
Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations

A guide to help you develop a comprehensive approach to safeguarding in your organisation



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

Contents

1. About this guide **3**
2. What is safeguarding and why is it needed? **3**
3. How do I determine the appropriate level of safeguarding? **3**
4. What safeguarding measures are available? **5**
 - Clear role descriptions **5**
 - Comprehensive interviews **6**
 - Robust references **6**
 - Introductory periods, taster sessions and work shadowing **7**
 - Induction and training programmes **7**
 - Support and supervision **8**
 - Safeguarding policy **8**
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously CRB checks) **10**
 - Real-life safeguarding scenarios and unnecessary DBS checks **11**
 - Recruiting a volunteer with a criminal record **14**
 - Health and safety procedures **15**
5. Overview **16**
6. Further information **17**
- Appendix A **18**
- Appendix B **19**
- Appendix C: Activities covered by the old definition of Regulated Activity (eligible for an Enhanced DBS check) **20**
- Disclaimer **22**
- Copyright **22**

1. About this guide

This guidance seeks to help volunteer-involving organisations identify the main features of a good approach to safeguarding. It should be read as a guide to safeguarding as an approach and not as a replacement for an organisation's protection or safeguarding policy (see below for more on safeguarding policies). It asks the reader to think about the level of safeguarding a particular volunteering opportunity requires by using a simple risk assessment tool, before considering the various measures and tools at their disposal. In doing so, it attempts to make the reader think comprehensively about safeguarding as a holistic approach involving a range of different processes and procedures.

2. What is safeguarding and why is it needed?

Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances. Safeguarding is about protecting everyone from harm, abuse or neglect. This includes the beneficiaries and clients we work with, staff and volunteers. We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and we must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. A good approach to safeguarding includes clearly assessing risk and taking actions to mitigate these risks. This may include a range of processes such as:

- effective recruitment techniques
- essential training and supervision
- clear guidelines on what to do in the event of an allegation or incident.

The safeguarding process starts before volunteers are involved in any activity by initially ensuring the right people are recruited in the first place, and that they receive the necessary support and guidance to carry out their work safely and effectively. Safeguarding also serves to protect volunteers themselves and the organisation they work with by helping organisations avoid potentially compromising situations. Effective safeguarding also looks beyond traditional notions of harm and abuse, also taking into consideration health and safety, and other ways to ensure the health and wellbeing of volunteers, and beneficiaries or clients.

3. How do I determine the appropriate level of safeguarding?

The level and nature of any particular safeguarding approach should be determined by, and proportionate to, the risk inherent in activities of the volunteering opportunity in question. Some roles will be very informal, and often require little more than an introductory talk about what the role demands and what the volunteer expects to gain from the opportunity. For example, a local community group organising a one-off litter-pick event in a city park, involving minimal public

interaction, would probably have no need to provide an induction or training meeting or obtain DBS checks for these volunteers. A simple chat about the role and practicalities such as health and safety guidelines would probably suffice. Of course sometimes even occasional or informal volunteering roles such as this can potentially involve risk. For example, if children were involved with the litter pick the organisation would need to consider child protection. The informality or occasional nature of a role does not automatically preclude the need for safeguarding. The point to remember is that the safeguarding approach should fit the risk inherent in the activities of each volunteering opportunity.

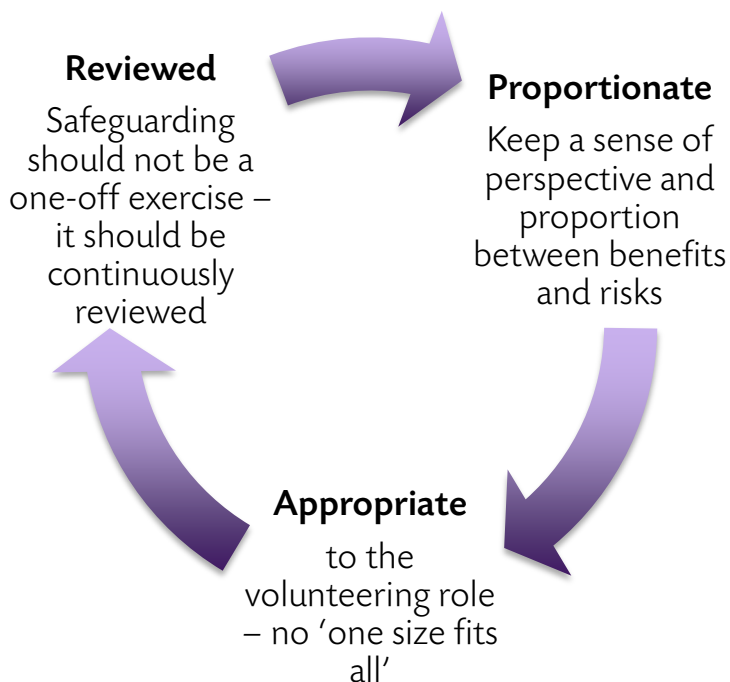
A hypothetical safeguarding scenario at the other end of the spectrum would be a children's charity looking to recruit volunteers to provide unsupervised care for young children several times a week. The safeguarding approach needed for this activity would need to be more robust to ensure that all measures available are being taken to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of the children being cared for. For example, references for volunteers recruited, an introductory or trial period which would allow the volunteer to be observed in the role, a comprehensive induction and training programme, as well as an enhanced DBS check.

Of course, real life situations are rarely this black and white, as demonstrated by some of the scenarios in [Section 4](#). This makes it important to think carefully about each role and the measures needed. In addition to the risk assessment, you should also consider the following factors before any decision is made.

