

The Green Party of England & Wales

Safeguarding Policy

This Safeguarding Policy was adopted by the Green Party Executive in March 2019. It is subject to regular review, based on best practice.

The policy was last reviewed in November 2020. The next review is scheduled for May 2021.

1.0 Introduction and purpose of this document

No child, young person or at risk adult should have their welfare compromised through their involvement with the Green Party. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we have in place systems, processes, and clear responsibilities across the Green Party for the protection and safeguarding of all children, young and at risk adults, who come into contact with the Party in its activities. Our aim is to provide clarity for those volunteering and employed to know how to develop a safeguarding culture as well as knowing how to raise concerns and take action if they are concerned about any aspect of safeguarding. We also want to ensure they understand the ways in which they can help to prevent risk of harm.

The Green Party is committed to developing a Party culture whereby all Green Party members feel empowered to report safeguarding concerns in the knowledge that they will be appropriately acted on.

The Green Party is committed to developing ever more effective systems for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

This Safeguarding Policy is delivered through the Green Party's [Safeguarding Procedures](#).

2.0 How do we define safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a preventative and precautionary organisational approach to planning and procedures required to protect children and adults at risk from actual or potential harm resulting from their contact with any part of the organisation. Safeguarding involves recognising signs of physical or emotional abuse or neglect, or any circumstances that might facilitate these, reporting those concerns and acting appropriately on them.

The [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 report](#) published by the Government defines abuse as follows:

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3.0 Who does this policy aim to protect?

The policy applies to children, young people and adults at risk.

For the purpose of this policy, children are defined as anyone under the age of 14. Department for Education guidance on safeguarding children can be found [here](#).

Young people are defined as people between the ages of 14 and 17.

An adult at risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support. Further NHS guidance of safeguarding at risk adults can be found [here](#).

The Green Party is committed to following the Six Principles set out by The Care Act 2014 to underpin the safeguarding of adults at risk:

- Empowerment - People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership - Services offer local solutions through working closely with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

The Care Act also provides definitions of abuse, which can be found [here](#).

The Green Party is also committed to the principles of empowerment for adults at risk set out in the [Mental Capacity Act](#), and to [making safeguarding personal](#) (ensuring that adults at risk are asked what they want to happen following a concern, that their wishes are taken into account and they are informed of actions being taken).

4.0 Responsibilities

The Green Party's Safeguarding Policy is embedded at every level of the Green Party, through the following safeguarding procedures:

- All Green Party members are responsible for abiding by the Safeguarding Commitment, requiring them to immediately report any concerns about the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Green Party staff members are also required to agree to the Safeguarding Commitment.
- All Chairs of local Green Parties are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented within their local party on how to maintain safe boundaries for all children, young people and adults at risk involved in their local Party, and how to immediately report any concerns they are made aware of.
- Every Green Party region has a safeguarding champion, who supports local parties in the region to implement the safeguarding policy. The Young Greens also have a safeguarding champion.
- The Chief Executive of the Party serves as the Green Party's Safeguarding Officer and receives and acts upon all reports of concern about the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.
- The Green Party Executive has an Executive Lead for Safeguarding who is responsible for offering advice and support on the development and implementation of the Policy
- The Green Party Executive is responsible for overall implementation of the policy alongside Green Party Regional Council, who has responsibility for wider party welfare.
- The Disciplinary Committee is responsible for investigating and making decisions on any disciplinary cases that arise from breaches of the Safeguarding Commitment.

The Green Party of England & Wales - Safeguarding Procedures

1.0 Introduction

These procedures are part of the Safeguarding Policy and specify how the Green Party of England and Wales discharges its responsibilities contained within the Safeguarding Policy. It outlines the responsibilities, systems and processes for implementation of the Policy at all level of the Party.

2.0 Responsibilities

1. The Green Party Executive is responsible for overall implementation of the policy, and the appointment of an Executive Lead for Safeguarding who is responsible for offering advice and support on the development and implementation of the Policy.
2. The Green Party Regional Council, who has responsibility for overseeing GPEx;'s implementation of the policy, as part of its responsibility for wider party welfare.
3. The Disciplinary Committee is responsible for investigating and making decisions on any disciplinary cases that arise from breaches of the Safeguarding Commitment.
4. The Green Party's National Safeguarding Officer has the following responsibilities:

The Safeguarding Officer is the Green Party's most senior member of staff – the Chief Executive Officer. They are responsible for maintaining, implementing and reviewing the Green Party's Safeguarding Policy and the Green Party's Safeguarding Procedures.

The Safeguarding Officer is assisted in their safeguarding duties by a wider safeguarding team, comprising the Safeguarding Lead on the Green Party Executive and the Safeguarding Assistant (a staff member, who will assist with the burden of day to day safeguarding responsibilities). Together these three individuals form the Green Party's National Safeguarding Team.

