MVHA members and/or volunteers where unsupervised children, young people or adults at risk are present will have at least one

committee member, trustee or volunteer with appropriate experience, training and at minimum, a basic DBS check, in attendance throughout and overseeing the activity to ensure all safeguarding procedures are adhered to. They will be recognizable by a distinctive coloured lanyard.

2.2 Hiring Agreements

Groups and individuals hiring the hall are responsible for their own safeguarding arrangements. Some may have their own governing bodies with specific requirements and expectations for safeguarding, e.g., OFSTED, The Scout Association, Age UK etc. Other local groups and individual hirers may not have their own policies, in which case they must be made aware of the hall's policies and procedures and understand that by hiring the hall they are agreeing to adhere to the hall's safeguarding principles and procedures.

2.3 When the hall is hired out by a third party, a written hiring agreement is required so that both the management committee and the hirer know their rights and responsibilities. This hiring agreement ensures that both parties fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the hiring, establishing a clear contract between two parties which could be used as evidence should legal action become necessary. It is a key document which passes responsibility for the hall to the group or individual for the period of hire. This includes compliance with all the hall's principles and procedures for safeguarding. Hirers will be required to provide evidence of that compliance, if required and on request. The evidence could be a paper copy of a policy or the group may be able to share a link to their website for an online copy.

2.4 Groups which serve the under 3, 3 - 5 and 5 - 11 age groups are required to follow the Ofsted guidelines for levels of supervision.

2.5 Actioning concerns. If anyone has concerns about the behaviour or actions of anyone associated with the hall they should immediately inform the named safeguarding person, **Tessa Evans** or hall committee chairperson, **David Hutchinson**. Failure to share information could result in a ban from the hall. Anyone acting in an unsafe or unwise manner will be subject to referral to the relevant authorities, (see 1.9), and a similar ban according to a decision made by at least 3 Committee Members.

2.6 If a disclosure is made to a hall user it will be recorded. Leading questions should not be asked but a clear factual record made of what has been disclosed. If a concern is noticed, (such as evidence of physical abuse, severe neglect or distress), this should be reported in the same way as for disclosures. All referrers should follow the summary guidance:

- Record the time and date
- Write down exactly what you are told, at the time, even if it is on a scrap of paper. Do not rewrite your notes, keep original notes.
- Do not promise to keep what you're told a secret
- Tell the child or young person what you will do next
- Do not make promises you cannot keep

2.6 All disclosures should be immediately reported to the named safeguarding person for the relevant group who will in turn inform relevant authorities, (see 1.9). Where appropriate,

responsible adults (i.e. parents, guardians, and carers), will be informed unless such a disclosure would cause significant distress or threat to the individual making it. This decision will be made by the relevant safeguarding named person.

2.7 Confidentiality cannot be promised in any case where an individual may be in danger of any form of abuse. Abuse can include physical, sexual, emotional or neglect. Event organisers and leaders and volunteers are expected to record and report any concerns. Referral is made to the relevant authorities, with the adults responsible for the individual who has made a disclosure being notified if appropriate.

2.8 Once the matter has been referred to the named person they will take the necessary action. It is not usually appropriate to feed back to the individual making the disclosure. The person who made the disclosure should check that the information has been passed on.

2.9. Any individual making a referral will be protected by the Committee under whistle blowing procedures. Similarly, if the individual making the referral feels that insufficient action/follow up has taken place they should inform the Committee without fear of repercussions.

3. Recruitment and Selection of Safeguarding Volunteers

3.1 The Village Hall Committee is committed to carrying out relevant DBS checks for key role holders such as Chairperson, deputy Chair, Safeguarding Lead and any volunteer who has unsupervised access to Children, Young People and/or Adults at Risk. Suitable training will be offered and /or arranged for volunteers and interested individuals, by the Village Hall safeguarding officer, and partnership organisations such as Durham Community Action.

3.2 Currently the Hall does not employ staff. Volunteers who clean the hall do not have contact with the groups or individuals using the hall and consequently do not need DBS checks. If conditions change for these or any future workers each post will be assessed, and any checks carried out accordingly.

3.3 Volunteers are assessed for level of activity, and DBS checked if appropriate. Any unchecked person would be supervised by a suitably checked and trained person if assisting with activities involving unaccompanied Children, Young People and/or Adults at Risk.

