



SURREY YOUTH FOCUS

C H A M P I O N I N S P I R E E M P O W E R

Safeguarding Children within third sector organisations:

Results and recommendations from a survey by Surrey Youth Focus

4th July 2017

1 Executive Summary

A survey of safeguarding practices of third sector organisations in Surrey was carried out in early 2017. Organisations invited to participate ranged from small completely voluntary to larger professional ones. The range of activities they deliver was wide - including sports organisations, youth clubs, services for homeless young people, services for young people with disabilities, employment and uniformed activities, etc. We sought to gain responses from a wide range of organisations through distribution by email, twitter and other channels. 99 people responded with a good spread across the county geographically.

The key findings were:

1. Our respondents were keen for more information/training including on digital related issues, evaluating their safeguarding practice, mental health and bullying/violence and introduction to safeguarding.
2. We need to identify and publicise an appropriate "Evaluate your safeguarding practice tool" suitable for small organisations. We would also like to offer a workshop on this topic.
3. Many organisations have not involved young people in the creation of their safeguarding practice.

Overall, our respondents were very engaged in the safeguarding agenda and keen to know more. A concern that remains following the survey is that organisations less engaged in safeguarding are unlikely to have answered the survey and hence we do not know how many organisations out there are not engaged in the agenda who need to be.

2 Introduction

Surrey Youth Focus was given seed funding by Surrey County Council to set up a Safeguarding Young People Network for the third sector. The funding covered:

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- Carrying out a survey of voluntary organisations to determine their needs and influence their safeguarding practice.
- Setting up the voluntary sector database and marketing the network.
- Distributing messages from Public Bodies to the third sector for one year.
- Running three events.

The network was launched in December and we now have 180 people on the email distribution list. We expect this number to grow as word of the network gets out.

Pleasingly, the number of people reading the bulletin is very high – over 40% typically open it compared to an industry average of 21% according to MailChimp. Also the click through rate (the percentage of people who click to get further information) is high at around 12-16% per bulletin, compared to an industry average of 2.5%.

It is very important to note that Surrey Youth Focus are not, and do not intend to be, experts in Safeguarding. What we do aim to do is be a conduit of information and to play a facilitation role to improve safeguarding in the sector, ensuring that practitioners and safeguarding experts are interacting in appropriate ways to achieve excellent safeguarding.

In early 2017 we carried out a survey of voluntary sector organisations who serve young people in Surrey. It is important to emphasise that included in “the third sector” are a huge range of organisations – different governance structures, different sizes, ranging from completely voluntary to largely paid, professional staff. The range of activities carried out by the voluntary sector includes sports organisations, youth clubs, services for homeless young people, services for young people with disabilities, employment and uniformed activities, etc. We sought to gain responses from as wide an audience as possible, distributing via email, twitter, etc.

Participation in the survey was, of course, voluntary so driven by individual people’s motivations to respond. It is important to note that the survey will typically be answered by those who are interested in the topic of safeguarding. It is highly likely (although not proven) that there are many organisations out there who are less concerned about safeguarding and may have poorer practice than the survey results suggest. However at the other end of the spectrum there are also some organisations, such as the Scouts, who “grasped the nettle” around Safeguarding some years ago and have driven excellent practice throughout their organisations. There is a risk in some of these organisations of reaching “safeguarding fatigue” where people feel that they have already devoted enough time to this topic and hence do not answer the survey.

There were 99 respondents to the survey, a good spread across all eleven of Surrey’s Boroughs and Districts and a range of organisational types.

We found a number of ways in which organisations want and/or need to improve their safeguarding practice and this report outlines these in further detail and recommends ways forward.

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This document gives the key findings from the survey along with information gathered through other sources (e.g. informal conversations). Note that the recommendations are not currently resourced and would need to be resourced/funded in order to progress.

