The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)

Safeguarding - It's everyone's business

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about:

- Preventative action.
- It is about promoting health and welfare.
- It is about helping everybody to take part in activities in a safe environment and supportive environment.
- It is about promoting individuals to be the best they can be.

Debbie Hunt – Trustee Lead for Safeguarding

RLSS UK aims to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk who participate in its activities including lifesaving, lifeguarding, community awards, education, sports, competitions and any other events have a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. All groups of people whatever their age, gender, language, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, social-economic status and culture have the right to protection from abuse. It is everybody’s responsibility to facilitate this.

We encourage everybody involved in RLSS UK affiliated activities to report any problems that they may have experienced or witnessed.

What are the main issues regarding Safeguarding?

There are SIX main issues:

1. **Physical Abuse**
2. **Emotional Abuse**
3. **Sexual Abuse**
4. **Neglect**
5. **Bullying**
6. **Grooming**

**Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, or otherwise causing physical harm.
Examples of physical abuse might involve making excessive demands on an individual that exceed their physical capability or in an instance when drugs are promoted to improve performance.

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, young person or adult at risk such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the victim’s emotional development.

Emotional abuse could include:

- Conveying that they are worthless or inadequate.
- Not allowing an individual to express their views by acting condescending towards them and mocking them or by silencing them when they try to communicate.

Witnessing the ill-treatment of another individual or through bullying (including cyber-bullying).

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing an individual or group to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. This includes:

- Physical contact and non-contact activities such as viewing sexual images or acting in a sexually inappropriate manner.

Some of RLSS UK activities for example teaching techniques, which may involve physical contact with young people, could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the teacher/trainer/instructor/assessor over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs of a child, young person or adult at risk that is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Neglect includes:

- Failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter.
- Failing to protect an individual from a physical and emotional harm or damage or not responding to emotional needs.
- Failure to ensure appropriate medical care or treatment is given.
- Not providing adequate supervision.
Neglect in RLSS UK activities including lifesaving, lifeguarding, education, sports or any other event could include a teacher/trainer/instructor/assessor not ensuring young people are safe through adequate supervision, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.

**Bullying**

Is defined as repeated, aggressive, verbal, psychological or physical conduct by an individual or group against another person or group. Bullying may, therefore, be seen as deliberate hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Anybody can be the target of bullying. Victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons, such as being overweight, physically small, having a disability or special needs or belonging to a different race, faith, or culture.

**Grooming**

Grooming refers to an individual’s deliberate actions to create an emotional connection with a child, young person or adult at risk to gain their trust to commit sexual abuse or exploitation. More generally, it can be seen as a process by which an individual manipulates those around them to provide opportunities to abuse and reduce the likelihood of being reported or discovered. It always involves manipulation and deceit.

Commonly, this may include:

- Offering advice and understanding, buying gifts, such as equipment and gadgets, giving an individual attention, using their professional position or reputation, offering a combination of gifts, taking them on trips, outings or holidays

**Craig - Lifesaving Instructor Droitwich Lifesaving Club**

I love what I do for the club and as an instructor it is my duty to ensure that everybody under my supervision has access to fun activities, in a safe environment that develops them as a lifesaver. Playing my role to provide them with the time and guidance to improve at their own pace, celebrating development of candidates and providing emotional support.

This includes ensuring that I promote positive behaviour, inclusion and fairness between instructors and candidates. We all have a role to play in safeguarding and it is important that I work with my candidates to ensure they understand their own role in supporting one another.

I have a duty to look for any signs of abuse and to record and report any incidents that I feel need passing on.
Tracy – Branch Safeguarding Officer

Everybody involved in lifesaving activity deserves to be treated fairly, with respect and to be given the opportunity to realise individual potential.

It is all of our responsibility to manage safeguarding, from the candidates in the club, parents, volunteers and Welfare and Safeguarding Officers.

I take my pride in my role to provide support to club welfare officers and members across the branch so they can carry out the essential vetting procedure. So that they can put measures in place to create the correct environment. So they can have the confidence to feel supported to discuss any issues of concern with myself or local safeguarding contacts.

Ultimately I aim to act as a conduit to ensure that I support well run and safe activity whilst empowering the confidence to challenge and pass on any incidents.

If you have any worries

• React
• Record
• Report

If a child, young person or an adult at risk is in immediate danger, call the police on 999

Jo Barrett – RLSS UK Safeguarding Case Officer

If you have any issues you would like to discuss, whether they affect yourself or someone else then you are encouraged to speak to a Club Welfare Officer, A Branch Safeguarding Officer or if unavailable report direct to the RLSS UK Safeguarding Case Officer at Headquarters on 0300 3230 096.

If a child, young person or an adult at risk is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999.

Any issues raised will be taken seriously and treated with discretion.

If you are concerned about a child or adult at risk is within danger of harm or poor practice has been spotted or reported then you should follow the React, Record, Report 3 step procedure immediately.

It is essential that any allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken. Not acting is not an option.

If you are reporting a concern or an allegation you are not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. It is the role of the appropriate statutory agencies, such as the local authority, social services, childrens services, adult services or the police to make
enquiries and investigations. You should refer to the RLSS UK’s Safeguarding Policy for information on how to follow the React, Record and Report 3 step procedure, this includes flow charts and templates to support you in this process. It is your role to facilitate passing on information so that the relevant agencies can deal with this as soon as practically possible.

If a child or adult at risk is in immediate risk of harm you should call the police on 999.