



WWOOF

UNITED KINGDOM

Safeguarding Policy

Last update June 2022.

This policy is intended to inform and instruct WWOOF UK staff, trustees and members about safeguarding anyone involved in a WWOOF exchange.

WWOOF UK is committed to protecting its staff, trustees and members from all forms of abuse wherever possible. Staff and trustees are themselves safeguarded by the implementation of the employee policies in the WWOOF UK Employee Handbook, so this policy focuses on WWOOFers and Hosts.

Safeguarding at WWOOF

WWOOF UK functions primarily as an 'introducer' organisation and is not directly involved in placing WWOOFers with hosts. As such, there is limited scope for WWOOF UK to actively safeguard WWOOFers and hosts.

WWOOF UK supports members by providing information and guidance, advising them how to report problems or concerns, and by following procedures to properly address those reports.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting a citizen's health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. For WWOOF UK, this means ensuring WWOOFers can volunteer on farms free from harm, abuse and neglect by the hosts, and hosts can welcome WWOOFers without harm, abuse or neglect by the WWOOFers.

Who needs to be safeguarded?

Everyone involved in WWOOF should expect to have a good experience, and be protected (as far as possible) from negative experiences. Safeguarding aims to give extra protection to vulnerable people, including those always at risk due to physical, sensory and mental impairments or those with learning disabilities, and to those who become vulnerable owing to circumstances outside their control. Over and above protected characteristics in law, WWOOF UK recognises that WWOOFers may become vulnerable to harm due to financial, geographical, gender, language, travel or cultural issues. WWOOF UK expects that hosts would help WWOOFers in a difficult situation in any way that is reasonable.

WWOOF UK's Safeguarding Actions

WWOOF UK provides guidance to members and potential members via a Safeguarding page on our website which includes;

- general guidance about communication between WWOOFers and hosts
- general guidance for how WWOOFers travelling alone can keep safe
- contact details of WWOOF UK
- contact details of specialist support services (e.g. The Samaritans)
- advice about who to contact in an emergency

Information provided to potential hosts and WWOOFers points them to the Safeguarding page.

Staff responsibilities include screening each new host to determine their suitability for hosting volunteers, that they have the correct insurance, and that reasonable steps are taken to ensure volunteers are safe from risks, e.g. from farm machinery. All hosts are made aware of WWOOF UK's Safeguarding policy and guidance during their screening, and this is reiterated in their three-month follow-up email.

Once hosts are approved, they join our database and can arrange exchanges with WWOOFers. The exchange arrangements are made directly between hosts and WWOOFers under the auspices of WWOOF UK with both parties paying due regard to the policies outlined in this document.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Any member can report a problem or concern about anything to do with WWOOF, including the conduct of members, staff or trustees, via our website.

The complaints procedure is maintained and reviewed by the WWOOF UK Coordinator and the Personnel & Organisational Administrator, who is trained in safeguarding and is supported by the trustee nominated as primary Safeguarding Officer for WWOOF UK.

All staff, including those dealing with enquiries through the general contact form, pass any reports of a problem or concern on to the Personnel & Organisational Administrator.

Any report of a problem or concern which constitutes a safeguarding issue will be dealt with through both the complaints procedure and the safeguarding incident review process (see Appendix 1).

