

# Safeguarding Policy

## Safeguarding commitment at Humanists UK

Safeguarding is the action of protecting children and adults from harm. Creating a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued, is at the heart of safeguarding. It's about making sure our organisation is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse, and neglect. It's also about being ready to respond safely if there is a concern. We have a duty to safeguard volunteers, staff members, service beneficiaries, participants, and donors. Everyone in Humanists UK has a role to play in safeguarding. It is part of our day to day activities.

This Humanists UK's Safeguarding Policy applies to everyone working or volunteering on behalf of Humanists UK. This policy is detailed in Humanists UK's staff, trustee, consultant, and volunteer handbooks and is replicated in the Celebrant code of conduct.

Humanists UK is committed to the protection from harm of *all* people who come into contact with the organisation, though particular consideration is given to children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding applies to all people coming into contact with Humanists UK through its work.

Below are the key principles underpinning safeguarding at Humanists UK:

- The welfare of the individual is paramount.
- All people, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse<sup>1</sup>.
- The policy applies to all personnel including staff, trustees, contractors, volunteers and celebrants.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. This may require a referral to Children's Services or Adult Social Services and, in emergencies, the Police.
- Humanists UK is committed to safe recruitment, selection, and vetting of personnel.
- This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures that can be found in the staff, trustee, volunteer, and consultant handbooks and Celebrant code of conduct. These are reviewed annually.

All personnel (including trustees, staff, consultants, celebrants and volunteers) must report any concerns or allegations of abuse to either the Lead Safeguarding Officer, Chief Executive, children's services, adult social services, or the police. Failures to report will be taken up using Humanist UK's disciplinary procedures. Personnel are encouraged to flag concerns about the policy or procedures relating to Safeguarding to the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes, but is not limited to, those people who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

## **Purpose of Safeguarding**

The purpose of safeguarding is to protect people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, and to enable them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. Below are the most common types of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery, or commercial exploitation
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect
- Self-neglect
- Cyber abuse

This list is not exhaustive, and people may experience more than one type of abuse at the same time. Exploitation is a theme throughout.

## **Safeguarding Children**

Safeguarding children duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18. Safeguarding children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing harm to children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

## **Safeguarding Adults at Risk**

Safeguarding duties for adults at risk (often referred to as vulnerable adults) apply to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect

- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect<sup>2</sup>

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability, medical condition
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be elderly and frail
- Be a family carer
- May have protected characteristics as a result of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

(A more precise definition of Vulnerable Adults can be found in Section 59 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 but this broader 'Adults at Risk' definition from the Charity Commission is helpful in understanding the broad scope of safeguarding. **Any adult could be 'at risk'**, whether they are in a care setting or not.)

## **Confidentiality**

It is important that members of the public who contact Humanists UK feel able to share information with us. Humanists UK personnel should keep this information confidential as far as possible. However, this confidentiality cannot be absolute, and we have a responsibility to share personal information if we believe that doing so could prevent a serious crime or prevent serious injury to, or abuse of, themselves or another person.

Our Privacy Policy can be found on our website: <https://humanism.org.uk/privacy-policy>

## **Managing risks**

Risk assessments should be conducted to ensure that the safety of children and vulnerable adults is paramount. A *proportional response* to risks should be taken, with high-risk activities not engaged in without appropriate mitigation measures in place.

Humanists UK personnel typically do not engage in any unsupervised activities involving children under the age of 18. Teachers, parents, carers or an otherwise responsible party should always be in attendance. Should Humanists UK personnel find themselves alone with a child, they should seek help as quickly as possible.

Humanists UK personnel should endeavour not to work alone with vulnerable adults, for example by staying in a group setting or with a DBS-checked member of staff from the organisation with whom they are working. Supervision of activities with known vulnerable adults should be provided by a DBS-checked individual.

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<sup>2</sup> Care Act 2014

Activity planning meetings may, by their very nature, involve two people working alone, whether online or in a private space. A proportional response to risk should always be taken. If there is any reason to have concern about such a situation, the Lead Safeguarding Officer should be consulted immediately.

This mitigates the risk of harm both to service users and to Humanists UK personnel.

Unsupervised one-to-one contact with vulnerable adults occurs only in helpline or other specific caring activities such as Celebrant family visits, Faith to Faithless or Pastoral Care, all of which should be conducted by trained, DBS-checked personnel.

## Training

Humanists UK will provide training to any employee, trustee, volunteer<sup>3</sup>, consultant or celebrant who it feels should complete child and vulnerable adult safeguarding training, especially if their work may require them to provide support to vulnerable adults and children. This includes volunteers whose role requires them to respond to queries from members of the public, or to run events. It is the responsibility of the Humanists UK Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO) in conjunction with the Chief Executive to determine who requires training.

## Safeguarding roles

Humanists UK has appointed an individual who is responsible for dealing with Safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will be available for anyone to consult with. The LSO within Humanists UK is:

Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO): Catriona McLellan  
Telephone Number (Work): 020 7324 3068  
Telephone Number (Mobile): 07899 776622

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Tony Pinkney  
Telephone Number (Work): 020 7324 3060  
Telephone Number (Mobile): 07912 148572

Please note that these **mobile numbers are only for evenings and weekends**. During office hours please use the landline number starting 020 7324.

Should none of these named people be available then please refer directly to the relevant local safeguarding board ([which you can find here](#)). Should the concern be about an immediate risk to an individual, call 999.

