

Policies for voluntary youth organisations

A NCVYS Fact Sheet – August 2014

Introduction

This fact sheet signposts you to information, tools and services that can help you to establish, implement or review policies that are appropriate to the running of a voluntary and community youth organisation.

What policies should I have in place?

Ideally, voluntary and community youth organisations should have the following policies in place.

- **Safeguarding policy**

To demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the overall safety of all the children and young people in its care, clearly showing that child protection procedures are in place.

- **Code of conduct for staff, volunteers and for children and young people**

This is an agreed statement of appropriate behaviour that reflect the safeguarding policies i.e. Codes of Conduct for staff and volunteers, and for children and young people. Guidance also needs to be in place for disciplinary and grievance procedures for all paid staff and volunteers to comply with the ACAS Code of Practice.

- **Confidentiality, sharing information, Whistleblowing and complaints policies**

It is important to have clear policies in this area, so that young people, parents/carers, paid staff and volunteers are aware of how to act if they are giving, or have been given, confidential information. Also to allow members and users of the organisation to complain or report any aspects of the organisation or an individual.

- **Equalities (Equal Opportunities) and diversity policy**

This policy and procedures prevents discriminatory practice and upholds the right of children and young people, as well as staff and volunteers, to be treated fairly.

- **Anti-bullying policy**

Aims to minimise the risk of bullying taking place and to put a stop to it when it occurs, with appropriate interventions.

- **Youth participation policy**

This policy ensures that young people are empowered within the process of safeguarding and have an active say in decision making related to their safety.

- **Health, safety and welfare policy**

This policy needs to be in line with current legislation, clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of the organisation and individual, with clear procedures for risk assessing both the environment and the welfare of the individual.

- **Recruitment and selection policy**

This policy needs to be in line with current guidance and employment legislation. It must cover recruitment of paid staff, volunteers, ex-offenders and where appropriate, young people under the age of 18 years.

- **Reporting concerns, suspicions and allegations policy**

A policy or procedure that ensures that your organisation has clear written procedures for informing paid staff, volunteers and young people what to do if they receive information that causes them concern, or a colleague/workers' behaviour is causing concern.

Ensuring policies are effective

For policies and procedures to work effectively, they need to be communicated and fully understood by all paid staff and volunteers, all members/users of the organisation, parents/carers, and external contractors. Checks then need to be in place to ensure the policies have been embedded within the organisation.

The policies should be visible and available for all to see and use. Ensure they are flexible both to the core activities and focus of the organisation, as well as ad hoc activities.

Wherever possible, the views of children and young people using your service should be sought, and included in the creation and implementation of policies and procedures.

It is important to make sure that the language you use within these policies is age appropriate to your users.

Need help or further information?

Keeping It Safe Guidance and Implementation Tool

Keeping It Safe is produced by NCVYS and is an essential tool helping children and young people's voluntary and community organisations work through the process of safeguarding. The guidance and implementation tool also provides you with **guidance on all the policies you need to put in place (not just those related to safeguarding), referred to earlier**. Of particular interest, are the **template policies** and procedures. The guidance contained within Keeping It Safe and the templates are there to help you develop your own policies and procedures. Policies need to be tailored to your organisation, but the templates are helpful examples. The guidance and implementation tool provides information of who to contact for further information e.g. for Equalities and Diversity, contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Price: £35 members, £50 non-members

To order and further information: www.ncvys.org.uk/keeping-it-safe

To mention also that NCVYS offers a **national quality assurance mark for safeguarding called Sound Systems**. The accreditation process is based on organisations being able to evidence their commitment against six core standards and helps them to develop and use safeguarding policies and procedures when working with young people.

Further information: www.ncvys.org.uk/sound-systems

NCVYS Affiliate Service

NCVYS can provide access to a bank of professionally qualified and experienced sector **specialists who can help you write and review policies and procedures**. Infrastructure members may use the Big Assist funding to buy-in this service. Sector specialists can be brought in to your organisation as you need them, or over a longer period of time via a **retainer package**. We will be happy to provide you with a quote for this work.

Further information: www.ncvys.org.uk/ncvys-affiliates

Queries

If you have any questions about the above services, then please contact Isabelle King, Innovation and Sustainability Manager on 07939 289492 or email isabelle@ncvys.org.uk. If you have any other queries, please email mail@ncvys.org.uk.

This information sheet has been created by Nichola Brown, Membership Services Manager, using information contained within the NCVYS Keeping It Safe toolkit.