Appendix 1 - Complaints and Safeguarding Procedure

Complaints procedure outline

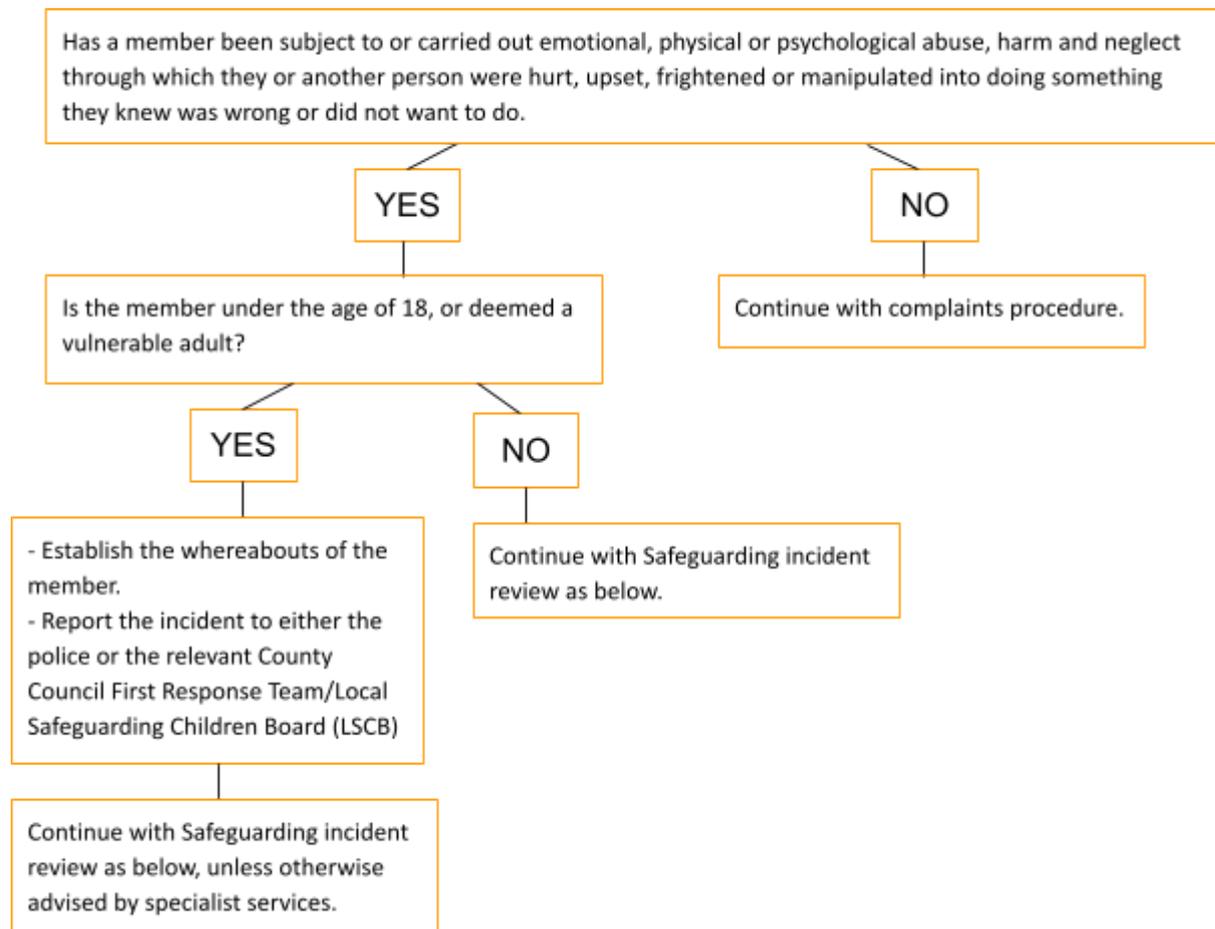
- WWOOF UK contacts the person reported so they can explain the situation from their side.
- Usually, WWOOF UK will also ask other WWOOFers or hosts about their experience in relation to the specific problem reported.
- If there seems to be a solution to the problem, WWOOF UK will try to support members to improve their practices so they can continue WWOOFing or hosting.
- If no solution is found, or a member's actions appear to pose a serious safeguarding risk to other members, WWOOF UK may cancel or suspend their membership.
- All members involved in the reported situation will be told the outcome of the investigation.

The full detail of the complaints procedure can be found in the Employee Handbook.

Safeguarding incident review process

Each complaint is also assessed as to whether it constitutes a safeguarding issue, with all actions in the procedure taken by the Personnel and Organisational Administrator or, if they are unavailable to do so, the Safeguarding Officer.

STAGE 1



STAGE 2

