

Safeguarding

Guidance for Nightlines & Parent Bodies

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Next review due	September 2024

About this guidance

This document gives guidance on Safeguarding arrangements for Nightline services. It is intended to be read by both Nightlines and their parent bodies.

Definition: Parent Body

A parent body is the organisation that is ultimately responsible for the Nightline service. For most Nightlines, this is a Students' Union or equivalent. For others, it is a University.

For independent Nightlines, references to the "parent body" should be read as references to your Board of Trustees.

Nightlines and parent bodies should work together with each other and the Association to ensure that adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

It is important that Nightlines engage in a full and detailed discussions with their parent body regarding safeguarding matters.

This guidance has been prepared based on advice from the Helplines Partnership and other sources. Further resources on safeguarding are linked at the end of this document.

While all reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this guidance, this is not legal advice and therefore should not be relied upon as a complete and accurate statement of the law. If you believe that you require legal advice, then you should contact a legal professional with suitable expertise. The Association accepts no liability for any losses or damages, however caused, arising from your use of this guidance. This does not exclude our liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence, or any other liability which cannot be excluded by law.

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Safeguarding

1. Introduction: What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is an umbrella term that applies to everything you do to keep people safe. For example, health & safety, risk assessments, and data protection are all part of safeguarding.

This guidance looks at the two elements of safeguarding which are most commonly associated with the term: the protection of **children** and **adults at risk**.

The definitions depend on the part of the UK that you are based in.

Definition: Child

A child is anyone under the age of 18.¹

(in Scotland, 16-18 year olds are considered adults in some circumstances, but for safeguarding purposes, under 18s should be treated as children)²

ENGLAND & WALES

Definition: Adult at risk³ (previously “vulnerable adult”)

An adult at risk is anyone over the age of 18 who:

- has needs for care and support,
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

SCOTLAND

Definition: Adult at risk⁴

An adult at risk is anyone over the age of 16 who:

- is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights, or other interests;
- is at risk of harm (due to their own or others' actions); and
- because they are affected by a disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected

¹  Children Act 1989, s 105.  Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, s 97. [NI] Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, art 2.

² See [National guidance for child protection in Scotland 2021](#)

³  Care Act 2014, s 42.  Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, s 126.

⁴  Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, s 3.

Note that there is overlap between the definition of a child and the definition of an adult at risk in Scots Law. In general, the child safeguarding arrangements take priority.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Definition: Adult at risk of harm⁵

An adult at risk of harm is anyone aged over the age of 18 whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- personal characteristics (e.g. age, disability, etc.); and/or
- life circumstances (e.g. isolation, living conditions, etc.)

Definition: Adult in need of protection⁶

An adult in need of protection is an adult at risk of harm:

- who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and
- where the action or inaction of another person(s) is causing, or is likely to cause, harm.

Adults may be at risk due to a disability or other medical condition, mental health condition, learning difficulties, or another reason.

Whether someone is a vulnerable adult or not may change depending on their circumstances.

It is important to note that whether someone is an adult at risk is not the same as whether they have mental capacity. Most adults at risk will still have capacity (and in fact, many children also have capacity).

2. Safeguarding Policies

Nightlines should ensure that they have a copy of their parent body's Safeguarding Policy. This will usually be available on the parent body's website, but Nightlines may wish to ask for it directly from the parent body, as this can be a useful way to begin a conversation about Safeguarding.

The parent body's Safeguarding Policy should include the name of the parent body's **Safeguarding Lead** (the person responsible for safeguarding in the organisation) as well as details of how to make safeguarding reports.

⁵ [NI] Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015), p 10.

⁶ [NI] Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015), p 10.

Nightlines will also require a number of Safeguarding Policies & Procedures to ensure that safeguarding is implemented effectively within the Nightline. Nightlines should have policies/procedures covering their approach to safeguarding, handling disclosures of abuse, handling child callers, reporting actual or suspected abuse, safer recruitment, and whistleblowing.

