#PlaceToBelong

Scouts Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Introduction

Scouting is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment where all young people can thrive and have a feeling of belonging. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of everyone who engages with us, and we expect all volunteers, staff, and trustees to make safeguarding integral to everything they do.

We place the needs and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk at the centre of our planning, decision making, and delivery. Through safer recruitment, robust training, and meaningful engagement with young people and those with lived experience, we work proactively to prevent harm, respond effectively to concerns, and continually strengthen our practice.

Our approach is grounded in the values of care, respect, integrity, cooperation, and exploring our own and others' beliefs. We foster a culture of honesty, openness, and learning so that concerns can be recognised and addressed confidently.

We recognise that safeguarding experiences can have lasting emotional and psychological impacts on children, young people, adults at risk, victims and survivors, as well as volunteers and staff managing safeguarding concerns. We are committed to embedding trauma-informed approaches across our safeguarding culture by promoting safety, consistency, transparency, respect and compassionate communication throughout all safeguarding interactions and processes. We recognise that how people experience safeguarding processes is as important as the processes themselves.

By learning from the wider safeguarding sector and encouraging everyone to speak up, we ensure that the wellbeing and best interests of young people remain at the heart of Scouting.

Delivery of the strategic plan

This strategic plan will be achieved through yearly business plans which will address and align with the strategic priorities. Delivery of the strategic plan is monitored by the Safeguarding Committee on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The UK Head of Safeguarding is accountable for its implementation.

Delivery of the strategy will be supported through ongoing learning, feedback, review and assurance processes, so that safeguarding practice remains responsive, visible and aligned with the experiences of young people, volunteers, staff, parents, victims and survivors.

Our Safeguarding Vision

A movement where young people, volunteers and staff contribute to a trusted, youth centred safeguarding culture in which responsibility is shared by all, safeguarding is embedded in everyday practice, and people feel safe, heard, respected and supported.

Safeguarding strategic priorities 2026-2029

The Scouts Safeguarding Strategic plan sits within Place to Belong: Our Strategy to 2025, enabling and supporting outcome 5: A safe, inclusive and sustainable movement. The strategy captures five key safeguarding strategic priorities:

- Scouting uses rigorous safer recruitment to appoint trusted, capable adults who help young people thrive.
- Everyone who works with Scouting upholds our values and consistently meets high safeguarding standards.
- Young people and those with lived experience are heard, valued, and empowered to speak up.
- Timely, consistent safeguarding responses are backed by clear decisions and robust case management.
- Scouting collaborates with the wider safeguarding sector to stay aligned with best practice.

Safeguarding Strategic Priority 1:

Scouting uses rigorous safer recruitment to appoint trusted, capable adults who help young people thrive.

Scouting recognises the importance of conducting rigorous and robust safer recruitment at all levels of the organisation, from trustees, volunteers and staff to conducting appropriate checks on those whom we partner with to deliver life changing adventures to young people. Such practices not only serve to ensure that Scouting appoints the best and most trusted adults shaping young people's lives but also serves to act as deterrent to anyone seeking to cause harm.

We will achieve this by:

- A legally compliant, rigorous, consistent national vetting process incorporating disclosure checks and references which works in the best interests of young people.
- Clear, transparent vetting decision guidance which allows for robust recruitment and retention of trusted adults.
- Robust safeguarding welcome conversation guidance for volunteers and new joiners.
- Building strong relationships with growth and communities' teams across the movement to understand safer recruitment and to work in partnership to recruit and retain trusted suitable adults.

Success will look and feel like: Adults appointed through Scouting's safer-recruitment process consistently demonstrate behaviours, attitudes, and values that build trust with young people and volunteers, with feedback indicating that new recruits feel well-supported, clearly guided, and confident in their safeguarding responsibilities.

Scouts

Safeguarding Strategic Priority 2:

Everyone who works with Scouting upholds our values and consistently meets high safeguarding standards.

Scouting understands that to achieve a culture whereby safeguarding truly is everyone's responsibility and it where it becomes part of Scouting DNA, education, development and engagement is vital and a multifaceted approach is needed. Critically important is that this is informed by data insights, best practice research, and most importantly young people themselves. The Scouts recognises that safeguarding culture is shaped not only through policy and training, but through leadership, behaviour, reflective learning, communication, and how consistently safeguarding values are demonstrated in everyday interactions and decision making.

We will achieve this by:

- Refresher mandatory safeguarding e-learning for all volunteers and staff is created, has an agreed review schedule and is updated accordingly.
- Development and delivery of a consistent safeguarding training programme for Lead volunteers including face to face events.
- Evaluation of safeguarding learning will consider not only completion rates, but whether volunteers and staff report increased confidence, improved understanding and greater ability to recognise, respond to, and challenge safeguarding concerns in practice.
- Clear safeguarding communication materials for multiple audiences including, young people, parents/carers, and the public.
- Maintaining mandatory training for all volunteers and staff at the compliance level set by the Board
- Seeking opportunities to integrate safeguarding into existing structures and training opportunities/events/conferences.
- Development of an engaged and educated volunteer safeguarding network at both a HQ and local county/District level who are a trusted source of knowledge and support to the wider movement. Creating leaders who champion safeguarding.
- Developing a Quality and Assurance Safeguarding Framework for local Scouting to provide oversight and identify risks/gaps.

