

[Press release: Safeguarding is a key governance priority for all charities, says charity regulator](#)

Trustees should take steps to ensure no one who comes into contact with their charity suffers distress or harm, as well as safeguarding children and adults at risk, says regulator of charities.

The [Charity Commission's new safeguarding strategy](#) says that safeguarding is a key governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.

The strategy explains that trustees should ensure their charity provides a safe environment for staff, volunteers, and anyone who comes into contact with it.

It also makes clear that safeguarding goes beyond preventing physical abuse, and includes protecting people from harm generally, including neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and the consequences of the misuse of personal data.

Where a charity funds other organisations, such as overseas partners, that work with children or adults at risk, its trustees should carry out appropriate due diligence so that they can be confident that their partner has in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures.

Safeguarding is one of the three areas of risk facing charities that the Commission priorities in its work, alongside fraud and financial abuse and mismanagement and the extremist and terrorist abuse of charities. It says trustees always remain responsible for safeguarding, even if some aspects of it are delegated to staff.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at the Commission, says what trustees need to do in practice will depend on their charity's circumstances:

The public rightly expect all charities to be safe environments. So all trustees should make safeguarding a governance priority. Of course, what trustees do in practice will depend on the context of their charity's work, and trustees should take a proportionate approach. Charities working with vulnerable groups such as children and adults at risk for example, will need to ensure their safeguarding policies and practices comply with relevant safeguarding legislation and regulations.

But all trustees should think about the people that come into contact with their charity and consider the steps they can take to prevent them from coming to harm.

Recent accusations of harassment in the work place, including against some charities, demonstrate how vital it is that trustees are alive to the need to protect and safeguard all those involved in or affected by their work.

The Commission recently found that some [veterans' charities](#) were not taking adequate steps to protect their beneficiaries; the Commission says this was, in part, because the trustees did not consider certain veterans as being vulnerable.

The new strategy sets out the Commission's approach to safeguarding, and explains what trustees' charity law duties mean in the context of safeguarding. It replaces a previous strategy.

Ends

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Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. The Commission takes a risk-based approach to safeguarding matters and its role is to ensure that trustees of charities work with or provide services to vulnerable beneficiaries comply with their legal duties, and take reasonable steps to protect them and other persons that come into contact with the charity from harm and minimise the risk of abuse.
3. The Commission is not responsible for dealing with incidents of actual abuse and does not administer safeguarding legislation. It cannot prosecute or bring criminal proceedings, although it can and does refer any concerns to the police, local authorities and the Disclosure and Barring Service ('DBS') each of which has particular statutory functions.