1. The safeguarding measures used should be proportionate to risk involved with the volunteering role in question. Disproportionate safeguarding can create unnecessary barriers to volunteering.
2. The approach should be appropriate to – or 'fit' – the volunteering opportunity. Each role will have a differing potential for risk, so having a 'universal' approach for all of an organisation's volunteering roles will either lead to ineffective safeguarding or unnecessarily restrictive procedures.
3. Your approach to safeguarding should be continuously reviewed to ensure it adapts to changes to the responsibilities and parameters of the volunteering role and the associated risks.

An overview of the process is shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

Figure 1



4. What safeguarding measures are available?

Depending on the risk assessment of the volunteer role, you may need to make use of a range of safeguarding measures in order to mitigate the risks you identified. In this section we identify what measures you should consider, even before you start recruiting volunteers.

Clear role descriptions

Being clear about what a role involves goes further than helping a would-be volunteer understand what is expected of them. This is an important, but often underestimated, first step to any effective safeguarding approach. Clearly stating the skills, experience and time commitment required is important to attract the most appropriate volunteers for a role. It can also help to set boundaries from the outset.

The role description also provides an ideal opportunity to make reference, when necessary, to the responsibility the organisation has for safeguarding, and to identify, if appropriate, the responsibility the volunteer may also have, identifying it as a high priority.

Role descriptions should not just be used as a recruitment tool but should be a point of reference for both the organisation and the volunteer on an ongoing basis. They can be a tool for support and supervision, and help aid discussions around a volunteer's performance or responsibilities when needed.

Comprehensive interviews

For most volunteering opportunities it will be necessary to arrange a face-to-face interview with the would-be volunteer. In addition to evaluating an applicant's suitability for a particular role, a comprehensive interview will also provide an opportunity to ask specific questions that will help to give you an insight into their attitude towards, and knowledge of, the client group they will be working with.

You may want to consider asking what they would do in a particular situation, or whether they are already familiar with safeguarding processes or have worked with vulnerable groups before. These kinds of questions could also help to examine a potential volunteer's values and ethics. For example you could ask what they think some of the risks might be when carrying out the role they are applying for and why being aware of this might be important.

A volunteer interview should be a two-way process, and is therefore also an opportunity for potential volunteers to find out more about the role and the organisation. You should not expect every potential volunteer to have an in-depth knowledge about safeguarding, and you should therefore bear in mind how they might respond to training and induction that will help to prepare them for the role. As an organisation you should also consider how you will ensure they have the knowledge and skills to do their role safely and effectively.

At this stage you may need to have a sensitive discussion with applicants about any information they have provided that may be unclear or which raises questions or suspicions. This could include an inability to provide references, or a gap in employment that concerns you. If you identify inconsistencies, you should think about how serious the dishonesty has been and whether this may make them an unsuitable candidate. However, some volunteers may be unfamiliar with an interview and application process, so it's important that you explain to volunteers what the process will be and that they understand what information they need to provide at each step, and why. Talking it through with them will ensure that your process is supportive as well as thorough.

Robust references

Asking potential volunteers for references as part of the recruitment process is now standard practice for most organisations. Lots of organisations seek two references where possible. References help to provide an independent perspective of a volunteer's skills, reliability and possibly their attitude. It can also give an insight into how they have approached situations and work in the past. A good reference can therefore be a useful tool in identifying a volunteer's strengths and weaknesses.

The information provided in references should be used alongside the information gathered in other parts of the recruitment process, especially the application form and interview. References can be used to confirm first impressions or highlight where further information might be needed before the applicant is offered the role.

When collecting references, you should ensure that the person providing them has signed it off to confirm the information they have provided is accurate. This should be done in writing where possible, but if obtained verbally, a written note of the conversation should be taken which could be signed off at a later date. If you are collecting references by email, an electronic signature may be appropriate.

Introductory periods, taster sessions and work shadowing

For some roles, it may be worth having an introductory period for potential or new volunteers to give them a taste of the role before they commit themselves to your organisation on a longer-term basis. This also provides an ideal opportunity to gain a deeper insight into the personality of the individual and how they will approach their role.

Taster sessions and work shadowing can offer a similar opportunity to gain a better understanding of the type of person a volunteer is, as well as a chance for volunteers to work alongside an established member of staff to learn more about a particular role.

Induction and training programmes

An induction programme will help a volunteer to fully understand the parameters of their role and the safeguarding procedures used by the organisation they have joined. If the role involves dealing with vulnerable adults and children, a full induction covering a variety of issues will probably be needed. You should think about including the following in your induction programme.

- The organisation's mission statement and its commitment to the safety of the vulnerable adults and children in its care
- A discussion about the requirements and sensitivities of the organisation's client group
- A precise description of the requirements and responsibilities of the volunteer's role, with reference to the role description.
- An opportunity to talk with, or presentations/talks from, established volunteers about their roles and responsibilities within the organisation.
- A presentation on the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures (see below)

Working closely with a volunteer during this initial period will not only help the volunteer understand what is expected of them and the boundaries of their role, but it will also give the organisation a better insight into the volunteer's personality and their suitability for the role.

Following their induction, it is also important to consider what training a volunteer will need or benefit from to help them in their role. Some roles, such as giving advice or caring for young children, may require extensive training. For other roles, particularly in smaller organisations or community groups, informal training from existing volunteers may be all that is required. Of course, some volunteering opportunities will require little or no training at all.

You should always regularly review your induction and training to ensure it remains relevant to the kinds of roles your volunteers are undertaking.

Support and supervision

All volunteers need support and supervision, but the form that this takes will largely depend on the role and the volunteer in question. For example, volunteers at a one-off event may need less support than someone who volunteers several times a week.