Success will look and feel like: Volunteers, staff, young people, and parents consistently report that safeguarding is embedded in everyday Scouting practice, describing adults across the movement as confident, well-informed, proactive, and aligned with Scouting's values when responding to safeguarding concerns or promoting safe environments. Safeguarding is experienced as visible, approachable, and embedded throughout the movement, rather than as a separate or specialist function.

Safeguarding Strategic Priority 3:

Young people and those with lived experience are heard, valued, and empowered to speak up.

Scouts recognise that young people and those with lived experience (victims/survivors) make vital contributions and add vast amounts of valued perspectives to the creation of a strong safeguarding culture. Spaces need to be actively created for individuals to feel able to safely contribute and to be heard effectively. Scouts is committed to ensuring that participation and engagement with young people and those with lived experience is ethical, supported, trauma-informed and meaningful, recognising the emotional impact that contributing to safeguarding work may have.

Where people share their experiences or contribute to safeguarding development, Scouts will be clear about the purpose of the engagement, how their views will be used, what support is available, and how feedback will be provided.

We will achieve this by:

- Creating meaningful opportunities for young people and those with lived experience to influence safeguarding
- Track themes from youth feedback and lived experience insights and use them to inform decisions. Introduce simple, youth friendly reporting routes (digital and in person) that are easy to find and easy to use.
- Develop clear, age-appropriate safeguarding information for young people so they understand their rights, how to raise concerns, what will happen if they speak up and who will support them.
- Encourage volunteers to model active listening and create environments where young people feel respected and taken seriously.
- Creating a trauma informed pathway for victim/survivors to engage with the Scouts legal processes in an effective manner.

Success will look and feel like: Young people and individuals with lived experience consistently describe feeling safe, respected, and genuinely listened to when engaging with Scouts, reporting that their insights meaningfully shape safeguarding decisions, communication, and practice across the movement.

Safeguarding Strategic Priority 4:

Timely, consistent safeguarding responses, clear decision making, and supportive case practice

Effective case management is essential to ensuring the safety of young people, promoting fair and proportionate treatment of individuals, and strengthening confidence in our reporting and response processes. The Scouts is committed to seeking feedback, learning from past practice, and continually enhancing the quality and consistency of its safeguarding response. The Scouts recognises that safeguarding processes themselves can impact trust, confidence, and wellbeing. We are committed to ensuring that safeguarding responses are not only effective and timely, but also compassionate, transparent and trauma-informed in how they are experienced.

We will achieve this by:

- Strengthen decision-making frameworks making them transparent and clear
- Improve case management systems and Quality Assurance
- Ensuring those involved in safeguarding cases are regularly updated, supported through a trauma informed approach and feedback loops closed appropriately.
- Actively seeking feedback from those who are supported by the Safeguarding Team including those who are directly involved/impacted.
- Those involved in safeguarding work, including volunteers and staff should have access to appropriate support, guidance and reflective opportunities, recognising the emotional impact of responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Be data led and informed to drive performance and identify patterns for development and improvement.
- Conduct regular case reviews to identify learning and strengthen future practice. Learning from safeguarding practice will be used not only to improve systems and processes, but to strengthen reflective practice, confidence, consistency, and organisational learning across the movement.

Success will look and feel like: People involved in safeguarding—whether young people, volunteers, or staff consistently experience the safeguarding process as timely, clear, fair, and supportive, with decisions and communication that build trust and confidence in The Scouts' safeguarding response.

Safeguarding Strategic Priority 5:

Scouting collaborates with the wider safeguarding sector to stay aligned with best practice.

The Scouts recognise that for everyone to be safe, the wider safeguarding sector must continue to do better and improve and strengthen its safeguarding approaches and practices for out of education settings. Scouts are therefore committed to contributing to national and sector-wide safeguarding initiatives, to share and learn from our challenges and successes, to be accountable, and to lead by example. This includes being open to reflection, learning from challenge, and continually reviewing safeguarding practice to support improvement and accountability.

We will achieve this by:

- Actively engaging in relevant national or regional safeguarding networks and/or forums.
- Taking a leading role within WOSM on safe from harm and actively engage with other large NSO's to encourage and share learning.
- Building external partnerships to strengthen our safeguarding work.
- Conducting annual reviews of safeguarding policies against sector standards
- Sharing key external learning with volunteers and staff
- Seek out spaces for collaboration with others and inform sector wide practices.

Success will look and feel like: The Scouts is recognised by partners, networks, and safeguarding bodies as an active, credible, and collaborative contributor to the wider safeguarding sector, consistently sharing learning, aligning with best practice, and helping to shape safer standards across the sector.

Continued Safeguarding priority and collaborations:

The above priorities represent the foundations of a strong, consistent, and trusted safeguarding culture across The Scouts. The Scouts recognises that safeguarding culture is not achieved through policy alone, but through the ongoing interaction between systems, leadership, learning, behaviour, and lived experience.

We are committed to continuous reflection, development, and improvement to ensure safeguarding remains visible, understood, and embedded throughout the movement, and that everyone engaging with The Scouts safeguarding systems feels heard, respected, and supported.