



# Safeguarding Report 2017

Keeping people we support, those who come into contact with us and our people, safe from abuse and harm

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# Statement

Daniel Sedgewick, Trustee and Board Safeguarding Lead



We are committed to providing a safe and trusted environment which safeguards and promotes the safety and well-being of anyone who comes into contact with us, including the people we support, our staff and volunteers.

Safeguarding is one of our highest priorities at the British Red Cross. To reflect the importance of safeguarding at a leadership level, in June 2017 I was appointed as the inaugural dedicated trustee safeguarding lead on the Board of Trustees. This role sits comfortably alongside my position as Chair of our Service, Quality and Assurance Committee which has a direct role in overseeing our safeguarding work.

The nature of our work, the services we offer and our models for delivering these services, mean that we are in daily contact with people in our communities who are at greater risk of abuse and exploitation. We are committed to providing a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with us, including our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.

I am determined that we take all the necessary steps to ensure that people who access our services or engage with us through our retail or fundraising activity as well as all our people, do so in safety. To this end, I expect all of our people to be trained and supported in recognising the signs of abuse and in knowing exactly what to do should they have concerns about a child's or adult's welfare.

It has been a busy year for us. There has been heightened media interest concerning safeguarding, including in the charity sector. We have, rightly, had

to keep our processes under review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and make continuous improvement part of our work.

Internally we successfully implemented our new process for recording safeguarding concerns that we come across whilst delivering our services or interacting with the public, via the Datix incident reporting system. This is timely as the number of concerns that we come across in the course of our work, both for children and adults, has continued to rise. We continue to revise and adapt our processes, procedures, training and models for raising concerns so that people who use our services remain safe. In addition, we look to advances in technology to make our training more available and accessible.

We know that we must continue to remain vigilant. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all our people, not just a handful of designated safeguarding specialist colleagues. We are committed to being open and transparent in our safeguarding work and to keep striving for the highest possible standards to help keep people who engage with our charity safe from abuse and harm.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Sedgewick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

# Introduction



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The British Red Cross supports people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. We are part of a global voluntary network, responding to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies. We enable people at risk in the UK and abroad to prepare for and withstand emergencies in their own communities. And when the crisis is over, we help them to recover and move on with their lives. Within the UK, the British Red Cross operates through 3,500 staff and over 20,000 volunteers. Service delivery is grouped into service lines including: Ambulance Support and Event First Aid, Education, Independent Living and Crisis Response, Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links.

The British Red Cross strives to ensure that all the children, young people and adults who engage with the organisation do so in safety. We are committed to providing people who engage with us with the highest attainable standards of safeguarding and protection.

We similarly strive to ensure that all our people understand the safeguarding duties placed upon them and know how to respond appropriately and effectively to a safeguarding concern. We are thus committed to developing and maintaining a thorough, fit for purpose and transparent safeguarding approach both in the UK and overseas. We believe that the welfare of people who engage with us is best served by the development and maintenance of open and transparent ways of working and by promoting good practice in all our work, as well as addressing and learning from poor practice as it arises. We are thus committed to embedding an open culture around all our work, and where colleagues and those we work with feel safe to speak up if they see something that they are concerned about or where we should improve.

# Our commitment to children

The British Red Cross believes that everyone who comes into contact with a child has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the child's welfare, and to protect them from all forms of harm and abuse.

Child abuse is never acceptable. We accept our responsibility to ensure the safety of all the children and young people who have contact with us.

We have significant contact with children in a number of different contexts and we believe that they all have an equal right to protection irrespective of their gender, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or age. Our children and young people's safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures will be applied to all children without discrimination.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child informs all our work with children. We are committed to the full realisation of the rights that children hold. All child abuse involves a denial and abuse of these rights and our commitment to children's rights must include a commitment to safeguard the children with whom we have contact. We will uphold the rights of all the children who have contact with us.

We believe that all children have the right to grow up safe from harm without threat to their health, safety and welfare. Further they should not be prevented from fulfilling their full potential. The British Red Cross will value and respect the children that our work, in all its forms, brings us into contact with. We will listen to children and promote their right to be heard and their right to participate in the decisions that affect them.

Our work with children and young people is an essential part of the work that we do and the relationships between adults, children and young people are mutually beneficial, brings value to the

organisation, and enhances our work. We will value the contribution that children and young people make to our organisation. We will make the British Red Cross a safe and welcoming environment for children.



# Our commitment to adults at risk – principles and standards

When engaged in safeguarding work with adults at risk we work within the framework of the six safeguarding adult principles:

- 1 **Empowerment** – presumption of person led decisions and informed consent
- 2 **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- 3 **Proportionality** – proportionate (i.e. solution matches the risk) and least intrusive (i.e. limits person's freedom or choices as little as possible) response appropriate to the risk presented
- 4 **Protection** - support and representation for people who are not able to protect themselves
- 5 **Partnership** – with the person, other safeguarding partners and local solutions through services working with their communities
- 6 **Accountable** – to the person, the organisation and other safeguarding partners

**Person centred** – working with the adult to help them make their own informed safeguarding decisions

We support and enable people to work to the following safeguarding adults' policy standards through our policies, procedures, training and guidance.