Buddying systems and volunteer meetings can be a good way of providing peer support. Buddying – either alongside another volunteer or paid member of staff – not only helps support the volunteer, but also means there are at least two people present in any situation. Meetings will provide volunteers with an opportunity to discuss their work and daily life within an organisation.

More formal supervision meetings may not be appropriate for all models of volunteer involvement, but for many volunteers it can be a good way of ensuring that they get a chance to give and receive feedback on a regular basis.

Whatever approach to support and supervision you choose, it should ensure there is a way for volunteers to raise problems or concerns at any time, ensuring potentially problematic behavior is identified at the earliest opportunity and addressed.

Safeguarding policy

If an organisation works extensively with children, young people or vulnerable adults, it should have a safeguarding policy in place that all its employees and volunteers are familiar with and have access to. This should clearly articulate the organisation's commitment to safeguarding as well as the roles and responsibilities of everyone in the organisation for delivering on this commitment. It should clearly state that all volunteers and staff have a role to play in protecting vulnerable people from harm.

Central to an effective safeguarding policy are clear procedures for reporting concerns and incidents, and recording this information. This may include actual concerns or incidents, as well as alleged or suspected concerns or incidents. It should also provide guidelines on identifying harm, abuse or neglect, and the different forms this may take, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. This awareness will help to ensure that everyone can be the organisation's 'eyes and ears' on the ground, and know their roles and responsibilities and how to take action.

While not exhaustive, the list below identified some of the main points an effective safeguarding policy should cover.

- Explicitly state an organisation's commitment to protecting its clients, employees and volunteers from all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional and sexual harm.
- Provide clear guidelines on what to do in the event of an allegation or incident, or if concerns are raised about the welfare of a vulnerable person.

- Identify who vulnerable adults and children can contact in the event of an incident.
- Clearly define what constitutes emotional, physical or psychological abuse, harm and neglect.
- Provide details of the complaints and disciplinary procedures to manage concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers.
- Outline the procedures for recording allegations and incidents, and the disciplinary mechanisms that result in the event of any transgressions.
- Specify organisational responsibilities for recording abuse or harm to avoid employees and volunteers assuming it is 'somebody else's responsibility'.
- Provide practical advice to volunteers on dos and don'ts within the organisation.

Each safeguarding policy should be tailored to fit each individual organisation and its activities. There will therefore be some variation in the type and scope of the policy an organisation will have in place. Factors affecting the scope of a safeguarding policy include:

- the size of the organisation and staff group
- the nature and scope of the volunteering activity
- the personal characteristics of the client group
- the venue or location of the activity
- the history and experience of the organisation.

For example, a small organisation that engages with vulnerable adults and children on a limited basis may only need a policy that concentrates on how to identify and report incidents of abuse or harm, while an organisation whose main focus is to provide care for young children in multiple locations throughout the UK will need a more thorough and detailed safeguarding policy document covering a variety of issues and eventualities, distributed throughout its various local groups. If your policy needs to be quite long then make sure it is written as clearly as possible so that people can easily identify what steps need to be taken and their responsibilities. The training you have in place must be developed in relation to your policy. These policy documents can be quite long (up to 100 pages) and include how an organisation uses most, if not all, the safeguarding measures covered by this guide. It may be helpful to have summaries of some aspects, for example a flow chart on how to report issues.

All organisations, regardless of their size, should ensure that there is awareness of the safeguarding policy within the organisation among staff and volunteers. In order to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the policy, you may wish to ensure that they go through this at the point of recruitment as part of their induction and training. It might be helpful to have a record that they have seen the policy, for example by asking them to sign a statement that says they have read and understood it. All organisations, regardless of their size, should make every effort to raise awareness of the document among their volunteers, and where necessary provide training on its implementation.

A safeguarding policy differs to the other tools listed in this section in that it is a measure an organisation has in place at all times, and which covers all its volunteers and employees. As with other organisational procedures, it should be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains fit for purpose. You should clearly record when the policy was last reviewed. In this respect it is not a tool that can be chosen at will, depending on the volunteering opportunity in question. However, if an organisation asks its volunteers to sign volunteer agreements prior to recruitment, it can add a clause stating the volunteer has read and understood the organisation's safeguarding policy.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously CRB checks)

If a volunteering opportunity includes work that involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults and children – known as Regulated Activity (see Appendices A and B for a user-friendly guide to whether a role is classed as Regulated Activity) – then an organisation must check whether the volunteer is included in either of the two DBS 'barred lists' of individuals who are unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. This is a legal responsibility for the recruiting organisation and it is a criminal offence for organisations to recruit a volunteer who appears on either of the DBS barred lists in Regulated Activity with the group from which they are barred from working. Likewise, it is a criminal offence for a person to seek or carry out work in activities from which they are barred.

In relation to this, organisations also have a 'duty to refer' or report volunteers to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) who are dismissed or removed from Regulated Activity (or would have been if the person had not already left) because they harmed or posed a risk to an individual. This 'duty to refer' overrides any obligation to withhold information on the grounds of confidentiality. It is important that organisations know their responsibilities in this regard and you should think about ensuring how you make this clear in your policies and procedures for reporting incidents, should it be relevant to your organisation.

Certain other volunteering roles are eligible for an Enhanced DBS check. This includes activities covered by the old definition of Regulated Activity (see Appendix C), which can still be applied in the current system. It is up to the organisation recruiting the volunteer to decide whether a DBS check is sought for these roles.

While they are important for certain roles, DBS checks are just one part of the safeguarding process and your policy should identify them alongside other safeguarding measures you are taking. DBS checks have their limitations in that they only reveal offences previously detected by the police and can often contain information that is irrelevant to the volunteering role in question. They also don't provide all the information you need to decide whether someone is a suitable volunteer. A good induction and training programme, [as outlined above](#), will often also be needed to provide an insight into the suitability of a potential volunteer. A well-designed safeguarding policy will also be needed to allow them and others to effectively identify, and deal with, potentially problematic behavior.