3 Recommendations

These are the key recommendations:

- 1) Explore further resources at a local and national level and seek mechanisms to **provide information/training** on each topic widely across Surrey. e.g. online training/workshops/webinars. The priority topics identified so far are:
 - a) The challenges of keeping your young people safe in the digital age: sexting, photographs, social media, etc.
 - b) Evaluating the safeguarding practice of third sector organisations.
 - c) How to deal with mental health issues e.g. depression and self-harming.
 - d) How to deal with bullying, violence, aggression and abusive behaviour and language.
 - e) Introduction to safeguarding for a charity/voluntary organisation.
- 2) With the help of an expert, analyse the survey responses to **consider the safeguarding policies for a number of organisations**. Are the policies appropriate? If not why not?
- 3) Evaluate your safeguarding practice – find and promote an **“evaluate your safeguarding practice” tool** aimed at third sector organisations, especially small ones. This must not be too heavy – statutory type tools are typically too onerous for volunteer led organisations. There may well be a tool out there (e.g. from NSPCC) but this needs to be investigated.
- 4) Consider in future how we could target an unbiased sample of the voluntary sector to **find out the true percentage of how many have a safeguarding policy/code of conduct**. This would need to be a targeted approach, such as a phone survey.
- 5) Find a route to enable and encourage voluntary organisations to **involve young people in creating their safeguarding policies**. Again, tap into resources such as Children England for their expertise and consider disseminating “how to” guides or putting on a workshop.
- 6) At the time of the survey there was a need to **educate voluntary organisations on the different roles of MASH and LADO**. This has/is being worked on by SCC/SSCB.
- 7) Bring together safeguarding/welfare officers together to discuss cultural type issues – **how to gain buy in to the safeguarding agenda** in their organisations.

4 Survey Results

4.1 Thirst for information

There is a thirst for information/training about Safeguarding: 79% would to know more about at least one topic. Out of the 99 respondents, these were the hottest topics:

- The challenges of keeping your young people safe in the digital age: sexting, photographs, social media, etc - 49%
- Evaluating their safeguarding practice – 49%
- How to deal with mental health issues e.g. depression and self-harming 32%
- How to deal with bullying, violence, aggression and abusive behaviour and language 28%
- Introduction to safeguarding for a charity/voluntary organisation 26%

Other topics which at least 13% of people wanted:

- Ensuring appropriate relationships between your staff/volunteers and young people
- How to carry out a risk assessment
- How to deal with discrimination
- How to deal with drug related issues (including one sports club asking for help on performance enhancing drugs).
- How to create a safeguarding policy
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Radicalisation of young people
- What to do when a staff member/volunteer suspects a child is being abused outside of the organisation. e.g. a parent, another adult or another young person. Abuse includes Child Sexual Exploitation, child abuse, neglect or other harm

Other text comments made by respondents on the information that they require:

- How to make your governing body take action!
- How to talk to 'older' young people (age 16-25 with additional needs) about safeguarding in a non-patronising way. We have not been able to find any resources to help with this.
- Drug related is more for performance enhancing.

Action within existing project: Ask SSCB and other partners to identify appropriate resources to help with each of these topics if available. Run 3 workshops to address one issue, possibly Challenges of keeping young people safe in the digital age.

Recommendation: Explore further resources at a local and national level and seek mechanisms for providing information/training on each topic widely across Surrey. e.g. online training/workshops/webinars.

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4.2 Content of safeguarding policies

We have gained significant intelligence on the content of safeguarding policies. Here are the percentages of organisations who have these issues in their Safeguarding Policies/Codes of Conduct:

Keeping young people safe from any risk associated with the services/activities that you provide	91%
Ratios of staff/volunteers to young people	52%
Whistle blowing by staff	60%
Complaints by young people	65%
Use of mobile phones/social media/taking and disseminating photographs and video of children by both adults and young people	69%
Appropriate physical behaviour and social relationships between adults and young people	74%
Transporting young people	57%
Appropriate use and supervision in changing rooms	27%
Appropriate supervision in toilets	25%
Application of sun tan lotion	14%
Appropriate/inappropriate sharing of information about young people	65%
Inappropriate behaviours by staff, volunteers or children including bullying, discrimination, violence, aggression and abusive behaviour and language	78%
Policies about smoking, alcohol and drugs for staff, volunteers and young people	60%
What a staff member/volunteer should do if they suspect a young person is self-harming	53%
	71%

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What a staff member/volunteer should do if they suspect that a child is being neglected or abused from a person outside of your club or organisation e.g. a parent or friend	
What a staff member/volunteer should do if they suspect a young person is subject to Child Sexual Exploitation.	56%
What a staff member/volunteer should do if they suspect a young person may be subject to radicalisation and violent extremism i.e. extreme political, social, or religious ideals.	36%
What a staff member/volunteer should do if they suspect a young person may be subject to Honour Based Violence such as Forced Marriage/Female Genital Mutilation.	32%
What to do if you believe a young person may be at risk of being trafficked?	30%

We found that a number of these figures were lower than expected. For example, given that 50% were sports clubs, it was surprising that only approximately 25% had a statement on use of toilets/changing rooms in their Safeguarding Policy/Code of Conduct.

