

Army Cadets safeguarding children policy

Policy Statement

All children have the right to protection from all forms of abuse and harm at all times, including when engaged in Cadet activities and when in contact with members of the Army Cadets. Staff Cadets are aged 18 and over, so are not children as defined below, but may still be vulnerable and owed a duty of care.

This policy applies to all persons who work, volunteer, supervise and/ or instruct within the Army Cadets, all of whom have a duty of care responsibility. This includes safeguarding children in their care from abuse and harm and promoting their wellbeing and safety. All must respond swiftly and appropriately when suspicions or allegations of abuse arise.

It is the responsibility of all persons within the Army Cadets to:

- help create and maintain a culture in which:
 - children are valued
 - children's rights to be safe are upheld
 - child protection and safeguarding issues are raised in a timely manner and appropriate action taken
- minimise the risk of circumstances where a child may be harmed
- take appropriate actions to address concerns and report any incidents where a child has been or could have been placed at risk of harm

The Army Cadets take their duty to protect cadets very seriously. Engagement with external agencies, including police and disclosure and barring services as required, ensures the Army Cadets remains a safe space operated by safe people.

Within Combined Cadet Force Army Section (CCF(A)), hosting schools usually lead on safeguarding and school policies must be followed.

Key Terms

Throughout this policy, and all Army Cadets safeguarding documents, the following key terms are defined:

- The term '**Safeguarding promoting the welfare of children**' is defined in the Statutory Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children¹ as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment,
 - preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development,
 - ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care,
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

- **'Children'** or **'Child'** refers to all Cadets up to the age of 18 years. Scottish legislation recognises 16-18 year olds as 'young people' in law but for the purposes of this policy the phrases 'child' and 'children' will apply to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- **'Duty of care'** refers to the responsibility held by all adult members of the Army Cadets and requires them to always act in the best interest of children and young people, taking appropriate steps to ensure protection from harm or abuse.

Responsibilities

It is the duty of all volunteers and members of staff throughout the Army Cadets to prioritise the Safeguarding of children. Children and young people have a right to protection and their welfare is paramount.

Advice on Safeguarding matters can be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Army Cadet Safeguarding Hub (ACSH), or the NSPCC. Action to protect children must not be delayed inappropriately whilst advice is sought. It is always appropriate to contact Police or Social Services immediately, and directly, when there is information to indicate a child is at imminent risk of harm, or there is evidence of recent harm.

The role of the DSL in the Army Cadet Force (ACF) is held by the **CEO** of each ACF County. Contact details for the County CEO can be found on each County's ACF website.

For CCF(A) activities, hosting schools usually lead on safeguarding and so the schools DSL is the lead.

The **ACSH** provides Case Workers who support the CEOs in their role and helps ensure the organisation fulfils its Safeguarding responsibilities. All Safeguarding issues and actions are shared with the ACSH for awareness and to enable the provision of advice. If necessary the ACSH can be contacted directly by emailing RC-Cdts-INCREP-0Mailbox@mod.gov.uk.

Assurance of Safeguarding is provided by regular Brigade Safeguarding Steering Group (BSSG) meetings which are chaired by the Commander or Deputy Commander of the Army's Regional Point of Command (RPoC).

Recruitment and training of volunteers

All Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) receive enhanced disclosure checks from their appropriate disclosure organisation². These checks are renewed every 3 years (or individuals are registered on an update service with one of these organisations). In addition, two references are taken for each CFAV upon application.

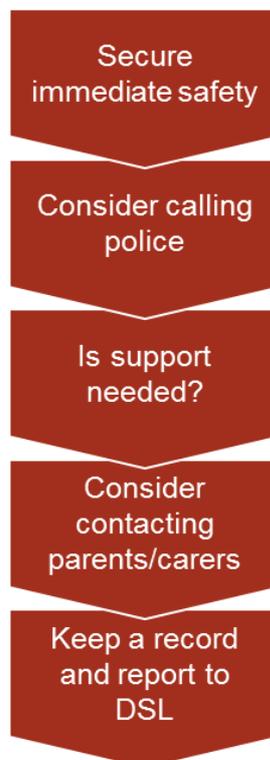
Every CFAV is trained in safeguarding during their induction and undertakes annual safeguarding refresher training. Engagement is recorded and assured.

² Appropriate disclosure organisation – Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in England or Wales, PVG or Disclosure Scotland in Scotland, and AccessNI in Northern Ireland.

How to respond to Safeguarding allegations or concerns

If a child says they or another child is being abused (including any allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or another young person), or if there is concern for a child's welfare outside of Cadets, the following steps must be considered and followed as indicated:

- **Ensure everyone's safety.** Immediate safety of all personnel as far as practical eg administration of first aid and/ or separation of an alleged perpetrator and victim to different areas etc, is the priority.
- **Contact Police.** If there is a risk of imminent harm to a child, including if a Cadet may be at risk of harm if they return home from a Cadet activity; or if there is evidence of recent harm, police must be contacted immediately on 999. Advice from Police is followed.
- **Seek support and guidance if necessary.** Immediate advice may be sought from the 24/7 NSPCC helpline, or DSL if they are available.
- **Contact parents/guardians.** In the majority of circumstance, it is appropriate for the parent(s) of Cadets to be informed of pertinent information about incidents involving their child, from the outset. However, parents must not be informed under the following circumstances
 - whenever Police ask for them not to be,
 - when advised by Children's Services or the NSPCC not to,
 - if there is concern that this may result in additional risk to the child in question or someone else,
 - or a concern of evidence being destroyed.
- **Keep a record and inform DSL.** All information and subsequent actions regarding safeguarding must be recorded. The DSL, must be informed promptly of all safeguarding allegations and concerns and they will share relevant information with other agencies as applicable.



Legal Framework

Each UK nation is responsible for its own policies and laws. The safeguarding systems in each nation differ in some detail and statutory guidance from each stipulates what organisations must do to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and young people. This policy is in line with the legal requirements and statutory guidance of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Further legislation and statutory guidance on safeguarding children and young people is detailed in:

- **England.** [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)³ and [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)⁴.
- **Northern Ireland.** [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#)⁵ and the [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Procedures Manual](#)⁶.

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

⁵<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

⁶<https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/>

- **Scotland.** National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland⁷.
- **Wales.** Welsh Government Safeguarding Guidance⁸.

ACF and CCF(A) Regulations are available internally and provide information about the expectations of members of the Cadet Force in relation to Safeguarding.

Endorsement

This Policy has been endorsed Maj Gen Eastman MBE, GOC Regional Command, Deputy Standing Joint Commander (United Kingdom) & Commander Cadets, as the senior responsible person for the Army Cadet Force.

Policy Review

We recognise the importance of reviewing policy and commit to the renewal of this Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis, or in line with legislative changes.

Last review – July 2021

Expected review – July 2022

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-child-protection-scotland/>

⁸ <https://gov.wales/safeguarding-guidance>