It is important that DBS checks are not used simply as a 'just in case' box-ticking exercise and sought simply because a particular volunteering role is eligible for one. For some volunteers a

DBS check can feel intrusive and an unnecessary invasion of their privacy. This, along with the bureaucracy involved, can be a barrier to volunteering. For this reason, careful consideration should be given as to whether it is necessary to obtain a disclosure or whether other measures offer sufficient safeguarding.

Anecdotal feedback shows that some volunteers are being subjected to DBS checks when it is either illegal to do so, or when one is unwarranted for the role in question (see [Section 4](#) for real-life scenarios illustrating the unnecessary use of DBS checks). Safeguarding is an extremely serious issue, but organisations should avoid being too risk averse.

Volunteer involving organisations often work in partnership to deliver projects and services that involve volunteers and may also be under pressure from partners to take a particular approach or stance on DBS checks. You should, wherever possible, try to work with partners and funders to ensure all parties fully understand DBS in the context of other safeguarding processes in place for the project or service to ensure there is an agreed approach. This is crucial if all parties involved are to understand fully their roles and responsibilities in the associated processes.

Where eligibility exists but an organisation is unsure whether a particular role requires a DBS check it should conduct a risk assessment of the volunteering opportunity. The overview in [Section 5](#) covers some of the things you should consider as part of your risk assessment.

If an organisation decides a DBS check is necessary, and the disclosure returns information on spent or unspent convictions, an organisation should conduct an assessment of whether the offences revealed are serious enough to prohibit recruitment for that particular role. On page 15 there is a list of questions for evaluating this information.

You should think about whether other measures offer sufficient safeguarding. For some volunteers a DBS check can feel intrusive and an unnecessary invasion of their privacy, and so it is important to make sure it is necessary and appropriate to the role. Carefully considering your approach will help to prevent DBS checks and ensure that the associated processes aren't an unnecessary barrier to volunteering.

For more information on DBS checks, read NCVO's information sheet available on [KnowHow NonProfit](#).

Real-life safeguarding scenarios and unnecessary DBS checks

Understanding when it is appropriate to complete a DBS check can be difficult. The following are real-life examples of when DBS checks were completed unnecessarily. They demonstrate why completing checks could have been avoided and what other safeguarding measures could be put in place.

Scenario 1: University students delivering workshops in school classrooms

A students' union organises a group of student volunteers to deliver classroom based workshops in a local secondary school for an hour a week. The volunteers work with children in groups of 4 to 10 at a time, with the teacher present throughout the sessions.

Safeguarding approach

The students' activities involve volunteering in a school and satisfy the frequency or 'period condition' of Regulated Activity (carried out by the same person once a week or more, or on four or more days in a 30-day period). However, they are supervised by the teacher, who is themselves in Regulated Activity.

While it is ultimately for the school to determine whether the level or intensity of the supervision is sufficient to preclude the need for a DBS check, a risk assessment would show that checking the students in this instance would have no impact on the safeguarding of the children in question.

As Ofsted's Safeguarding in schools: best practice (2011) says:

The key word for both inspectors and providers in the area of safeguarding is 'reasonable' ... Ofsted does not require schools to build walls around play areas; it does not expect schools to seek Criminal Records Bureau checks on casual visitors to schools

In addition to the communal and supervised nature of this particular role, the students union organising the workshops will already have a good personal insight into the character and suitability of the volunteers delivering the workshops, all of whom would have previously supplied robust references before enrolling on their courses. This, along with the training needed to deliver the workshops, would be sufficient safeguarding for this particular volunteering opportunity.

Scenario 2: Volunteers taking blind and partially sighted people on tandem bike rides

A tandem cycling club meets weekly to provide blind and partially sighted people aged 30 years old and above with the opportunity to cycle with sighted volunteers on a tandem bicycle. In an attempt to modernise, the club has become affiliated with a local charity so it can benefit from the charity's public liability insurance cover.

As a precondition for affiliation, the charity asked that all the cycle club's volunteers undergo criminal record checks, claiming that in the event of an insurance claim, the insurance company may refuse to settle if all the volunteers are not DBS checked.

Safeguarding approach

This is not 'Regulated Activity relating to Adults' (see Appendix B), so there is no legal requirement for a DBS check. And while the club's activities may be covered by the old definition of Regulated Activity (see Appendix C) and therefore eligible for an Enhanced DBS check, a risk assessment of the activity, accounting for the age of the client group and the public and communal nature of the bike rides, would show that a check would not positively affect the safeguarding of the vulnerable adults in question.

Commenting on this case, a broker specialising in underwriting insurance policies for charities says:

... for a charity working exclusively with sound minded adults on a limited or ad hoc basis it could be said for them to CRB check every volunteer would be disproportionate and not a reasonable request

Good references and health and safety training would be enough for this volunteering opportunity. Asking all the volunteers to be DBS checked is unnecessarily intrusive and would create an unwelcome level of bureaucracy for a small community club with limited resources.

Where possible, an organisation facing pressure from an overly risk-averse funder or sponsor should make the case that existing safeguarding measures are sufficient and that unnecessary DBS checks represent a serious barrier to recruiting volunteers. If necessary, it should also consult with authoritative bodies such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Scenario 3: Volunteering for a hospital radio station

A hospital radio station uses volunteers to help it broadcast to patients every day. Some of the volunteers visit wards to ask patients what music they would like on the radio or ask them to take part in an on-air quiz, but they do so rarely and with the approval of nursing staff. They have no more access to the patients than someone walking in off the street. Some of the volunteers have no patient contact whatsoever.