Recommendation: With a safeguarding expert, we need to analyse the individual responses about their safeguarding policies for a number of organisations. Are they appropriate? If not why not?

4.3 Quality of Safeguarding Practice

We found it very interesting that 100% were confident or somewhat confident about the ability of their safeguarding practices to safeguard young people. However when asked what topics they would like to know more about, “Evaluating safeguard practice” was wanted by 58% of respondents.

Furthermore, the survey was designed to inform as well as seek information. When asked “What action(s), if any, are you going to take as a result of answering this questionnaire?” 83% indicated that they intended to take further action.

This survey has already made people think and decide to take further action:

- 44% would take action to ensure all staff/volunteers are adhering to our Safeguarding Policy/Code of Conduct
- 28% would revise their safeguarding policy as a result.
- 27% would sign up to a newsletter
- 22% would find out more about a particular aspect of Safeguarding

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- 17% would carry out a Risk Assessment
- 11% would escalate specific issues to our next board/management meeting
- 9% would organise/book training

So, although all had some confidence with their practice, most still chose to take action as a result of the survey.

Of course, this is only across those organisations who have taken the survey. Given that those who took the survey saw an opportunity to do more, presumably there are hundreds of other organisations who could benefit from going through a similar approach to look at their practice.

Our conclusion overall is that there is room for improvement and organisations need to be empowered to evaluate their safeguarding practice.

Recommendation: We need to get the messages that were distributed in the safeguarding survey out more widely to other voluntary organisations, in a way that gets people engaged. One possible route forward is an “evaluate your safeguarding practice” tool aimed at third sector organisations, especially small ones. This must not be too heavy – statutory type tools are typically too onerous for volunteer led organisations. There may well be a tool out there e.g. from NSPCC, but this needs to be investigated.

4.4 Broader engagement of voluntary sector

Good news that a very high percentage had a Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct (only 3% had neither) and most had a Welfare Officer or Safeguarding Lead (only 7.3% had neither). However, the sample is of course only of those interested enough to take a survey which is likely to be biased. There may be significant numbers who do not have a Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct. We would need other means to find out whether this is an issue amongst other members of the voluntary sector. It is not clear at this stage how this could be accomplished.

Recommendation : For now, we propose that this is not the highest priority issue and should be put on hold. However, at some point in the future, we may want to develop a route to find out if this is an issue.

4.5 Young people not involved

Less than 20% of organisations said that young people had been involved in creating the policies. 16% were not sure and 52% said that young people had not been involved.

Young people often not involved in creating safeguarding policies, despite being a recommendation by Children England.

Recommendation: Consult Children England for their expertise and consider disseminating how to guides or putting on a workshop.

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4.6 Who to call?

There is a need to educate on some of the services provided by statutory agencies e.g. the terms MASH and LADO.

This is being addressed with the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board.

5 Other Observation

From personal experience, the knowledge, competence and commitment of the safeguarding or welfare officer will have a direct bearing on the quality of safeguarding practice across the whole of a voluntary organisation. In some organisations, the welfare officer might be highly experienced in safeguarding in their professional career, with the appropriate competence, gravitas and commitment to have significant influence over the management board and hence whole organisation. In other organisations, the welfare officer might have little professional knowledge or commitment, having reluctantly accepted doing the role due to lack of volunteers. A big challenge for even the most dedicated and experienced welfare officer is to gain buy in for the safeguarding agenda across the organisation.

<p>Recommendation: Bring together safeguarding/welfare officers together to share experiences and discuss cultural type issues – how to gain buy in for the safeguarding agenda across an organisation.</p>
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