The Nightline Association has produced template policies which are available [here](#).

3. Training

Nightline listening volunteers should complete at least a basic level of Safeguarding training. The parent body will usually determine what is appropriate, but as a minimum, training should cover:

- What safeguarding is
- The definitions of children and adults at risk
- Identifying when an adult may be an adult of risk
- Responsibilities under the Safeguarding Policy
- Recognising types and signs of abuse
- How and when to report concerns relating to service users and other volunteers
- How to react to a direct disclosure
- Handling calls containing details of abuse
- When and how to whistleblow to the Nightline Association, parent body, or authorities

This is not a complete syllabus and training resources should be prepared with the assistance of someone with professional training and experience. Safeguarding training should take at least 1 hour and be included in the initial training of all volunteers, with a refresher at least every 3 years (but ideally annually). Safeguarding scenarios should also be embedded into role plays as part of the larger training structure.

Non-listening volunteers will need some safeguarding training, but will not need the elements relating to call-taking. Committee members will need additional training on their responsibilities.

The parent body may have existing training resources but these will likely need to be adapted for a Nightline context.

The Association is working on developing training resources for Nightlines regarding Safeguarding. We hope for basic resources to be ready for September 2024.

4. Reports

As the Nightline is legally part of the parent body, a report to the parent body's Safeguarding Lead is not a breach of confidentiality as the information is not communicated outside of the organisation.

However, safeguarding arrangements should still be detailed in the Nightline's privacy notice (see [GPG v4 section 5.3](#) for more information on privacy notices).

Nightlines should also be careful not to promise absolute confidentiality or secrecy as details may need to be referred to an external agency by the Safeguarding Lead. There are also other situations where confidentiality may need to be broken (see [GPG v4 section 4](#) for more information on confidentiality).

4.1. What to report

Reports should be made where a child or adult at risk appears to be being abused, or is at risk of abuse. Nightline volunteers will require training to understand the different types of abuse, and how to identify signs of abuse.

Some reports are based on direct disclosures, while others are based on concerns that arise from a person's words, behaviours, or actions.

The person at risk might be a volunteer, a service user, or a third party (for example, a family member of a volunteer).

Nightlines **must not investigate** or ask for more details of the abuse or concern. This is in keeping with both the Nightline principle of non-directiveness, as well as general safeguarding principles. The only duty for Nightlines is to report concerns and disclosures to the parent body's Safeguarding Lead.

The requirement not to investigate does not prevent:

- Nightlines asking for identifying details in order to obtain help for a service user if they have explicitly or implicitly asked for this (see [below](#))
- Asking open questions or using other active listening techniques as with any other Nightline contact

4.2. How to report

Nightlines should not be expected to make third-party referrals or take significant safeguarding decisions. Nightlines should simply report to the Safeguarding Lead

for the parent body who will have the necessary training and expertise to handle any concerns or disclosures.

Reports might be made directly by the volunteer with the concern, or might be made via a senior volunteer or Committee member. Whichever system is agreed upon, it should be consistent and all volunteers should be aware of it. Best practice in safeguarding is generally for reports to be made directly by the person with the concern.

4.3. Follow-up

Reporters should be aware that safeguarding information is generally shared on a need-to-know basis only, and so it is unlikely that they will receive any updates on the report other than an acknowledgement that it was received. While this might be difficult for some reporters, it is important to remember that this is done to respect the victim's dignity and privacy.

If a reporter is still concerned that the situation is not improving, they can make another report and ask that the case be considered again. If they are still dissatisfied, they might consider whistleblowing (see [below](#)).

5. Safeguarding service users

People contact Nightline for a variety of reasons. Service users may or may not be adults at risk. Not all service users of a Nightline will be adults at risk and so Nightline volunteers should receive training in identifying when a service user may be an adult at risk.

While it is **not** appropriate to apply a blanket policy of assuming that all service users are adults at risk, it **is** acceptable to err on the side of caution where there is ambiguity.