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<sup>3</sup> This policy applies to those people volunteering directly for Humanists UK, not people trained by Humanists UK but volunteering for other organisations. These organisations will have their own safeguarding policy. For example, if you are a trained pastoral carer who is volunteering as part of a hospital/prison/institutional setting, that institution will ensure volunteers are trained and meet their safeguarding requirements. Volunteering working in schools or other educational institution settings will again need to abide by the safeguarding rules of those organisation.

## **Safeguarding training**

Everyone has a part to play in safeguarding but the roles listed below undergo safeguarding training as standard:

- Branch Chairs
- Programme leads/Chairs: Pastoral, Faith to Faithless, Education, Ceremonies
- Section leads/Chairs: Young Humanists & LGBT Humanists
- Community Services Coordinator

Additional training will be provided as needs are identified (eg for a volunteer managing events, branch secretaries, Public Affairs staff working with asylum seekers).

Safeguarding training is conducted via: <https://www.safecic.co.uk/>

## **Disclosure and Barring Service checks**

DBS Checks are arranged by the Office and Administration Manager in accordance with this policy. The DBS must be conducted by an umbrella body from the GOV.UK list (found [here](#).) Humanists UK currently uses [TotalCRB](#) to carry out DBS checks. The requirement for a specific role to be DBS checked will be determined at the creation of the new role and, for existing roles, will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the HR Group agenda.

If an individual subscribes to the DBS Update Service and their record can be verified as current, this will replace the need for a specific new DBS check.

Everyone has a part to play in safeguarding but the roles listed below will undergo DBS-checks as standard:

### **Humanists UK Trustees**

All trustees are required to undertake a DBS check.

### **Humanists UK Staff**

Employees whose role encompasses the management or supervision of other staff/volunteers who in turn have a level of safeguarding responsibility shall undertake a DBS check. The roles currently required are as follows:

Chief Executive  
Director of Community Services  
Director of Understanding Humanism

Head of Humanist Care  
Head of Ceremonies  
Ceremonies Training & Development Manager  
Community Services Coordinator  
Office & Administration Manager (in HR capacity)  
Director of Operations (in HR capacity)  
Executive Assistant (in HR capacity)

## **Celebrant Network**

The Humanist Ceremonies™ Network is a network of celebrants trained and accredited by Humanists UK. They work across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands. To enhance the reputation of Humanists UK and to provide reassurance to celebrants' clients, Humanists UK policy is that all celebrants undertake a basic DBS check. Currently Humanists UK will pay for the basic check.

## **Faith to Faithless (F2F)**

The Faith to Faithless programme is working to develop the world's first fully integrated support programme for apostates who leave high-control or coercive religious groups or cults. Many apostates can be considered 'at risk' adults, as they may be in danger as a result of their circumstances, and unable to protect themselves as a result of being isolated from wider society. Some might already have been disowned by their family and religious group and left homeless and vulnerable. Others may be at risk of violence: in some religious groups, apostasy is regarded as punishable by death. Some apostates are children, and entirely reliant on their parents or families for their care. They may fear the repercussions of 'coming out' as an apostate. Other children may have already told their families, and been harmed as a result.

The Faith to Faithless Project Manager, plus volunteers who work with vulnerable adults, such as the FTF trainers, require a basic DBS check.

The committee is not required to undertake DBS checks as standard (having an advisory function rather than management) but this will be subject to review at least annually or at the Board of Trustees discretion.

## **Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network**

The Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network trains and accredits non-religious people to provide pastoral care in institutions across the country, including prisons, hospitals, hospices, and universities. In general, pastoral carers are managed by the institution in which they work, and follow the institution's DBS-checking and safeguarding procedures. However, there are also volunteers who provide pastoral support over the phone or online for Humanists UK- these volunteers all require a basic DBS check.

## **School Speakers Programme**

The School Speakers Programme trains and facilitates visits by non-religious people to educational institutions across the country, including schools and universities. School speakers follow the DBS-checking and safeguarding procedures of the institution at which they have been invited to speak. However, as there is a high possibility that some schools will leave these volunteers unattended in classrooms, school speakers all require a basic DBS check.

## **Young Humanists**

Young Humanists is the 18-35s section of Humanists UK. Young Humanists exists to offer a space for non-religious people aged 18-35 to meet, socialise, debate and support each other.

The committee is not required to undertake DBS checks as standard but this will be subject to review at least annually or at the Board of Trustees discretion.

## **Humanist Students**

Humanist Students is the student section of Humanists UK. It exists to support and represent a growing membership of non-religious students on campuses everywhere in the UK.

The committee is not required to undertake DBS checks as standard but this will be subject to review at least annually or at the Board of Trustees discretion.

## **Defence Humanists**

The Defence Humanists section (formerly known as the UK Armed Forces Humanist Association) is a growing body of servicemen and women, their Families, Veterans and civilian members of the Ministry of Defence who seek to represent the interests of all those who subscribe to non-religious beliefs.

The committee is not required to undertake DBS checks as standard but this will be subject to review at least annually or at the Board of Trustees discretion.

## **LGBT Humanists**

The LGBT Humanists section provides community activities and activism opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender humanists, as well as promoting LGBT rights and understanding of humanism as part of Humanists UK.

The committee is not required to undertake DBS checks as standard but this will be subject to review at least annually or at the Board of Trustees discretion.

**Catriona McLellan**  
**17 September 2020**