

Taking the lead- Becoming a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The role of a DSL

All organisations should have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)- this includes Voluntary, Charity and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations. Whether larger charities or very small groups with minimal staff or volunteers.

A DSL would take the lead with any safeguarding or child protection related tasks and concerns that may arise. They would also produce and maintain safeguarding policy and procedure on behalf of their organisation.

A DSL should be:

- Someone with the resources and capacity to act.
- Where possible- a DSL should not be the most senior person within an organisation.
- Should be available when the organisation is active (such as delivering sessions/services)

Some organisations recruit a safeguarding specialist to deal almost predominantly with all safeguarding related tasks and needs. However, smaller organisations may choose to ask a current member of staff or volunteer to add the extra responsibility to an existing job role.

It is good practice to NOT have the most senior member of staff/ volunteer as the DSL. This is to ensure that any concerns relating to the DSL themselves/misconduct of staff members and allegations can be dealt with separately and professionally at a more senior level. However, it is understood that some very small organisation may have little choice in adopting the role of both senior staff member and DSL. In these cases, it may be a good idea to consider a trustee to have some responsibility/ awareness of safeguarding should there need to be someone senior but unconnected to the safeguarding concern.

As a designated safeguard lead you would be expected to be available during any organisational activity or sessions. It doesn't mean that you must be available 24/7, but on hand for support during necessary activity. This could be in person, via email or telephone should urgent safeguarding advice or action be needed. If you are not available, you should make the arrangements for someone to support in your absence.

What skills are ideal for a DSL?

Previous experience or training isn't always necessary to be a good DSL. But it is helpful to have some knowledge and be available to research your new role.

You will need to be able to lead and influence others and be prepared to deal with some potentially difficult situations or people. You will need to be proactive and able to set up necessary systems and processes to record and track any safeguarding

related concerns. It is also a great idea to research your local authority safeguarding team to see what support and training is available to you. And to have an awareness of referral pathways and local safeguarding priorities.

Skills and abilities for a DSL

- Build effective working relationships with staff/volunteers and service users.
- Be able and available to give advice and support.
- Act with integrity and respect when working with others.
- Administration management skills.
- Communication skills.
- Be able to work with conflict or emotionally distressing matters.
- Produce and develop guidance and resources.

Knowledge

- What the role includes
- Types of abuse and harm
- Understanding of legislation, government guidance and national frameworks for children and adults
- Local and national agencies that provide support for safeguarding practice
- Awareness of where you and other staff and volunteers can access training where required.

Although becoming a DSL may sound daunting at first, it can be a very rewarding role. Every organisation has the responsibility to safeguard the children and adults they work with, having a DSL available can provide piece of mind for service users and staff/ volunteers alike. And provide a central place for all aspects of safeguarding.

Where can I get support?

Forum CIO provides support and guidance to any VCSE organisation with any Safeguarding related topics- including support to become a DSL.

Also available is a quarterly VCSE DSL Peer support Group held every quarter, this is currently only available in Hull. With a view to develop a similar group in NEL. If you are in Hull and would like to join the VCSE DSL Peer Support Group, then please email Amy Elton (details on flyer below).

If you are a North-East Lincs VCSE organisation and are interested in the possibility of a VCSE DSL Peer Support Group, then please email Amy Elton (details in the flyer below) to register your interest.



SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATOR

Forum and Sector Connect are proud to offer bespoke safeguarding support for the VCSE (voluntary, charity and social enterprise) sector.

A completely free service tailored to your organisational needs.

- Safeguarding and related policy creation and reviews
- Safeguarding Training
- Supervision service and advice
- Tools and resources to aid best practice. Safer recruitment advice and training
- DBS information and advice

and more...



Phone
07548 764818



Contact Us
amy.elton@nbforum.org.uk



To arrange a meeting or safeguarding support please contact Amy Elton



Further Online guidance

Further guidance on safer recruitment and the DBS service can be found below.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/>

Direct Gov- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

Forum CIO- <https://northbankforum.org.uk/>

References

National Statistics- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/modernslaveryintheuk/march2020>

NSPCC- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

DirectGov- <https://www.gov.uk/>

NCVO- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/safeguarding/specialist-guides/certain-roles/designated-leads/responsibilities/skills-abilities/>