While Nightline services are not designed to take calls from children, it is possible that a child can contact the service. It is a GPG requirement for Nightline volunteers to signpost a caller identified as a minor to [Childline](#) and to make a report if a child is believed to be at risk of harm ([GPG v4 section 4.2.5](#)). If a Nightline does receive calls from children, then all children are covered by this guidance.

5.1. Mental capacity

A person lacking mental capacity will almost always be an adult at risk and so there is rarely any need to distinguish the two in a safeguarding context.

The Good Practice Guidelines currently require that Nightlines not assess the mental capacity of service users ([GPG v4 section 4.2.1](#)). Equally, Nightlines must **not** operate a policy of assuming that service users lack mental capacity as this is contrary to the legal presumption of capacity. A person is assumed to have mental capacity until it is established that they lack it.⁷

5.2. Reports to the parent body

Reports should be made in line with the parent body's Safeguarding Policy.

Most Nightline service users do not generally give identifying details as the service is anonymous. Identifying details would usually include a name, phone number or address but could include other factors that allow you to directly identify an individual. You should take into account the information you have together with all the means reasonably likely to be used by either you or any other person to identify that individual.

For example, a person's degree course combined with a distinctive first name might be sufficient to identify a person.

Requiring reports without identifying information is not usually proportionate as the report cannot be actioned. Best practice therefore is to only require Nightlines to make a report if there is some information that could be used to identify the child or adult at risk.

However, providing the parent body with contextual information such as call themes, frequencies etc. could be useful to allow the parent body to get an accurate picture of what is happening in the student body, and the kinds of contacts volunteers are receiving. This could be in the form of monthly or termly reports. Alternatively, if the parent body would like more data, they could be provided with a login to the Nightline Portal system so that they can access the Logbook. As no identifying information is stored in Logbook, this does not breach the confidentiality or anonymity principles.

5.3. Asking for identifying information

The Nightline movement's principle of non-directiveness will usually mean that Nightlines should not have a policy of actively enquiring for identifying information. However, actively asking for information might be appropriate in some circumstances, for example:

⁷ In England & Wales, see Mental Capacity Act 2005, s 1(2); in Northern Ireland, see Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, s 1(2); in Scotland this is a common law principle, see *Lindsay v Watson* (1843) 5 D 1194.

- When the service user has explicitly asked if the Nightline can help
- When the service user appears to want help, but is unsure what to do

Any enquiry should be done openly, explaining that the Nightline will pass the service user's details to someone that can help them.

Alternatively, or in addition, the Nightline can signpost methods for the service user to get help themselves, for example by contacting emergency services, or contacting victim helplines (see [GPG v4 section 2.3](#) on providing information while being non-directive).

You should have a clear policy setting out when and how to ask for identifying information.

Where a service user is in immediate danger, Nightlines should call emergency services where possible ([GPG v4 section 1.9.2](#)).

5.4. When to inform the Association

The Association does **not** collect personal data on service users and Nightlines **must not** provide us with any identifying information about their service users.

However, we would still like to be informed of serious incidents involving service users. This is so that we can support Nightlines and parent bodies in handling the incident, ensure volunteers are properly supported, and identify if there are any learnings that can be added to our guidance documents.

The serious incidents where you should inform us are set out in the [reporting section](#) of this guidance.

6. Safeguarding volunteers

Being a Nightline volunteer naturally means handling difficult situations, including distressing and abusive calls. This will understandably have an effect on volunteers, which is why it is so important to consider their wellbeing too.

It is important that you value your volunteers and put their wellbeing, alongside your own, first. Nightlines provide an incredibly valuable service to student communities, but this cannot be at the expense of volunteers' welfare (yours or your volunteers'). It is better to have no Nightline, than to have a Nightline which is damaging the welfare of its own volunteers.

It is important to recognise that difficult times for the student community (e.g. exam season) will often mean that volunteers are under additional pressure at a time when call volumes are highest.