The Safeguarding Officer and their team can be contacted through safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or through 020 36919 391.

The duties of the Safeguarding Officer and their team are as follows:

- To receive, record and act (including contacting external authorities such as the police where required) on all safeguarding concerns reported to the Green Party, to ensure that the no child, young person or adult at risk is put at risk through their involvement with the Green Party.

- To ensure that safeguarding information about an individual safeguarding concern is shared appropriately within the Green Party, including local Parties and relevant Green Party groups.
 - To embed a culture of safeguarding throughout the Green Party, through requiring every member to sign the Safeguarding Commitment and requiring local Party Chairs to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
 - To monitor the extent to which local Party Chairs are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities.
 - To keep up to date with legislation and best practice concerning safeguarding, and to update Green Party Safeguarding Policy as necessary.
 - To participate in safeguarding training and maintain an up to date DBS Certificate.
 - To regularly report on the application of the Green Party’s Safeguarding Policy to the Green Party Executive, including the number of safeguarding concerns reported and recorded.
 - To regularly review Safeguarding Policy, in particular the extent to which it is understood and applied across the Green Party. Date of next Review – September 2020.
5. The Chairs of Local Green Parties have a responsibility to follow the guidance set out in the Green Party’s [Safeguarding Guidance for Local Green Party Chairs \(Appendix B\)](#). This guidance sets out how Chairs can maintain safe boundaries for all children, young people and adults at risk involved in their Local Party, and to report any concerns to their welfare they are made aware of.
 6. Individual Green Party members have a responsibility to agree and adhere to the [Green Party Safeguarding Commitment \(Appendix A\)](#). This commits members to playing their individual part in ensuring that the Green Party is a safe space for children, young people and adults at risk – by behaving professionally around children, young people and adults at risk and reporting any safeguarding concerns to both their local Party chair and the national safeguarding team, and reporting any immediate concerns of abuse and neglect to police and local authorities
 7. Every Green Party region has a safeguarding champion, who supports local parties in the region to implement the safeguarding policy. The Young Greens also have a safeguarding champion.

3.0 Safeguarding Procedures governing everyone

The below diagram sets out how all Green Party safeguarding responsibilities interact, to form a cohesive safeguarding procedure that allows safeguarding concerns to be reported and responded to.

Green Party Safeguarding Procedure – in a nutshell



Blue arrows denote the routes by which safeguarding concerns are reported.



Green arrows denote the routes by which safeguarding information and guidance are shared.

The Safeguarding Commitment for Green Party members and employees

The Green Party's Safeguarding Policy states that:

No child, young person or adult at risk should have their welfare compromised through their involvement with the Green Party. The Green Party is committed to developing a Party culture whereby all Green Party members feel empowered to report safeguarding concerns in the knowledge that they will be appropriately acted on. The Green Party is committed to developing ever more effective systems for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

By agreeing to and abiding by the Safeguarding Commitment you can help uphold this policy and help to make children, young people and adults at risk who have contact with the Green Party safer. The Safeguarding Commitment should be read and applied alongside the Code of Conduct that applies to all Green Party members. You can read more about Safeguarding, the definitions we use for children, young people and adults at risk, and our Safeguarding Procedures [here](#).

Urgent Action

Whenever you believe that a specific child or young person is being abused or neglected, your first action should always be to report your concerns immediately to the police or to the Children's Services section of the local authority. You can contact the police by phoning 999 (in emergency) or 101 (if time allows) and following the instructions of the emergency services personnel or by phoning your local authority and saying that you wish to report a child protection concern.

If you have concerns but are unsure about whether a specific child or young person is being abused or neglected, you can discuss your concerns with an adviser on the NSPCC's helpline. You can contact a trained NSPCC helpline counsellor 24 hours a day by email or by using an online reporting form (help@nspcc.org.uk). You can also telephone the Helpline on 0808 800 5000 on Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends.

If your concerns relate to a specific adult at risk, you should contact the Adult Social Care section of the local authority or in an emergency always contact the police by dialling 999. The police can also be contacted about an adult at risk by dialling 101, if an emergency response is not thought to be necessary.

