

TVHA Governance Procedures

Safeguarding Bullying & Harassment Policies

1. Purpose

This policy defines how Townshend Village Hall operates to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

We have a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises including children, young people and vulnerable adults who are visitors and/or participants in any activities and events. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees, volunteers, and staff.

Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect at TVHA. Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated in the association; this includes bullying or harassment of Trustees, volunteers and staff by anyone using the hall.

This policy applies to all Trustees, members, volunteers and staff on and off the premises.

The Trustees cannot be responsible for any bullying or harassment carried out within any of the groups or people hiring the hall.

Trustees will step in if any hall user is exhibiting bullying or harassment behaviour towards any of the hall Trustees, staff or volunteers.

2. Definitions

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all staff, contractors and volunteers and will be used to support their work.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Vulnerable Adults for the purposes of this policy, a vulnerable adult refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to paragraph 14.2 of the Care Act 2015:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be a vulnerable adult.

Harassment, in general terms is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people in the hall, where actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

It may be related to age, gender, race, disability, religion, belief, sexuality, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. It may be obvious or it may be insidious.

For further guidance see: www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment

Legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of an employee's performance or behaviour at work is not bullying.

An occasional raised voice or argument is not bullying.

3. Persons affected

These will be:

- All trustees, volunteers, and staff
- All those attending any activity or service that is being delivered from the village hall charity property
- All visitors and contractors

4. Policy principles

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and mistreatment. 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. Townshend Village Hall charity has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

Townshend Village Hall charity recognises that under the Care Act 2014, it has a duty for the care and protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse. It also recognises its responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

Townshend Village Hall charity is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

Townshend Village Hall charity is aware of the work of their local safeguarding Board/Partnership and other support organisations on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of adults vulnerable from abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

Townshend Village Hall Committee is committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount:
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults 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.

Bullying and harassment can apply to any persons and is not limited to children and vulnerable adults.

5. Procedures

5.1 Safeguarding

▪ Statement of Eligibility

All members of the committee will have signed the Trustee Statement of Eligibility form* for trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse.

▪ Familiarisation

All members of the committee will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities.

▪ Issues

All members of the committee will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.

▪ Vetting

All members of the committee, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults unless appropriately vetted, within TVHA premises.

▪ Safe Recruitment

The hall committee will follow safe recruitment practices.

▪ Responsibility

Responsibility for safeguarding will be the individual who initially observes the issue. They will be supported by a member of the committee or a trustee who will assist with reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) run by Cornwall Council. Their contact details are:-

- Adult Safeguarding
 - Phone: 0300 1234 131
- Children Safeguarding:
 - Phone: 0300 1231 116
 - Mail: multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

▪ Suspicions and Allegations

All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult as reported to a committee member or trustee will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. Useful guidelines, when a child, young person or adult makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person are:-

- stay calm and listen carefully
- reassure the person that s/he has done the right thing in telling you
- not investigate or ask leading questions
- let the person know that s/he will need to tell the referral unit
- not promise to keep what they have been told a secret
- inform MARU as soon as possible
- make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which will be signed, and dated.

▪ Hiring Agreements

The hall committee will ensure that all hirers of the hall have signed The Terms and Conditions of our hiring agreement that cover safeguarding.

▪ Review

The village hall management committee will carry out an annual review of this policy.

5.2 Bullying & Harassment

Any complaints of bullying and/or harassment should be made to a committee member or any Trustee.

All complaints will be dealt with fairly and confidentially and sensitively and will be treated as a serious issue. They will be investigated promptly, objectively and independently. Decisions can then be made as to what action needs to be taken.

If appropriate, the matter will be dealt with informally. Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and an agreement that the behaviour will cease. Trustees reserve the right to suggest counselling to any individual found to be exhibiting bullying or harassment behaviour.

In a very serious case, a person will be asked to step down as a Trustee or stop volunteering at the hall or using the hall.

The aim of these procedures is to ensure incidents of bullying and harassment can be recognised and dealt with.

TVHA Adopted (date)