

## **SKILLS & VOLUNTEERING CYMRU (SVC)**



## **PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERS (AGED 16 & 17)**

Reviewed December 2024

	<b>Protection of Vulnerable Youth Volunteers Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
1.1	<p>For the purpose of this Policy, 'youth volunteers' refers to any volunteer engaged with SVC who is aged 16 or 17 years old.</p> <p>SVC will be offering a selection of ring-fenced opportunities for this age group, please see 'Youth Volunteering at SVC' document, for full details.</p> <p>All youth volunteers who participate in SVC's projects are entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. SVC has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for youth volunteers, they are provided with the highest possible standard of training and support. The purpose of this policy is to set out a clear framework to protect youth volunteers when under the supervision of SVC and our partner organisations.</p> <p>SVC is committed to devising and implementing policies so that staff, volunteers and trustees are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard all volunteers when volunteering with SVC and our partner organisations.</p> <p>The aim of this policy is to set out clearly for staff, volunteers, trustees and partner organisations, the framework for the protection of youth volunteers when undertaking volunteering with SVC.</p> <p>SVC works in partnership with several organisations who have agreed to provide volunteering opportunities for youth volunteers. SVC has a Duty of Care to ensure that our partner organisations are aware of the procedures, responsibilities, and risks associated with supporting youth volunteers. SVC will ensure that youth volunteers are supported effectively by staff and volunteers at both SVC and our partner organisations.</p> <p>Additionally, SVC staff, volunteers, and partner organisations will be trained to report any concerns regarding the safety of our youth volunteers.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Scope of Policy</b>
2.1	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff who support SVC</li> <li>All volunteers volunteering for SVC</li> <li>The SVC Board of Trustees</li> <li>All youth volunteers involved with SVC and our partner organisations</li> </ul>
2.2	<p>In keeping with Good Practice SVC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly monitor and review the implementation of the policy and procedures. The policy should be reviewed every year or whenever there is a major change at SVC or in relevant legislation.</li> <li>Act if they have concern about the welfare of a youth volunteer undertaking volunteering with SVC or a partner organisation.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Safeguarding Youth Volunteers</b>
3.1	The Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 established the National Independent Safeguarding Board for Wales to provide support and advice to the new Regional Children's Safeguarding Boards and newly established Regional Adult Safeguarding Boards (these may join together as one board in defined areas).
3.2	SVC is committed to increasing awareness of safeguarding issues relating to youth volunteers (and other higher risk groups, such as children or vulnerable adults), promoting good practice and assisting members of staff, volunteers and trustees, to make informed and confident responses in relation to safeguarding issues for youth volunteers (and children and adults at risk).
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Legal framework for Safeguarding Youth Volunteers</b>
9*94.1	<p>Legally, in the UK children are considered an "adult" when they reach the age of 18, therefore our youth volunteers are still classed as minors and are therefore protected by various Child Protection Laws.</p> <p>Children Act 1989 (and subsequent relevant legislation) established the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the welfare of the child is paramount;</li> <li>• Parental responsibility applies until the child turns 18 years of age;</li> <li>• All other adults supplying services to children are under a duty of care to maintain their safety and wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>Working together under the Children Act 2004 The interest of the child is paramount in all considerations of welfare and safeguarding. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and there is a duty to report concerns regarding safeguarding.</p> <p>Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014 (SSWBA, the Act) reinforces the rights of children and adults as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (including article 19, the right to protection from violence, abuse or neglect) and the Human Rights Act 1998 (including articles 2, 3, 4, the right to life, freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment and freedom from slavery and forced labour).</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Safeguarding in Relation to Youth Volunteers</b>
5.1	SVC takes a risk management approach to safeguarding. SVC staff are required to carry out risk assessments in respect of activities that involve youth volunteers, and are required to make reasonable, proportionate adaptations to their volunteering activities.
5.2	Where adaptations are reasonable and proportionate, SVC will put in place measures in order to control risks and ensure safeguarding and wellbeing.

5.3	<p>SVC reserves the right to refuse to a youth volunteer's application, if the adaptations necessary to safeguard that individual's wellbeing go beyond what is reasonable and proportionate.</p> <p>SVC reserves the right to cease a youth volunteers volunteering opportunity if it judges that the role is not working out, for full details please see SVC's Disciplinary Procedure.</p>
5.4	<p>An application from a youth volunteer who will be aged under 18 years at the commencement of their volunteer will trigger a risk assessment. SVC staff must ensure the following protocol is complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal interview to discuss the application, and suitability for the project applied for;</li> <li>- Reasonable Adjustments required;</li> <li>- Completion of SVC application form, collection of two references, and completion of a DBS (if applicable);</li> <li>- SVC Parent/ Guardian Consent Form completed prior to volunteering commencing;</li> <li>- Person Centred Risk Assessment for Youth Volunteers completed prior to volunteering commencing;</li> <li>- General Risk Assessment for Youth Volunteers completed prior to volunteering commencing;</li> <li>- Copy of this Policy made available to the youth volunteer and their parent/ guardian.</li> </ul>