If your concern relates to a child, young person or adult at risk suffering abuse or neglect as a result of contact with the Green Party, it will ultimately be important for the Green Party's Safeguarding Officer to be informed that a report has been made. However, once a matter has been reported to the police or the local authority you must be guided by them about what can be said to whom and when. In some cases the police or local authority will insist that nothing is said to any third party so as not to risk impeding investigations or protective actions. **Contact safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or 020 36919 391 to report your concerns.**

As a Green Party member/employee I agree:

- To report immediately to the police or the local authority any concerns that a child, young person or adult at risk is being abused or neglected – see the above urgent action box for details onto how to do this.
- To report immediately to my local Party Chair and to the Green Party's National Safeguarding Officer any factors in my own circumstances or history which may make it unsafe for me to have contact with children and young people or adult at risk, including all charges and/or convictions of sexual abuse or neglect. This information will be recorded on a confidential basis by the national party, in line with data protection regulations. We will notify you in advance if we feel that it is necessary to disclose this information to a third party.
- To report immediately to my local Party Chair and to the Green Party's Safeguarding Officer immediately any concerns of which I am aware about the behaviour or history of any other member of the Green Party which may place children, young people or adults at risk in danger of abuse and neglect, including all charges and/or convictions of sexual abuse or neglect. This information will be recorded on a confidential basis by the national party, in line with data protection regulations.
- To report immediately to my local Party Chair and to the Green Party's Safeguarding Officer any inappropriate behaviour I witness in the Green Party between adults and children, and/or young people/at-risk adults.
- In all my dealings with the Green Party, to be always open, frank and honest about matters concerning the health, welfare and safety of children, young people and adults at risk and never to seek to cover up, obscure or hide concerns of abuse or neglect or concerns about systems, people or working practices that could place children, young people and adults at risk in danger of abuse or neglect.
- To draw to the attention of my local Party Chair and to the Green Party's Safeguarding Officer any concerns I have that Green Party systems, people or working practices place children, young people or adults at risk in danger of abuse or neglect.
- In my own interactions with children, young people and adults at risk in the Green Party always to behave appropriately. This includes:
 - Always interact with a child in the company of at least one other adult, either the parent/guardian, or a person nominated by the parent/guardian. Do not spend time alone with a child.
 - Securing written consent from the parent/guardian before taking any photos/video footage of a child. Parents/guardians should be made aware of when, where and how the images/video footage may be used to give their informed consent.
 - Minimising any direct contact with a child on social media, and never exchanging personal email addresses and mobile phone numbers.
 - Not seeking to develop relationships outside of a Green Party context with children met as a result of Green Party activities
 - Ensuring that if any form of physical touching of a child, young person or adult at risk is required (e.g. picking up someone who has fallen), it should be kept to a minimum and involve communication with that person to ensure that I have received consent and am aware of their boundaries.

- Ensuring that a child or young person has given their full and informed consent to interactions and activities with me, and that I am aware of their boundaries.
- Ensuring that an adult at risk has given their full and informed consent to interactions and activities with me, and that I am aware of their boundaries.
- Seeking guidance from my Local Party Chair if I am unsure about how I should behave appropriately in particular circumstances with a child, young person or adult at risk.

I understand that I should report any safeguarding concerns to both my local Party Chair AND the Green Party's National Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or through 020 36919 391).

I understand that breaches of this Safeguarding Commitment on my part could result in disciplinary action from the Party.

I commit to bearing the Commitment closely in mind, and adhering to it, throughout my time as a Green Party member.

Safeguarding Guidance for local Green Party Chairs

Safeguarding Guidance for local Green Party Chairs*

The following guidance has been developed to help you, as a local Green Party Chair, to help maintain safe boundaries for children, young people and adults at risk involved in your local Party, and to report any concerns about their welfare that you are made aware of.

The national Party is here to support you at all times with this. You can call the national safeguarding team (safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or through 020 3691 9391) to ask for advice. The national safeguarding team will also provide safeguarding training opportunities and guidance for Chairs, including training at Green Party Conferences.

You can read more about Safeguarding, the definitions we use for children, young people and adults at risk, and our [full Safeguarding Policy here](#).

*Some Green Party Chairs may wish to delegate safeguarding responsibilities to another officer on the local Party Executive. This is permissible, as long as the decision is clearly recorded in Executive minutes. In such circumstances, the following advice applies to the designated safeguarding officer in the local Party.

Maintaining safe boundaries

As local Party Chair you can help maintain safe boundaries for all children, young people and at risk adults involved in your local Party by following the below guidance.

- A member under the age of 18 should only interact with the local Party after a parental consent form from their parents/guardians has been received. A new form should be completed every 12 months, until the member has reached the age of 18. [See form here](#).
- Should Party interactions require a member under the age of 18 to spend a night away from home on Green Party business (e.g Party Conference), a special parental/guardian form should be received before this can happen, confirming that the parent/guardian are happy with the proposed accommodation arrangements and outlining the arrangements under which the member aged under 18 is being accommodated, including emergency contacts. [See form here](#). A risk assessment should also be considered - the national Safeguarding team can assist you with this.
- Where possible, try to ensure that any contact between your local Party members (including yourself) and a child (someone under the age of 14) between Green Party events should be through official Green Party email channels or relayed through a parent/guardian. Direct contact from any members with a child through personal email addresses, mobile phone numbers and social media should be discouraged.
- Ensure that any member leading any unsupervised activities with children, young people or adults at risk on behalf of the Green Party (such as leading a Green youth group) agrees to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check.

