

Safeguarding Guideline to Prevent Physical and Sexual Abuse

Transparency and Accountability



This guide is about how to design processes, places and governance for transparency and accountability.



Trust may seem to be the essential thing when it comes to care, but for perpetrators this is a way in.



Instead, what vulnerable people need from you are processes and places of care that are transparent, so there's nowhere for a perpetrator to hide.



They need directors and executive staff to take responsibility for the risk of sexual abuse and do whatever they can to keep people safe.



Whatever you do, remember that this is about protecting the rights of people in your care, not the organisation

DESIGNING FOR TRANSPARENCY

What happens in the organisation needs to be visible to the board, executive and community. Perpetrators need to see that this is not a place where they will find cover.

You need to design processes and places of care so they are transparent.



HOW AND WHERE YOU PROVIDE CARE

The point of a process is to show what steps to follow to get a desired result. By their nature, they make things transparent.

A well-designed process will demonstrably increase the safety of the people in your care.

Ask yourself whether the way you give care:

- puts the interests of the person in your care first
- meets the standards that apply to your organisation
- makes it easy for the care giver to collect information which the board and executive need for their decisions.

The physical and online environments in which you give care also need to be transparent.

Have the safeguarding officer work with the facilities manager to assess the risks and modify layouts and interiors so that a person can't be isolated. Work with specialists in online risk to identify where and how perpetrators might find opportunities for solicitation, grooming, sexting and distributing pornography.



Find out whether processes and places of care give perpetrators anywhere to hide. Work with your care givers and, where you can, the people in your care, to design them so they don't.



HOW YOU MONITOR RISK

Even with the best planning and design, it won't be possible to block every way in for a perpetrator. This means you also need to be alert for signs that a perpetrator is in your organisation.

Look at your processes for:

- monitoring behaviours of concern and recording breaches of the policy and code of conduct
- responding to complaints
- reporting information to decision-makers
- improving your safeguarding measures.

These processes collect and feed information to decision-makers, so that they know what's going on in the organisation. Again, transparency. Do your processes give you this insight?

See our guide, Identifying, recording and reporting behaviours of concern and responding to disclosures



Does the fact that you have no complaints, incidents and concerns really mean that the people in your care are safe? Or does it just mean that you're not capturing information about what's going on.

DESIGNING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The directors on your board are personally accountable for what happens in the organisation, including how the resources of the organisation are used to safeguard people in your care.

That means they are responsible for the consequences of those decisions.

For them to exercise that accountability, they need information about what is going on in the organisation, so they make decisions about

- what governance and processes are needed to reduce the risk of a perpetrator harming the people in your care
- the resources needed to put that in place
- when to step in to improve governance, processes and culture before it's too late
- how they can create a culture of safeguarding by showing leadership in their organisation and the community.



A GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

A governance framework formalises that decision-making process and the lines of communication between the board and the organisation.

Information about what is happening in the organisation flow up those lines of communication and from the chief executive officer to the board.

Decisions about what to do flow back from the board to the executive, who then directs action.

Don't wait for your board to ask about designing a framework. Step them through their responsibilities. Show them where you need their guidance and advice.

Work out what information they need about operations to make those decisions and ask them to tell you if they need more.

Set up lines of communication that make sure they have the information they need, as part of regular reporting and if something comes to light.

Make sure staff, volunteers, contractors, and the community know what decisions the board has made about safeguarding.

The chief executive officer must make sure that the board's decisions are translated into the actions of frontline staff.





HOW MUCH STRUCTURE IS ENOUGH?

The executive team should work with the directors to design the framework so it's fit for purpose.

The first thing we recommend you do is establish a safeguarding committee with members from the board, executive team and other members of staff with experience and responsibilities for safeguarding.

It's first action should be to hold a special meeting to

- go through all their current safeguarding policies, processes and governance and have a frank discussion about the current attitudes and level of knowledge in the organisation
- identify any gaps which a perpetrator could exploit to get into the organisation
- direct the organisation to close those gaps with new policies, processes, governance and culture change.

Regular actions from then on should be

- reviewing reports on the status of known safeguarding risks
- evaluating risks that have come to light
- assessing whether the safeguarding measures are working as intended
- directing how those measures need to be improved and when you will be reviewing the framework.



Document your framework and share it, so the whole organisation and your community knows how the directors govern the organisation so that people are safe.



To learn more about Ansvar Safeguarding resources, please scan the QR code.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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