A trustee of the radio station has subsequently been asked by the NHS Trust to DBS check all their volunteers, even those that have no patient contact.

Safeguarding approach

This is not 'Regulated Activity relating to Adults or Children' (see Appendices A and B), so there is no legal requirement for a DBS check, and unless the 'hospital ... is exclusively or mainly for the reception and treatment of children' or the patient contact satisfies the 'period condition' (the person carrying out the activity does so at any time on more than two days in any period of 30 days) the hospital radio volunteers are not legally eligible for a DBS check under the terms of the old definition of Regulated Activity (see Appendix C). Where eligibility does exist, each role should be assessed on its own merits. Where the role involves no patient contact, a good training and induction process clearly instructing what the volunteers can and cannot do would suffice.

A large organisation such as a hospital should also have a safeguarding policy in place which all its volunteers and employees have access to and have been trained to implement. Asking volunteers to sign a volunteer agreement which says they understand and agree with the policy is a further option that could help provide extra reassurance for the recruiting officer.

Recruiting a volunteer with a criminal record

Unless they are barred from working with children or adults, people with past convictions should not automatically be excluded from volunteering. According to the Police National Computer there are 9.2 million people in the UK with a criminal record and for some volunteering opportunities a criminal history might actually be beneficial for the nature of the work involved. For example, young offenders may feel they are able to relate to advice from a volunteer who has similar life experiences to them.

You need to consider different elements of the conviction and what impact this has on your risk assessment of the volunteer in that role. Below we have identified some helpful factors to consider when making decisions about a volunteer's criminal history.

Factors to consider when recruiting a volunteer with a criminal record

- What is the nature of the volunteering role?
- Are there offences relevant to the role?
- What was the seriousness and nature of the offence?
- What was the volunteer's age at the time of the offence?
- What amount of time has passed since the offence occurred?
- Was the offence revealed during the application stage?

Remember that people are not necessarily required by law to reveal information about their criminal record. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1975) identifies that people are not legally obligated to reveal details of spent convictions unless they are exempt from the act. It is illegal under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act to discriminate against someone on the basis of a spent conviction. Some people may choose to reveal information about their convictions voluntarily. If the conviction is relevant to their role it can be beneficial to have an open and honest discussion about this with them early on in the recruitment process. It is also important to be clear from the outset when a DBS check is required as part of the recruitment process.

If someone does have convictions, organisations should consider what the risk might be and how they might manage it, for example by adapting roles to reduce levels of risk or by providing additional levels of supervision. Other staff and volunteers may in some cases need to be made aware of any health and safety or personal security issues when working with a particular volunteer or type of offender.

Health and safety procedures

Although predominantly concerned with protecting vulnerable people from mistreatment or harm, a good safeguarding approach should also consider health and safety procedures. This is equally important for volunteers as it is for staff and beneficiaries.

In English law, an individual may be owed a duty of care by another to ensure that they do not suffer any unreasonable harm or loss as a result of the latter's activity. A duty of care can be applicable to a wider range of situations including:

- loaning equipment to others
- charity walks and sponsored runs
- running fetes or fairs
- organising day trips
- selling food at a charity stall.

It is good practice for organisations to carry out risk assessments for volunteering opportunities it provides. The results of the risk assessment will help determine what the organisation needs to do in order to minimise the risk; this will usually include providing information or training to volunteers. Completing a risk assessment does not need to be a complex task and can be presented in different ways. It should, however, do two main things:

4. Detect and mitigate potential hazards involved with any activity by identifying a risk and assessing the degree of harm it could cause against the likelihood of it occurring.
5. Indicate what measures need to be put in place, if any, to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