## Standard 1

We support people to make their own informed safeguarding decisions as adults (in alignment with safeguarding and capacity legislation and guidance, our safeguarding policies and procedures, the local authority safeguarding adults policy [of the adult at risk] and regulatory, commissioner and governance requirements).

## Standard 2

We respond effectively when staff, volunteers or other representatives of the British Red Cross have concerns about an adult at risk of harm or abuse. Our approach advances the rights and upholds and promotes the dignity, wellbeing and welfare of the people we support so that we are Making Safeguarding Personal.

## Standard 3

We expect, prompt, support and monitor safeguarding adult concerns so we're learning from how we've handled adult safeguarding incidents and allegations in order to support continuous improvement in our adult safeguarding work.

## Standard 4

We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and have a consistent approach to agreeing and defining how these responsibilities are met.

## Standard 5

Whilst recognising that the local authority has the lead role we are committed to working in partnership with the people we support and our multi-agency partners to improve safeguarding outcomes with and for the people we support.

## Standard 6

In line with safer recruitment guidance we seek to recruit, support and manage staff and volunteers who can help adults to keep themselves safe and promote and uphold their rights, dignity and well-being at all times.

# Our safeguarding approach

We have a designated safeguarding lead on the Board of Trustees and a senior member of staff responsible for our safeguarding response in the UK. The Service Quality and Assurance Committee (sub-committee of the Board) receive quarterly safeguarding reports as part of their governance oversight of our safeguarding arrangements.

Two specialist Safeguarding Development Officers (SDOs) produce tools, resources, training content to increase awareness and knowledge of safeguarding in the UK. They also input into, support and provide oversight of our operational response to reported safeguarding concerns. Alongside our SDOs we have an extensive network of Safeguarding and Protection Officers for children (SPOs) and Safeguarding Adults Officers (SAOs). They provide guidance and support

to staff in relation to appropriate and effective safeguarding responses, and escalate concerns to more senior staff where appropriate to do so.

Our safeguarding policies and procedures include guidance for engaging with children via social media and procedures for engaging with celebrities and high-profile supporters and visitors.

We provide a range of safeguarding training at different levels across the organisation, delivered both online and in person.

We produce awareness raising materials, post 'news items' on our intranet and have a dedicated 'safeguarding week' to raise awareness and highlight topical safeguarding issues in November each year.



# Reported safeguarding concerns for adults and children (1 January – 31 December 2017)

In 2017 we supported over 685,000\* people across the UK through our services. We also engaged with thousands of people through our network of retail shops. While numbers of reported concerns for both children and adults during 2017 rose against previous years, these remain a very small percentage of the numbers of people we support or engage with annually.

The following three tables relate to the safeguarding concerns we have come across during the course of work.

\*Data on people supported are captured in different ways and uses different definitions across the organisation. This total is therefore indicative.

## Reported safeguarding concerns for children and young people (by service and category of abuse)

	Neglect	Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Emotional abuse	Age disputes	Destitution	Trafficking	Other	Total
Ambulance Support	15	15	1	1					<b>32</b>
Crisis Education						1			<b>1</b>
Crisis Response	4	1						1	<b>6</b>
Event First Aid	2	2	3	1				2	<b>10</b>
Independent Living	1	2	1	1					<b>5</b>
People and Learning			1	1				1	<b>3</b>
Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links	15	9	10	14	28	35	3	7	<b>121</b>
Retail		2	3			1			<b>6</b>
Other			1						<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>185</b>



For 2017 1054 safeguarding adult reports are recorded on Datix, our electronic reporting system. 69% of these were welfare issues and 31% related to abuse.

### Reported safeguarding welfare concerns (by service and type)

	Suicidal ideation and/ or attempts	Poor living conditions	Unmet health needs	Self-neglect	Self-harm	Other welfare concern	Total
Ambulance Support	40	46	33	28	22	32	<b>201</b>
Event First Aid	1	0	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
Independent Living	73	73	81	33	17	62	<b>339</b>
Crisis Response	6	9	5	3	0	4	<b>27</b>
Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links	75	4	29	0	14	20	<b>142</b>
Mobility Aids	0	1	1	1	0	0	<b>3</b>
Retail	0	0	4	0	1	1	<b>6</b>
Other	3	0	2	0	0	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>725</b>

### Reported safeguarding abuse concerns for adults (by service and type)

	Financial and/ or material	Domestic	Psychological/ emotional	Discriminatory	Modern Slavery	Neglect and/ or act of omission	Sexual	Physical abuse	Organisational	Other abuse	Total
Ambulance Support	1	6	5	0	0	26	3	5	7	1	<b>54</b>
Crisis Response	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	<b>6</b>
Event First Aid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Independent Living	76	21	39	1	0	26	3	17	2	9	<b>194</b>
Mobility Aids	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links	0	19	10	3	7	2	5	10	5	5	<b>66</b>
Retail	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	<b>5</b>
Other	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>329</b>

During 2017 we investigated **two serious incidents** in relation to safeguarding where there was a significant failure (or an allegation of failure) in our safeguarding responsibilities. One concerned the conduct of a volunteer in relation to the inappropriate use of social media and contact with one of our volunteers who was under 18. The second was in relation to our response to an adult at risk who had travelled to the scene of a major incident and who was brought to our attention by a third party.

