



Safeguarding annual report 2024-25

1. Context

This report is primarily concerned with management of safeguarding matters during the period April 2024 – March 2025. The aim is to provide assurance that the mechanisms in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust approach to safeguarding.

This is the first annual report on safeguarding activity. Producing an annual report on how the Authority meets its commitment to safeguarding, as set out in the Safeguarding Policy, was a recommendation following a Safeguarding review in August 2023.

The routine safeguarding management of the activities of the Authority and employees is the responsibility of the Authority, management and employees. In our safeguarding policy we have specifically committed to:

- Adopt safeguarding guidelines throughout our procedures and make clear the standards of conduct expected of our workforce when engaged in a professional activity.
- Recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Share information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/guardians and staff/volunteers.
- Respond swiftly to all suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Provide effective management for staff through supervision, support and training.

2. Governance

There is a legal duty of care to provide a safe environment when children and vulnerable adults access our services. We have a safeguarding policy which sets out the Authority's aims, commitments and responsibilities on safeguarding in the delivery of our services. The policy was ratified at the meeting of the Programmes and Resources Committee on 24 January 2025, and will be reviewed annually going forward. The policy is published on our website at <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/publications/operationalpolicies>

A Safeguarding Working Group (SWG) was convened in December 2023 to implement the recommended actions from the review. The SWG consists of:

Post	Role
Head of People Management	Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)
Engagement Manager	Deputy DSO
Young People and Communities Team Leader	Deputy DSO
HR Adviser	Lead on staff processes
Volunteering Manager	Lead on volunteer processes
People Management Support Officer	Lead on Disclosure and Barring Checks

The SWG was chaired by the DSO and met quarterly in this period.

3. Review of supporting documentation

The document **Guidance on Safeguarding** sets out how we will implement the intentions of the policy. It was reviewed throughout the year and the updated version published on the HUB for staff to access and on Better Impact for volunteers. The target audience is staff and volunteers who have significant contact with children and vulnerable adults. It provides the contact details of Safeguarding Officers, and who to contact outside of the organisation, when needed. It gives clarity on the selection and recruitment process of staff and volunteers into roles which involve working with children or vulnerable adults, and in what circumstances these roles require disclosure. It gives details on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and the process for keeping certificates up to date.

The Guidance clearly sets out the standards of conduct to which all staff and volunteers are expected to comply, and also the procedure to follow when there are any concerns.

The four induction briefing documents were reviewed in November and condensed into one, the **Safeguarding induction briefing**. The content is based on the information provided in the ELMS module *Safeguarding for all*. The volunteer handbook on Better Impact has a link to this briefing document, and it has been added to the line managers checklist to ensure it is discussed with every new starter.

4. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check audit

Although Authority staff and volunteers are rarely in sole charge of children and vulnerable adults (as they are usually accompanied by a teacher, guardian or carer whilst accessing our services), it is recognised it is important to ensure as much as is reasonably practicable, that appointments to positions of trust are 'safe'.

In November, the decision criteria for identifying which of our staff posts and volunteering roles require an enhanced DBS check was reviewed. Following this, the Wider Team managers were tasked with assessing the posts and volunteer roles they manage using the criteria to determine whether a DBS check was required.

As a result of this audit, 37 staff posts were identified as requiring a DBS check. Five volunteer roles were identified. At the end of 2024-25, there are 26 volunteers with a DBS certificate.

This means successful candidates and volunteers in these posts/roles will be subject to a pre-appointment DBS check (and every 3 years thereafter) aimed at assuring us of their suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

5. Education and Training in 2024-25

It is recognised that staff and volunteers with special safeguarding responsibilities require training to enable them to develop and maintain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding.

Safeguarding training throughout 2024-25:

- The DSO attended the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) attended Working Together: Everyone's responsibility (Level 3) in November.
- The DDSOs completed the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) two day Designated Safeguarding Officer Training in December. (this is a requirement for all Authority designated posts every 3 years)
- The safeguarding lead HR Adviser and the Volunteering Manager completed the NSPCC online Managing allegations training.
- The HR Advisers and Volunteering Manager completed the NSPCC online Safer recruitment training.
- All DBS checked postholders and volunteers completed the following ELMS modules:
 - Safeguarding for all – Children edition (20 mins)
 - Safeguarding for all – Adult edition (20 mins)
- All managers/supervisors of work experience students are required to complete the Children edition prior to the placement.
- Two half day classroom *Safeguarding in Practice* training sessions by the Independent Safeguarding Service cic, in February and March (although latter postponed until May) open to any staff or volunteer working with children or vulnerable adults. There were 20 attendees in February and 19 people have booked on to the course re-arranged in May.

6. Work experience placements

In 2024-25 the Authority hosted 10 work experience placements.

Host team	No. of placements
Mix of CMPT/Engagement/Rangers/Woodlands	5
Development Management - Planning	2
Junior Rangers	2
Information Technology	1

The allocation of a placement requires individual students to submit a completed application form with parent or guardian consent. The parent or guardian is advised that staff supervising work experience students do so on an ad hoc basis therefore do not have a DBS check. They are also informed that we recognise children experiencing work for the first time may merit special consideration in regards to health and safety, and are provided with a list the common hazards associated with work at the National Park.

The Authority has a generic risk assessment for *young person & students*. Where any more significant risks are identified, a specific risk assessment would also be necessary.

7. Planning for implementation, monitoring and evaluation in 2025-26

Children and vulnerable adults have the right to be safe and happy in the activities that they, or their parents or carers choose, and parents have a right to believe that the organisations to which they

entrust their children, are safe. We have a duty of care for the children and vulnerable adults for whom we provide activities or services. Therefore, we must continue to put safeguards in place to ensure their safety and enjoyment.

It is far better to prevent abuse by putting safeguarding measures in place in advance of any incident – in exactly the same way that we consider health and safety hazards – and take steps to minimise the possibility of this occurring.

In this period, the SWG delivered actions to meet the recommendations from the August 2023 review. The review was an assessment of our safeguarding measures by a previous DSO based on their experience and observations, against our policy commitments.

The current DSO proposes a more systematic approach to assessment (appendix 2 – Safeguarding Action Plan for 2025-26). Using the NSPCC's *safetycheck standards*, a checklist relevant and proportionate to the Authority's activities with children and vulnerable adults has been drafted. Using this checklist at the first 2025-26 quarterly meeting of the SWG, the DSO, supported by the DDSOs, will use their knowledge and training to complete the checklist and identify what actions are required to either maintain, update or improve the measures.

8. Recommendations

- 1.** The Safeguarding annual report 2024-25, is recognised and noted.
- 2.** The proposal to develop a Safeguarding Action Plan for 2025-26 from the checklist, is approved.