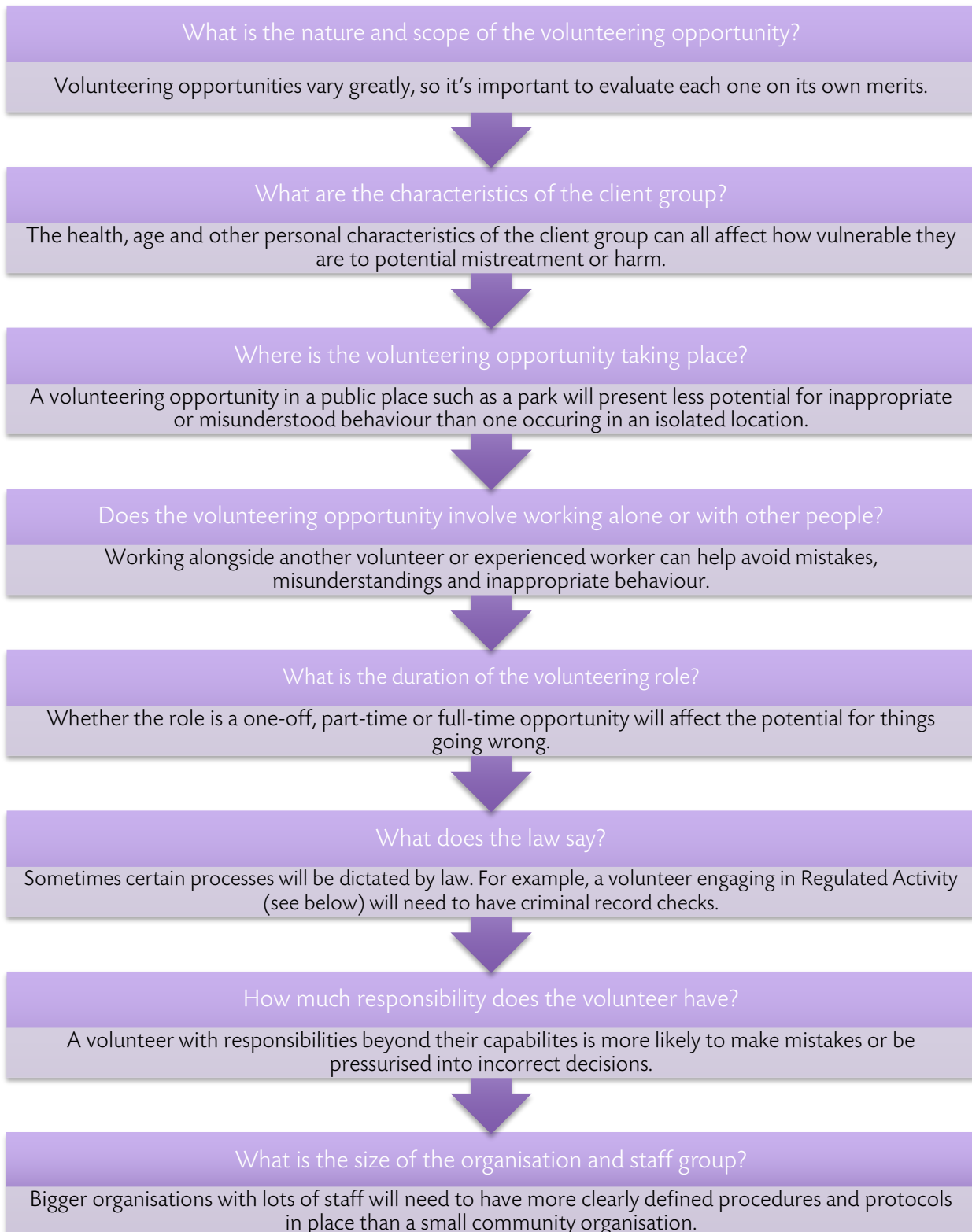
For more information on risk assessments, including templates, visit [the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) website](#). The HSE is the national independent watchdog for work-related health, safety and illness

The greater the potential for risk then the more detailed the training, information or other processes might be required. The approach taken should always be relevant to and proportionate to the role. For example, information and training to a volunteer in a hospice who will be lifting patients in and out of bed would be significant, but less health and safety training would be required for a volunteer helping to run a raffle.

If an organisation has no paid employees and only has volunteers it is not obliged to have a written health and safety policy, but is strongly recommended to do so. Developing a health and safety policy helps to clarify procedures and responsibilities. The HSE provides information specific to voluntary organisations.

5. Overview

This flowchart provides an overview of the steps you need to think through when deciding what level of safeguarding you need in place. You should then consider which of the options available to you are appropriate.