We reported 10 safeguarding concerns to the Charity Commission as per their current guidance on reportable incidents (this included the two serious incidents that met our internal criteria above). These incidents were also reported to DFID in early 2018 as part of our response to the Secretary of State on safeguarding.



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# Our 2017 achievements

## Awareness raising

Throughout 2017 we have continued to raise awareness of safeguarding via our intranet and our annual safeguarding week.

We have reviewed our awareness-raising publications and designated safeguarding staff members have continued to seek opportunities to champion safeguarding throughout the organisation.

## Online reporting of safeguarding concerns

The phased introduction of our online incident reporting system, Datix, began in October 2016 and full implementation was achieved during 2017. Datix is used widely within the NHS to capture details about incidents, including safeguarding concerns and it has brought a number of benefits to the British Red Cross in relation to safeguarding. These include but are not limited to; enabling better oversight, monitoring and analysing of concerns; the prompt logging of concerns; and, the safe storage and retrieval of records.

The SDOs provide oversight of the concerns reported on Datix through regular review; providing specialist support, guidance and advice and escalating concerns as required. As the number of safeguarding concerns reported on Datix continues to increase, we will keep our operational response to this under review.

Some operational issues related to the use of Datix remain, such as the initial data capture process and the timeliness of review and these are being addressed.

## Learning and development

Our Foundation Training Programme for new staff and volunteers contains an introduction to safeguarding children and adults at risk. Separate safeguarding refresher training is available online.

We have continued to develop our practice training with and for those services requiring a level of safeguarding training over and above that which is contained within the Foundation Training Programme. Roll out and uptake has been slower than planned due to a lack of capacity to implement training across the service lines. Our Event First Aid and Ambulance Support services were the first to release their training and materials to their staff and volunteers online. Refugee Support and Restoring Family Links training will be developed and rolled out in 2018. Within Independent Living and Crisis Response the adult training materials have been piloted and will be implemented from spring 2018. Parallel training for children will be developed and implemented later in 2018 in recognition of the very small numbers of reported concerns relating to children.

The SDOs have continued to deliver tailored training to those who take on the role of SPO or SAO. The SDOs provide ongoing support to these colleagues through a variety of communication channels both in groups and individually.

In addition, we have developed a 'bank' of safeguarding scenarios accessible to all staff and volunteers via our intranet. These cover a range of safeguarding issues relating to both children and adults across a range of settings and situations. They provide model answers and prompts to facilitate discussion of the issues and responses required in each case and can be used in settings such as team meetings.

## Policies and procedures

Our safeguarding policies for adults and children were revised and formally endorsed by the Board of Trustees at the end of 2016. Our corresponding procedures for responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns for adults and children were approved in February 2017.

Throughout 2017 we have worked to raise awareness of the importance and content of these policies and procedures, including via our intranet, training modules online and delivered in person, and during our annual safeguarding week in November.

The guidelines regarding our use of social media in our work with children and young people have also been revised and similarly communicated. Parallel guidance for safeguarding adults online will be developed in 2018. Targeted communications were also forwarded to colleagues in a number of our services.

Our Safeguarding Development Officers (SDOs) have continued to input into other related policies, procedures and processes as appropriate, for example in relation to restraint, consent, money handling, transporting services users, safer recruitment, and responding to age disputes.

We are aware that both understanding and compliance are important issues and we will continue to think creatively about ways to encourage and support compliance, particularly where staff and volunteers are struggling with capacity issues.

## Improving our safeguarding advice and support provision

We have spent much of 2017 supporting the embedding of SAOs and SPOs within their service lines (rather than according to geographical location as in 2016), following an internal strategic change transformation project which reshaped our UK Operations. Alongside this, we have delivered training to new and existing SAOs and SPOs and worked with service leads to identify and close gaps in SAO and SPO provision, to ensure we have comprehensive coverage across the UK and in all areas of our work.



Image © Simon Fawcett/BBC.



# Our focus for 2018

We will keep our policies and procedures under review and will make amendments to them as appropriate. We expect both our safeguarding policies and procedures will all be reviewed in 2018, as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.

We will continue to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding throughout the British Red Cross; identifying and making best use of new and existing channels to reach our people.

We will continue to implement service-specific training in line with emerging legislation and in response to changes in both our internal and the external environment.

We will explore new and innovative ways of using technology to deliver our safeguarding training to reach more of our people.

Finally, we will be reviewing our structure for reporting, escalating and overseeing safeguarding concerns to determine whether this is still able to meet both our operational and development needs.

## **Where we are**

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