



ARG UK Safeguarding Policy Statement

Amphibian & Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is a registered charity (number 1165504) committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs). As part of that focus, we organise and participate in educational and outreach activities for the benefit of our volunteers, conservation partners and the wider public and to promote the conservation of our native species. This includes outreach with schools and youth groups, with community groups that may include vulnerable and protected adults; and with the wider public at events and training days, run by us, and that we attend as part of our community outreach programme.

Our safeguarding policy applies equally to our volunteers and members of the wider public attending our events, activities and training days. We want all of our volunteers including children and vulnerable and protected adults to enjoy their involvement with ARG UK and its affiliated groups. To engender this we commit to operating safely, with safeguarding as the top priority, and to act and be seen to act appropriately at all times.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.
- To protect all of those associated with ARG UK and its affiliated groups from harm, and provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.
- To protect children and vulnerable and protected adults who participate in activities organised by ARG UK and its affiliated groups from harm.
- This policy applies to anyone involved with ARG UK, including our Board of Trustees, operational staff and volunteers ; and to our affiliated ARGs including all member and non-member volunteers participating in associated activities.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- Safeguarding protocols and procedures

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- Volunteer working agreement
- Health and Safety documents including the generic risk assessment, lone working procedures

Statement of Rights

- Children and vulnerable and protected adults should never experience abuse of any kind
- ARG UK and its affiliated groups have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, protected and vulnerable adults, to keep them from harm and to allow them to operate in a safe and protective environment.
- All volunteers have the right to a safe and protective environment

Definitions

The terms “children” or “child” refer to all children and young people up to the age of 18 years. The fact that a child has become sixteen years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is in the armed forces, in hospital, or in prison or a young offender’s institution, does not change their status or their entitlement to services or their protection under the Children Act 1989.

A vulnerable or protected adult, also sometimes referred to as an “Adult at Risk”, is defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

We recognise that

- the welfare of children and vulnerable and protected adults is paramount.
- all children and vulnerable and protected adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, ex-offender status or socioeconomic background have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse and will have a positive, enjoyable and safe experience with ARG UK and its affiliated groups.
- some children and vulnerable and protected adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable and protected adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting welfare.
- all allegations, suspicions of harm or abuse and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
- our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity

We aim to keep children and vulnerable and protected adults safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a Safeguarding Team with a designated Safeguarding Officer, supported by individuals with experience of working in the education, welfare and prison sectors.

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- adopting safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training so that all members and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- making sure that all of our volunteers including children and their families, and vulnerable and protected adults and their carers know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and vulnerable and protected adults and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against members or volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, vulnerable and protected adults, members and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where members and volunteers, children, vulnerable and protected adults their families and carers, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

If as a volunteer, participant or beneficiary of ARG UK or an affiliated ARG, you have any concerns about your well-being or safety or if you have concerns about the safety of any child or adult at risk attending a ARG UK or ARG project or concerns about the conduct of ARG UK or ARG staff/volunteers then you should contact our safeguarding team.

Contact details

Safeguarding Officer

Dr Angela Julian

Contact: 07891 633692, or email angela.julian@arguk.org

Lead Safeguarding Trustee

Suzanne Collinson

Contact: safeguarding@arguk.org

NSPCC Helpline

0800 800 5000

This policy statement came into force on **December 2019**

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice **every two years**.

This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed on March 2023



Signed:

Date: 25.03.23

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