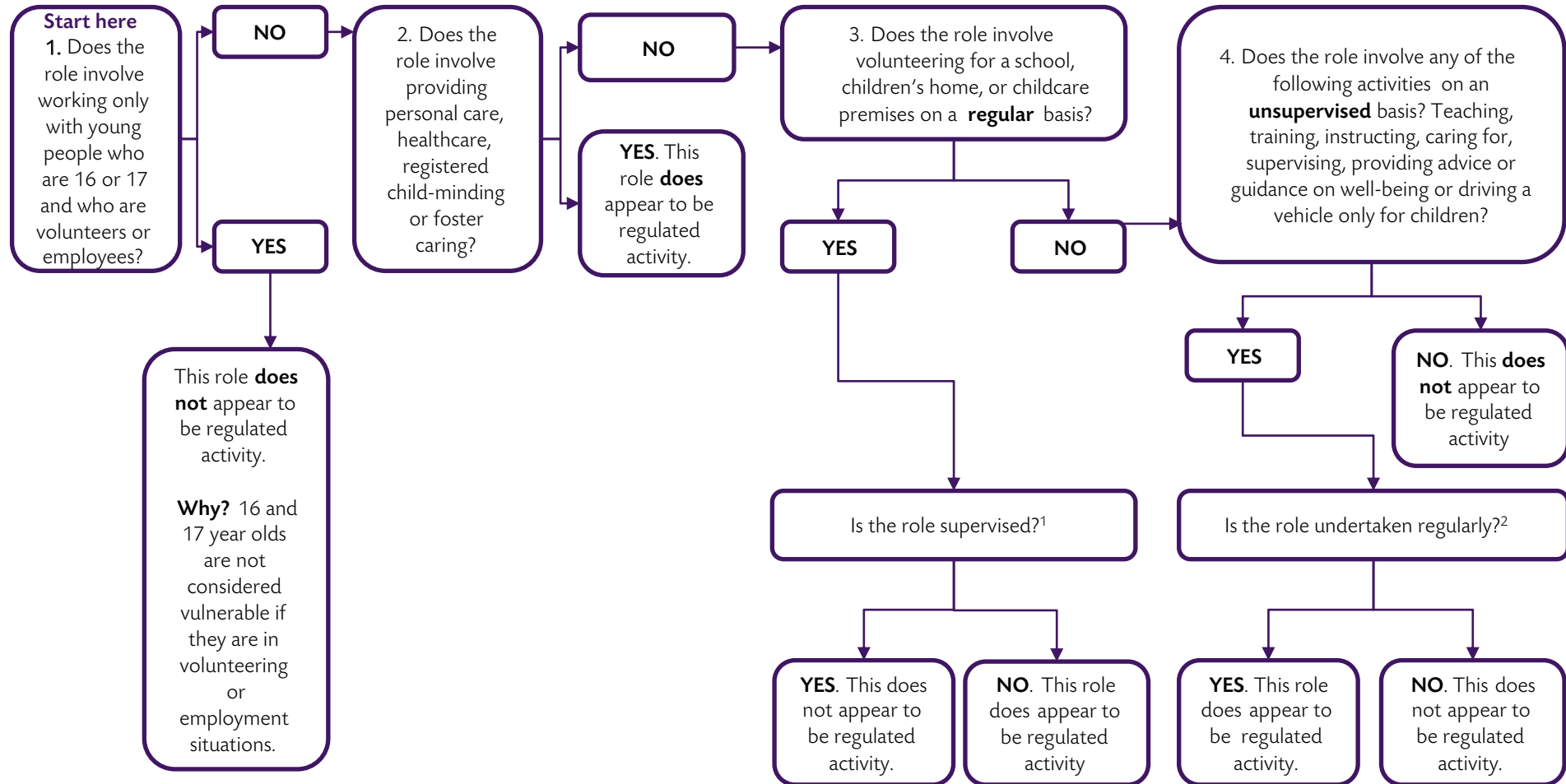


6. Further information

- NCVO's website KnowHow NonProfit has a section on [safeguarding](#).
- '[Keeping it safe](#)' is a comprehensive, practical guide from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services on safeguarding standards.
- The [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) provides information for organisations and applicants on DBS checks.
- [Unlock](#) provides information, advice, training and advocacy, dealing with the ongoing effects of criminal convictions.
- [Clinks](#) provides support to voluntary organisations working with ex-offenders and their families.
- [Nacro](#) is a crime reduction charity which supports ex-offenders and their families.
- [The Department of Education](#) provides additional guidance on the scope of regulated activity in relation to children. This includes what is classed as supervised and unsupervised activity.
- [The Safe Network](#) provides safeguarding information for activities involving children. It is jointly managed by the NSPCC and Children England.
- The NSPCC provides [help and advice](#) on a range of issues concerning children, including what to do if you are worried about a child.
- The Cabinet Office '[Can do guide](#)' for voluntary events covers steps to take to manage risk and keep participants safe.
- The [Information Commissioner's Office](#) provides information and guidance on complying with data protection legislation.

Appendix A: Regulated Activity relating to children and young people

Important: this chart does not apply to family arrangements and personal non-commercial arrangements (these are not covered by the DBS system) and should be read in conjunction with the full guidance from the Department for Education, available via www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren/a00209802/disclosure-barring



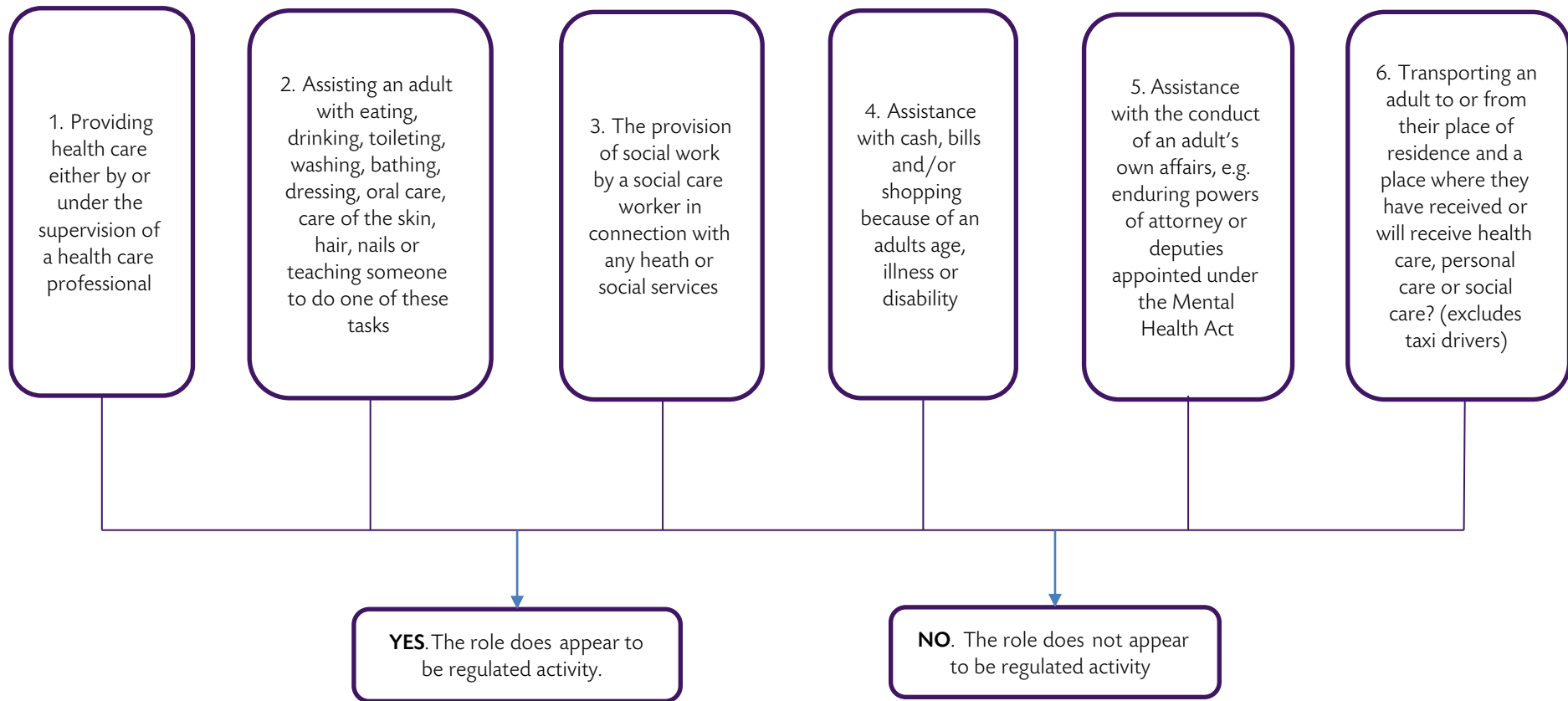
¹ Supervised means regular supervision by someone who themselves is in Regulated Activity. See the Department for Education’s guidance on supervision, available via www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren/a00209802/disclosure-barring

² Regular means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more) or on four or more days in a 30-day period (or in some cases overnight).