- Where possible, try to ensure that written permission from parents is in place before you take any pictures of child members of the Green Party. The permission should show that the parent/guardian understands what the pictures will be used for and where they will be used.
- Where possible, ensure that a child is not left alone with just one other member during Party business (be that a meeting, a campaign session, or another activity). Try to ensure that child is always in the company of at least two responsible adults, including if possible either the parent/guardian of the child, or a person nominated by the parent/guardian on their consent form.
- Ensure that any form of physical touching of a child required during Party business should be kept to a minimum, and should involve communication with that child to ensure consent has been given.
- Ensure that young people (people aged between 14 and 17) have given their full and informed consent to interactions and activities with their local Green Party, and that you and other member are aware of their boundaries.
- Ensure that at risk adults (see definition [here](#)) have given their full and informed consent to interactions and activities with their local Green Party, and that you and other members are aware of their boundaries.
- All consent forms related to safeguarding should be retained securely on file in line with data protection regulations. It should be understood that all consent from parents/carers can be withdrawn without justification and made effective immediately.
- Keep records of local Party officers, and their access to different software systems, up-to-date. It is important to ensure that the level of access local Party officers have to the personal data of local Party members is known.
- Work to ensure that all children, young people and adults at risk are given clear and easy to use information on how and to whom they may raise any concerns of their own about the behaviour of members towards them.

Every member of your local Party has been asked to individually agree to the Safeguarding Commitment Green Party members. The Safeguarding Commitment requires members to report safeguarding concerns to you, as well as to the Green Party's National Safeguarding Officer. This Commitment has been created to help you to maintain safe boundaries for all children, young people and adults at risk involved in your local Party – [you can find it here](#).

The national Green Party safeguarding team will notify you of any members of your local Party who have refused to agree to the Safeguarding Commitment.

There are clear laws on offences and rehabilitation of offences. Should a member or officer become aware of offences which would be disclosable under a basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, please inform the Safeguarding team as a matter of urgency on Contact safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or 020 36919 391.

The national Green Party safeguarding team *advise* that you print and ask members of your local Party to sign hard copies of the Commitment before they participate in action days and other forms of direct electoral campaigning for the Green Party. This is because there is a higher chance of unstructured contact between adults and children, young people and

vulnerable adults in this Green Party context than at an ordinary meeting. You can maintain these additional paper records as Chair.

Reporting safeguarding concerns highlighted to you (this covers members as well as Local Party Chairs or Coordinators)

On receipt of a reported safeguarding concern, please take the following steps:

1. If you are concerned that there is an immediate and present risk to someone's health, safety or wellbeing, please first phone 999 and follow the instructions of the emergency services personnel.
2. Contact the National Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or through 020 36919 391) to check that they have also received the reported concern. This double reporting system is designed to ensure that both local and national Green Parties have the same information to hand, to inform next steps.
3. The National Safeguarding Officer will then liaise with you to decide on the appropriate response, which may also involve contacting the Police. The police can also offer advice regarding safety at home and in the community and may refer people who have experienced violence, abuse or crimes to the Victim Support helpline (0845 303 0900), or to further victim support services. The response may also involve contacting local area social services team (safeguarding team), this information can be found on the local council's website.
4. Maintain a record of all correspondence and documents that relate to the reported risk

Care and support for your members

As Local Party Chair, you will want to foster an environment whereby members feel comfortable in reporting any safeguarding concerns to you.

To assist in creating this environment, you may wish to ask an Executive Committee member of a different gender from you to assist you in your safeguarding duties. This will help ensure that concerned members have a choice of people and genders to report any concerns to.

It is also important to remember that members who are not children, young people or adults at risk also have a right to feel safe in all their Green Party interactions. You will want to create a safe and supportive local Party environment whereby all members feel enabled to discuss any concerns in confidence with you. Although this does not fall strictly into safeguarding duties, the National Safeguarding Officer will be happy to help and advice on any such issues reported to you.

Behaviours of concern

As Local Party Chair, you are asked to report to the national safeguarding team any concerning behaviour towards children/at-risk adults in the Green Party that you witness/is reported to you.

Concerning behaviour could include:

- Attempts by members to meet/engage in social discussion with children they have met though the Green Party outside of a Green Party context
- Members making references to sexual matters to children, young people and adults at risk in any context.
- Members seeking to spend time alone with children, young people and adults at risk in any context.
- Members making physical contact with children, young people and adults at risk when this is not strictly required.
- Members making children, young people and adults at risk feel uncomfortable.

You can contact the national safeguarding team (safeguarding@greenparty.org.uk or through 020 3691 9391) to ask for advice on possible concerning behaviours.