It is vital to have an effective volunteer welfare system in place to protect volunteers and prevent these pressures from becoming too much (see [GPG v4 section 3](#) for guidance on support and supervision for volunteers).

6.1. Accepting children as volunteers

In general, we recommend that Nightline listening volunteers should be over the age of 18. Where a Nightline accepts volunteers under the age of 18, they **must** have explicit permission from the parent body ([GPG v4 section 3.3](#)).

We do not provide advice or guidance regarding children who are volunteers. Parent bodies should seek their own advice to ensure that they meet their duty of care towards child volunteers.

6.2. Avoiding overwork and burnout

Volunteers, particularly Committee members, will often feel obliged to take on additional shifts or duties to prevent the service from closing. However, this culture will often lead to these volunteers taking on too much and damaging their own health.

It is therefore important that Nightlines set hard limits on the maximum number of shifts that any one person can take in a given period. These limits **must not** be exceeded for **any** reason.

In general, we recommend that volunteers should have an absolute minimum of 7 days' break between shifts. Nightlines may wish to set the default break as longer (e.g. 10-14 days) to discourage regularly taking shifts every week, only allowing this as an exception when absolutely necessary.

Longer breaks may be needed following particularly difficult contacts. There should be a policy to enforce longer breaks following particularly difficult contacts (e.g. suicidal calls) to allow volunteers time to reflect and mentally recover ([GPG v4 section 3.1](#)).

Although it may not always feel easy, it is better to close the service than to demand more from your volunteers than they can do. If you are finding that you are regularly needing to close shifts, you should consider:

- reducing the number of nights that the service is operating
- reducing the hours that the service operates each night

- reducing the number of contact methods available

Volunteers must **not** take on additional shifts due to a lack of volunteers. A lack of volunteers is a recruitment issue and should be addressed as such. It is better to close shifts than to accept a high risk of detriment to volunteer welfare.

6.3. Allowing volunteers to say no

Nightlines should ensure that they never place undue pressure on volunteers to complete shifts. This should include:

- Ensuring that volunteers do not go on shift while unwell or unfit to do so (whether physically or mentally) ([GPG v4 section 3.4](#)).
- Allowing volunteers to take a break while on shift, including “pausing” contacts. This is especially important after difficult calls such as suicidal calls or abusive callers ([GPG v4 section 3.1.1](#)). Nightlines might consider a required minimum “time out” for certain calls, although volunteers should always be allowed to extend this where necessary.
- Enforcing minimum periods between consecutive shifts, particularly following difficult calls.

Nightlines should encourage a culture where volunteers feel able and empowered to say no to protect their own welfare.

6.4. Access to professional support

Many Nightlines have a system which allows their volunteers to gain priority access to one-off support from university counselling services following a difficult contact.

Where this is not in place, Nightlines and parent bodies should strongly consider it, or what other professional support could be put in place for Nightline volunteers.

6.5. Reports to the parent body

Safeguarding reports should be made to the parent body’s Safeguarding Lead wherever there are concerns about a volunteer. As the Nightline will obviously hold identifying details about its volunteers, reports will always be actionable and so the issues outlined for service users are not relevant.

Volunteers should be regularly made aware of the safeguarding arrangements and know who to go to if they have any concerns about themselves or other volunteers.

The Nightline may need to work more closely with the parent body when dealing with volunteer safeguarding issues. It may be appropriate for the Nightline’s

Coordinators and/or Welfare Officer to be involved in making safeguarding reports that concern volunteers.

6.6. When to inform the Association

The Association does not need to be given personal data relating to the safeguarding of volunteers. You **must not** provide us with any identifying information about volunteers involved in safeguarding incidents without their explicit written consent.

However, we would still like to be informed of serious incidents involving volunteers. This is so that we can support Nightlines and parent bodies in handling the incident, ensure volunteers are properly supported, and identify if there are any learnings that can be added to our guidance documents.