Appendix B: Regulated Activity relating to adults

Important: this chart does not apply to family arrangements and personal non-commercial arrangements (these are not covered by the DBS system) and should be read in conjunction with the full guidance from the Department for Education, available via www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren/a00209802/disclosure-barring

Does the role involve any of the following activities?



Note – Anyone who provides day-to-day management or supervision of persons involved in these activities are in Regulated Activity.

Appendix C: Activities covered by the old definition of Regulated Activity (eligible for an Enhanced DBS check)

The following is a summary of the *old* definition of Regulated Activity before it changed in September 2012 with the enactment of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. While the majority of activities that are applicable to volunteering are listed, the summary is not exhaustive. For full details see the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#).

While any volunteering role engaging in the activities below is *eligible* for a DBS check, careful consideration should be given as to whether a check is actually necessary (see [Section 3](#)).

1. Old definition of Regulated activity relating to children

Broadly speaking the principal activities of the old definition of Regulated Activity relating to children are:

- a. Certain types of close contact activity carried out frequently, on three or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight (the 'period condition'), including:
 - i. any form of teaching, training or instruction of children, unless the teaching, training or instruction is merely incidental to teaching, training or instruction of persons who are not children;
 - ii. any form of care for or supervision of children, unless the care or supervision is merely incidental to care for or supervision of persons who are not children;
 - iii. any form of advice or guidance provided wholly or mainly for children, if the advice or guidance relates to their physical, emotional or educational well-being;
 - iv. any form of treatment or therapy provided for a child;
 - v. moderating a public electronic interactive communication service which is likely to be used wholly or mainly by children;
 - vi. driving a vehicle which is being used only for the purpose of conveying children and any person supervising or caring for the children pursuant to arrangements made in prescribed circumstances.

- b. Any activity carried out frequently or on three or more days in a 30-day period in the following establishments which gives a person the opportunity to have contact with children in pursuance of their duties (e.g. a school secretary).
 - i. an educational institution which is exclusively or mainly for the provision of full-time education to children;
 - ii. an establishment which is exclusively or mainly for the provision of nursery education (within the meaning of section 117 of the School Standards and Framework Act [1998 \(c. 31\)](#));
 - iii. a hospital which is exclusively or mainly for the reception and treatment of children;
 - iv. an institution which is exclusively or mainly for the detention of children;
 - v. a children's home (within the meaning of section 1 of the Care Standards Act [2000 \(c. 14\)](#));
 - vi. a home provided in pursuance of arrangements under section 82(5) of the Children Act [1989 \(c. 41\)](#);
 - vii. relevant childcare premises.

- c. The provision of childminding where there is a requirement to be registered under the provisions of the Childcare Act 2006.

- d. Fostering a child.
- e. The exercise of functions of the Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS) support officers and their Welsh equivalent.
- f. The inspection of establishments specified in (b) (e.g. a school) on behalf of certain organisations (e.g. OFSTED; Healthcare Commission)
- g. The day-to-day management or supervision on a regular basis of any person carrying out the activities mentioned in a, b, e and f above.
- h. The exercise of a function of certain positions (e.g. school governor, Children's Commissioner, trustee of a children's charity, operator of the Information Sharing Index set up under the Children Act 2004).

2. Old definition of Regulated Activity relating to vulnerable adults

Broadly speaking the principal activities of the old definition of Regulated Activity relating to vulnerable adults are:

- a. Certain types of activity carried out frequently, on three or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight (the 'period condition'), including:
 - i. any form of training, teaching or instruction provided wholly or mainly for vulnerable adults;
 - ii. any form of care for or supervision of vulnerable adults;
 - iii. any form of assistance, advice or guidance provided wholly or mainly for vulnerable adults;
 - iv. any form of treatment or therapy provided for a vulnerable adult;
 - v. moderating a public electronic interactive communication service which is likely to be used wholly or mainly by vulnerable adults;
 - vi. driving a vehicle which is being used only for the purpose of conveying vulnerable adults and any person caring for the vulnerable adults pursuant to arrangements made in prescribed circumstances;
 - vii. anything done on behalf of a vulnerable adult in such circumstances as are prescribed.
- b. Any activity carried out frequently, or on three or more days in a 30-day period in a care home which gives a person the opportunity to have contact with vulnerable adults as a result of his duties or anything he is allowed to do there.
- c. The day-to-day management or supervision on a regular basis of any person carrying out the activities mentioned in a and b above.
- d. The inspection of certain establishments (e.g. a care home) by specified organisations (e.g. the Healthcare Commission).
- e. The exercise of a function of certain positions (e.g. the director of adult social services or a trustee of vulnerable adults' charity).

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that our guidance is correct at the time of publication. They are intended as a brief summary of relevant issues to help you plan or develop your work with volunteers. Legal advice should be sought where appropriate. NCVO is unable to accept liability for any loss or damage or inconvenience arising as a consequence of the use of this information.

The inclusion of other organisations in the Information Sheets does not imply any endorsement of independent bodies; all sources of further information are listed solely for signposting purposes.

Copyright

Please note that this Information Sheet is subject to copyright, which is owned by NCVO.