

NVR Safeguarding Policy

1.0 Introduction

The Nene Valley Railway (the 'Railway') believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or adult at risk to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and adults at risk who volunteer or are employed by the Nene Valley Railway. The purpose of this policy is to set out a commitment to practice which protects people, particularly children and at-risk adults from any harm that may be caused as a result of them encountering people at the Nene Valley Railway. This includes harm arising from the conduct of staff or personnel associated with the Railway.

The policy lays out the commitments made by the Railway and informs staff and volunteers of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

2.0 What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

This includes protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from encountering our staff and volunteers, customers or others who may be associated with the Railway.

3.0 Scope of the policy

- This policy applies to all people on NVR property including employees, volunteers, directors/trustees, managers, contractors and members of the public.
- The policy applies both to NVR property and interactions between staff, volunteers and others away from the Railway's premises including contact through social media.

3.1 Policy statement

The Nene Valley Railway believes that everyone we encounter, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Nene Valley Railway will not tolerate abuse or exploitation by staff, volunteers, customers or others associated with the Railway.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding, child safeguarding, adult safeguarding including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

3.2 The aims of the policy:

- Provide protection for the children and adults at risk who are work or volunteering at the Nene Valley Railway.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should follow if they suspect a child or adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

3.3 Definitions

A child is any person under the age of 18.

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 years or over who is or may need community care services by reason of mental of other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

4.0 Implementation

The policy will be delivered through an approach that focuses on prevention, implementation and reporting.

4.1 Prevention

This section outlines the behaviour expected of Nene Valley Railway staff and volunteers. It has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children and adults at risk but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals.

It should be read in conjunction with the railways other policies, in particular the Code of Conduct.

Following this policy will also help to protect the Railway by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children and adults at risk in order to abuse them.

When working with children and adults at risk, all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that they are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and others, so must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the Code of Conduct.

The Railway will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with children and young people aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of position of trust).

Sexual relationships between any member of staff or volunteer and an adult at risk represent a serious breach of trust and are not permissible in any circumstances.

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Safeguarding Officer for the Nene Valley Railway. Staff or volunteers who breach this policy may be subject to the Railways disciplinary procedures. Serious breaches of this code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children's Services Department.

When working with children and adults at risk it is important to:

- Always follow the Nene Valley Railway's safeguarding policy.
- Conduct activities so that staff or volunteers do not work alone in a one-to-one capacity with children or adults at risk for long periods or in isolated locations. Children aged 16 & 17 who are working at the Railway perhaps on apprenticeship programme or similar may be permitted to work alone with an adult supervisor for longer periods where it is not reasonable to provide additional supervision. If this is necessary a more senior manager should complete a risk assessment and approve these arrangements in advance. The Safeguarding Officer should also be made aware.
- Listen to and respect children and adults at risk at all times.
- Always avoid favouritism.
- Treat children and adults at risk fairly and without prejudice.
- Value and take children's and adults at risk contributions seriously.
- Ensure any contact with children and adults at risk is appropriate and in relation to the activity.
- Always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or adults at risk.
- Provide examples of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and promptly report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You must not:

- Patronise children or adults.
- Allow allegations to go unreported.
- Develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and adults at risk that are not a part of the work of the Railway and agreed in advance with an appropriate manager.
- Let children and adults at risk have your personal contact details (mobile number, address or social networking details). Managers and Supervisors can of course provide contact details so that there is proper communication with volunteers however any contact should only be limited to legitimate reasons connected with a person's duties or attendance at the Railway.
- Use sarcasm or insensitive comments to children and adults at risk.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Make inappropriate promises to children and adults at risk, particularly in relation to confidentiality.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or adults at risk.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues.
- Rely on your good name or that of the Railway to protect you from allegations.
- Take photographs or video of children and adults at risk without the expressed permission of their parent and carer. Even where permission to take photographs or videos has been given these must not be published in the railway's literature, the railway's website or shared more widely including on social media if permission to do so has not been given by a parent or carer.
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

4.2 Implementation

In order to ensure that everyone, including children and adults at risk who work at the Nene Valley Railway or who use its facilities are aware of, and understand the safeguards we have put in place, the Nene Valley Railway will:

- Ensure all relevant members of staff receive a safeguarding briefing as part of their induction.
- Ensure the appointment of a Safeguarding Officer and ensure this person receives relevant training to fulfil the role.
- Make this document available to all staff and volunteers.
- Make the Safeguarding Policy available to members of the public.
- Operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken according to government and safeguarding board guidance. Normally this will require that people who are responsible for the supervision of children or adults at risk will need to obtain a DBS certificate which does not show any information that would make them unsuitable to perform this role.

4.3 Reporting

If a child or adult at risk reports abuse to a member of staff or a volunteer they should:

- React calmly.
- Reassure the child/adult at risk that they were right to tell you and that they are not to blame.
- Take what the child/adult at risk says seriously.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.

- Not ask about explicit details.
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Inform the child/adult at risk what you will do next.
- Not attempt to discuss the matter with people who may be committing abuse.
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Officer or if that person is not available to the most senior manager at the Railway who can be contacted.

If someone has reasonable concerns that abuse could be taking place they should:

- Try to establish as many of the facts (as opposed to hearsay) as possible.
- Identify anyone who may have been witness to or could provide corroboration to events.
- Not attempt to discuss the matter with people who may be committing abuse.
- Report the matter as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Officer or if that person is not available to the most senior manager at the Railway who can be contacted.

When reporting any concerns this should include as much of the following as possible:

- Details of the child/adult at risk's name, and if possible, their age and date of birth, home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times other relevant information. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- Have the parents/carers been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Have anyone else been consulted? If so, report the details.

The Safeguarding Officer will, where appropriate, make a referral to the relevant authorities which may include but is not limited to, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough safeguarding body or the police.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for the Nene Valley Railway, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility for all to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. The Nene Valley Railway will assure all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a child/adult is at risk or may have been abused.

5.0 Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people such that it complies with GDPR or any other data protection legislation.

6.0 Internal enquiries and suspension

The Railway will make an immediate decision in consultation with relevant authorities about whether any individual who is the subject of an allegation should be suspended under the railway's disciplinary policy pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Railway will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Railway must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child/adult at risk should remain of paramount importance throughout.



The Railway will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff or volunteers relating to safeguarding matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed. Notification of any concerns will be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority and any other relevant professional bodies and included in references where applicable. This notification responsibility will apply even if the volunteer or member of staff is no longer at the Railway.

7.0 Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff or volunteers may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for a subject of an allegation.

8.0 Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made the procedures detailed above should be followed. This is because other children, either within or outside the activity of the Railway, may be at risk from this person.

Signature of the chairman of the board of directors.....*M D Purcell*.....

Date9th July 2024.....