The serious incidents where you should inform us are set out in the [reporting section](#) of this guidance.

7. Safer recruitment

While the vast majority of people who apply to be Nightline volunteers do it for the right reasons, there are unfortunately those who do so for less altruistic reasons, and may seek to take advantage of their position to exploit service users or other volunteers.

Safer recruitment practices help ensure that the people volunteering with Nightline are suitable people for their roles.

In addition, it is important to ensure that applicants will not be putting themselves at risk by becoming Nightline volunteers.

Why safer recruitment is important

Case study 1: Nightline

Names have been changed for anonymity, but this is a real incident. We have permission from the relevant police force to use this case study as an example.

Thomas was arrested at University of Sodor for a serious crime. Thomas pleaded guilty. While awaiting sentencing, he enrolled in a course at Borsetshire University, and was accepted as a volunteer with Borsetshire Nightline. While a Nightline volunteer, Thomas had access to adults at risk, both in other volunteers and in

service users. Thomas stated that he had volunteered with Nightline in the hopes that it would make him “look good” at the sentencing.

It was only when the Sodor police department got in touch that the Nightline became aware of the issue.

Case study 2: Samaritans

In 2021, the Telegraph reported on a small number of serious safeguarding incidents at Samaritans. The investigation found that certain middle-aged male volunteers had been using their position as Samaritans volunteers to meet up to have sex with female callers.⁸

7.1. General questions

You should ask potential volunteers about their motivations for volunteering, to make sure they understand what Nightline is and does, and that they want to be involved for the right reasons.

7.2. References

You should ask for references for potential volunteers. Ideally you should ask for two references. One should be their university tutor, while the other should be someone who knows them well such as an employer, or former teacher. Referees must not be relatives or close friends of the applicant.

Referees should be asked about the suitability of the person to volunteer, and you should contact them for more details if there is anything that suggests they might be unsuitable.

7.3. Asking about mental health

You should ask potential volunteers about their history of mental health/trauma/bereavement and any current/ongoing treatment they may be receiving.

The fact that someone is currently experiencing mental health issues and/or receiving treatment does not necessarily bar someone from volunteering with Nightline. Many volunteers have lived experience and this can be valuable for volunteers to be able to empathise and relate to the feelings of service users (although it is also important to remember that everyone's experiences are different and volunteers should never make assumptions about a service user's experiences).

⁸ [Samaritans volunteers met vulnerable callers for sex - BBC News](#)

However, it is important to remember that Nightline volunteering can be challenging work, and volunteers may be exposed to negative, distressing, and potentially traumatising emotions and details. This can take a toll on volunteers and place their own mental health and well-being under stress, either from a cumulative build-up over time, or from one particularly distressing incident.

As a consequence, volunteers with recent/ongoing history of mental health, trauma and/or bereavement (for example) could be negatively impacted by the stress related to volunteering. The stress may trigger the return of symptoms associated with their mental well-being and bring feelings back to the surface. Also, volunteers may find it harder to maintain healthy boundaries with service users and can subsequently over-identify and become overly involved with the caller and lose objectivity (this scenario can apply to all volunteers, irrespective of their mental health status or recent trauma).

Every applicant's situation must be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Nightline should discuss with the parent body's Safeguarding Lead how decisions will be made.

Based on advice from the Helplines Partnership, we suggest additional consideration is given to any potential volunteer who has experienced serious or acute mental health difficulty in the past 6 months (e.g. trauma, bereavement).

Where it is decided that an applicant is not in a position to volunteer due to their own experiences, this should be discussed with them sensitively. If applicable, they should also be encouraged to re-apply in a future training cycle if their circumstances change.

Alternatively, or in addition, they could be offered a volunteer role that does not involve taking contacts from service users (e.g. fundraising or publicity).

7.4. Asking about criminal records

Potential volunteers should also be asked if they have a criminal record or if they are currently under police investigation. [This government guidance](#) should be provided so that applicants do not declare any spent convictions.

Decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis taking into account all relevant information. This would usually be a matter for the parent body, not the Nightline. The Association can provide additional advice or support if the parent body does not already have a policy in place.

7.4.1. Spent convictions

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974,⁹ most criminal convictions, cautions, etc. become “spent” after a certain length of time.

It is against the law to refuse to offer someone a role due to a spent conviction unless that role is exempt (for example, teachers, doctors, etc.).¹⁰

Nightlines should not therefore be asking about spent convictions, nor should they take them into account if they become aware of them. The charity Unlock provides an [online calculator](#) which applicants can use to work out if they need to disclose a conviction - this link should be provided to applicants when they apply so that they do not accidentally declare spent convictions.

7.4.2. Criminal Records Checks

(Includes checks by the DBS, Disclosure Scotland, and Access NI)

Different levels of checks are available depending on the role being applied for.

As Nightlines do not give advice or guidance to children or adults at risk, volunteers are not carrying out regulated activity.¹¹ This means that Nightline volunteer positions are not eligible for any check other than a basic check.

Parent bodies may wish to apply for basic disclosure checks for Nightline volunteers at their discretion. These will usually require payment.

7.5. Data protection considerations

Please note that, as with all policies, data protection arrangements should be developed together with the parent body (see [GPG v4 section 5](#) for more information on GPG requirements for data protection). Any Nightline data protection policy will need to be compatible with the parent body’s policies. A separate policy may not be needed if the parent body already has suitable policies in place.

⁹ applies in England & Wales and Scotland. In Northern Ireland see Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

¹⁰ See [government guidance](#)

¹¹ In England & Wales, see Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, s 5 and sch 4. See also [government guidance](#).

In Scotland see Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, s 91, sch 2 and sch 3.

In Northern Ireland, see Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, art 9 and sch 2.

Information about a person's mental health is "special category data" under the UK GDPR.¹² Data about criminal records is treated similarly.¹³

Nightlines must therefore show that they meet a condition for processing,¹⁴ in addition to the usual lawful basis.

In this case, the applicable condition is likely to be the substantial public interest condition of "Safeguarding of children and of individuals at risk".¹⁵

The consent of the data subject is not required when using this condition as seeking the consent of the data subject would prejudice the ability of Nightlines and parent bodies to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities (since the withdrawal of consent by the data subject could place others at risk by prematurely halting any necessary safeguarding enquiries).

In order to make use of this condition, Nightlines will need an appropriate policy document.

An "appropriate policy document" must:

- State the condition(s) being relied on to process the data
- Show how the organisation complies with each of the [data protection principles](#)
- Include the organisation's retention and deletion policies
- Give an indication of the retention period for the specific data.

The ICO has a template appropriate policy document available on their website [here](#).

8. Volunteer disciplinary issues

Sometimes problems may arise after someone has started volunteering. It is important to take all concerns and allegations seriously and not to make any assumptions.

¹² UK GDPR, art 9(1).

¹³ UK GDPR, art 10.

¹⁴ Data Protection Act 2018, s 10.

¹⁵ Data Protection Act 2018, sch 1, para 18. Please note that the GDPR art 9(2)(d) condition ("not for profit bodies") is not a suitable condition for processing as most parent bodies will not meet the requirements and, in any case, this condition does not allow the sharing of information outside of the parent body, which is necessary for best practice in safeguarding.

8.1. Dealing with issues at the correct level

Many Nightlines have their own disciplinary procedures for their volunteers. In general, these should be limited to minor issues such as:

- informal resolutions to disagreements or minor complaints
- inactivity, or failure to complete mandatory training
- publicly breaching the volunteer's own anonymity

Dismissals by an internal procedure will generally only be acceptable for inactivity or failure to complete training (and these dismissals should allow an appeal to the parent body). Any other dismissal should involve the parent body in the decision-making.