3.4 A DBS Risk Register is held by the Safeguarding Lead which records the DBS status of all MVHA members and volunteers. It is a confidential document which is updated at least annually and/or when checks are completed.

4. Code of Behaviour for Volunteers

4.1 *Safeguarding of all hall users is everyone's responsibility.*

4.2 All staff and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with the hall's Safeguarding policy and procedures.

4.3 Any disclosures or concerns about the behaviour of anyone connected to the hall should be reported immediately to the named safeguarding lead or the Chairperson.

4.4 All hall users are expected to be familiar with expectations of behaviour when working with Children, Young People and Adults at Risk including:

- Respecting privacy and preserving dignity at all times.
- Having sufficient personnel so that there are no occasions where a volunteer is in an isolated situation with a child, young person or vulnerable adult other than in a public area.
- Fully understanding the expectations of working in a voluntary capacity with that particular age group
- Avoiding physical contact other than that necessary for the care of individuals and being aware of what is acceptable for them. Knowing that all forms of verbal abuse, aggression or manipulative behaviour are totally unacceptable, refraining from such acts and reporting any infringements.

5. Whistle Blowing Policy

5.1 Any individual making a referral will be protected by the Committee under whistle blowing procedures. Similarly, if the individual making the referral feels that insufficient action/follow up has taken place they should inform the Safeguarding Lead, or if the concerns relates to the Safeguarding Lead, they should be able to share their concerns with any Committee member, without fear of repercussion.

5.2 **Procedures for Whistle Blowing** include:

Protecting those who make referrals under the whistle blowing procedures so that there is a culture of informing without reprisal or negative consequence.

As far as possible protecting the anonymity of the whistle blower, (except where so doing could endanger another individual).

Thoroughly investigating any reported incidents regardless of how unlikely they seem.

Keeping accurate records so that any patterns in behaviour can be monitored.

6. Monitoring

6.1 All committee members, trustees, volunteers and Hall users are responsible for monitoring all behaviour within the hall, reporting and following up any concerns.

6.2 The Safeguarding Lead is the named individual for Child and Adults at Risk Protection and has overall responsibility for receiving referrals and reporting any incidents or concerns to the relevant authorities. They will scrutinise records, monitoring incidents and identifying any patterns which need following up, at least biannually and report their findings.

6.3 The Committee will receive reports of any referrals but not be given any details which break individual confidentiality or potentially interfere with an investigation by the authorities.

6.4 The named safeguarding lead and the Chairman will seek feedback from the relevant authorities in order to review and improve practice.

6.5 Any incidents will be analysed at a case review which will identify any improvements to procedures which are needed to prevent reoccurrence.

6.6 Policies and procedures will be subject to annual review or be updated when circumstance or regulations change.

6.7 The committee is aware of the recommendations regarding PREVENT and will work with the authorities should we become aware of a potential situation developing. Training and raising awareness within our community forms part of the role of the committee.

- END -

Thanks to Community Action Suffolk for sharing a model template which was used in the creation of our policy and advise and guidance from Durham Community Action and ACRE.

Appendix A

Duties and responsibilities of Safeguarding Lead Officer

1. Make sure that all issues concerning the safety and welfare of children, young people and Adults at Risk are properly dealt with through policies, procedures and administrative systems.
2. Make sure that all volunteers, children/young people, Adults at Risk, parents/carers and the management committee are made aware of the procedures and what they should do if they have concerns about a child or adult at risk.
3. Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child or adult at risk.
4. Take the lead on dealing with information that may constitute a child protection or an adult safeguarding concern. This includes assessing and clarifying the information, and taking decisions where necessary in consultation with the Chair of the committee and statutory child protection and adult safeguarding agencies.
5. Consult with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection and adult safeguarding agencies, such as the local authority children's social care department, the adult social care
6. Consult with the NSPCC Helpline and/or other local contacts when such support is needed.
7. Report regularly to the management committee.
8. Be familiar with and work within local inter-agency child protection and adult safeguarding procedures developed by the local safeguarding children board and local safeguarding adult board.
9. Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse, and adult safeguarding and abuse, and keep up-to-date with new developments in this area.
10. Attend training in issues relevant to child protection and adult safeguarding from time to time and share knowledge from that training with other volunteers and management committee members.

