



INTERNATIONAL 'SAFEGUARDING' VULNERABLE PEOPLE' TIPS



SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The RNLI believes it is always unacceptable for a young person or vulnerable adult to experience any type of abuse. All RNLI international partners must make a commitment to safeguard the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults by ensuring:

- the welfare of the young person and vulnerable adult is paramount
- all young people and vulnerable adults – regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious or other beliefs and sexual orientation or identity – have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse
- working in partnership with young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is key in promoting young people's welfare
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- they are aware of safeguarding practices.

RNLI international partners should refer to country-specific legislation relating to safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults, although the following principles will apply.

- **A young person is, as defined by The Children Act 1989 (UK Legislation):** 'a person under the age of 18 years.'
- **A vulnerable adult is:** 'a person who is in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness' and 'is or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. Note that disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is vulnerable.'

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Use your local reporting procedure to ensure any incidents are reported promptly and managed appropriately. Please contact your manager to check your local reporting procedure.

You have a local safeguarding coordinator who is responsible for:

- staying informed about all suspected abuse cases and ensuring they are appropriately dealt with
- ensuring appropriate training, information and advice is provided on safeguarding, and that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are followed and adhered to
- acting as the liaison point with the RNLI International Management Team and RNLI Media Team, as appropriate, to alert them to any impending media interest
- maintaining safeguarding records and updates
- offering advice and guidance
- informing the RNLI of any incident, where relevant.

Your manager will also be able to provide you with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy.

BEST PRACTICE IN SAFEGUARDING

Always:

- ✓ Work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations, and encourage open communication with no secrets.
- ✓ Treat all young people and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity. Take time to understand cultural practice and norms and demonstrate understanding in practice.
- ✓ Put the welfare of young people or vulnerable adults first.
- ✓ Maintain an appropriate relationship with young people and vulnerable adults. Physical contact may be appropriate as part of your normal duties, for example administering first aid or protecting a casualty, but should be avoided in any other situation. This also applies in a social context, where RNLI partners should maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- ✓ Build balanced, open relationships based on mutual trust. This allows young people and vulnerable adults to share the process of making decisions.
- ✓ If any form of manual/physical support is required, ensure that it is provided openly and according to guidelines. It must follow consultation and agreement with the young or vulnerable people concerned, and their carers.
- ✓ Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- ✓ Request written parental/carers consent if young people or vulnerable adults need to be transported in a vehicle.

Never:

- ✗ Request a young person or vulnerable adult participate in activity that is not culturally acceptable.
- ✗ Engage in rough, high physical contact or sexually provocative games.
- ✗ Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- ✗ Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person/vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- ✗ Allow allegations made by a young person/vulnerable adult to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
- ✗ Take young people/vulnerable adults to your home or other non work environments where they will be alone with you.



REPORTING

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately in line with the agreed local reporting procedure. You should also ensure the parents/carers are informed.

- You accidentally hurt a young person/vulnerable adult.
- A young person/vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner.
- A young person/vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- A young person/vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

RESPONDING TO A CONCERN

If you suspect that a young or vulnerable person may be the subject of abuse (or if somebody alerts you to abuse), it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred/is occurring. However, it is your duty and your responsibility to report your concern formally.

- **Stay calm**
Do not frighten the young person/vulnerable adult and do not rush into actions that may be inappropriate. These might include raising your voice or making physical contact.
- **Call emergency services if necessary**
If there is a need for any medical attention or protection, contact the emergency services – and ensure they are aware that this is a safeguarding issue.
- **Reassure**
State that they are not to blame and that they were right to discuss it.
- **Listen**
Believe what the young person/vulnerable adult says; show that you are taking what is being said seriously.
- **Keep questions to a minimum**
It is better to refer the matter to professionals as soon as possible.
- **Explain**
You may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening.
- **Record**
Ensure a record is made with all the information you have been given.
- **Report the incident**
Report the incident following local procedures.

Where to find more information:

For further advice, visit porthole.rnli2.org.uk/safeguarding, email safeguarding@rnli.org.uk or speak to your line manager.