Serious issues **must** be reported to the parent body. This means anything other than a minor issue (as above), including any incident or allegations of:

- criminal or illegal activity
- harassment, abuse, etc.
- breaking confidentiality
- breaching, or attempting to breach, the anonymity of other volunteers or of callers

All allegations must be taken seriously and reported to the parent body, however unlikely they may seem.

8.2. Issues outside of Nightline

Where an issue occurs outside of Nightline, this should be reported to the parent body. This might be where a volunteer does something as part of another society/club, or in their personal life.

It is also important that the parent body has an up-to-date list of the Nightline's membership at all times. This will allow the parent body to act if, for example, a volunteer needs to be suspended or removed due to inappropriate behaviour outside of a Nightline context that the Committee would not otherwise be aware of.

9. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the raising of concerns regarding organisational practice. In an ideal world, it is never necessary. However, it is important to make sure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to address issues to avoid institutional abuse and safeguarding failings.

9.1. By volunteers

Volunteers should be aware of how to raise concerns within the Nightline with the Coordinators or Committee.

If they do not feel that their concerns are being taken seriously, volunteers should know where to go. Volunteers should have a way of contacting the relevant person in the parent body.

Volunteers can also contact the Association on safeguarding@nightline.ac.uk if they wish. We will work with the parent body to resolve any issues.

9.2. By Nightlines

Where a Nightline has concerns about their parent body, they should follow the parent body's Whistleblowing Policy.

If the parent body does not have a policy, or the Nightline is not comfortable using it, the Nightline can instead contact the Association on safeguarding@nightline.ac.uk and/or contact the appropriate regulator:

- [Charity Commission](#) if the parent body is:
 - a Students' Union (or equivalent) in England or Wales
 - a University in Wales
- [Office for Students](#) if the parent body is a University in England
- [Scottish Charity Regulator \(OSCR\)](#) if the parent body is:
 - a Students' Union (or equivalent) in Scotland
 - a University in Scotland
- [Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#) if the parent body is:
 - a Students' Union (or equivalent) in Northern Ireland
 - a University in Northern Ireland

If we are contacted, we will work with the parent body to resolve the issue where possible. Where serious wrongdoing is alleged, we may not be in a position to solve the issue ourselves, but will support with any regulatory action if required.

10. Reporting to the Association

We ask for reports about serious incidents so that we can support you and your parent body, and so we can identify where we may need to provide more guidance or change our existing guidance.

We do not need to know the identities of anybody involved in order to do this. You **must not** include personal identifying information in any report made to the Association unless you have the person's express written consent. This includes indirect identification (e.g. referring to a Committee Member by their role could allow us to identify them).

A report to the Association should be sent to safeguarding@nightline.ac.uk and should include the following information:

- As much detail of the incident or situation as possible (without identifying anyone involved)
- Confirmation that it has been reported to your parent body
- What action (if any) you or your parent body have already taken

The table on the next page explains what type of incidents you should report to us. If you are unsure whether you need to report something, we would ask you to err on the side of caution and make a report anyway.

Reporting to the Association

Reminder: You must **not** include personal identifying information in any report made to the Association unless you have the person's express written consent.

Category	What you <u>should</u> report to the Association	What does <u>not</u> need to be reported to the Association
Service user safeguarding	- Allegations made by service users against Nightline volunteers - Any suspected or known incident of a service user completing suicide during, or immediately following, a contact with Nightline	- Safeguarding incidents involving service users and third parties - Suicidal thoughts or ideation
Volunteer safeguarding	- Volunteers self-harming, attempting suicide, or suffering other mental health issues where this occurs: - During a shift - Immediately before or after a shift - In another situation that has some connection with the Nightline (e.g. training, socials, etc.) - Significant numbers of volunteers quitting, needing time off, or otherwise being impacted by their volunteering	- General/minor volunteer welfare issues - Individual volunteers quitting or taking time off
Volunteer discipline	- Allegations made against a Committee member - Serious allegations against volunteers involved with delivering the listening service (e.g. allegations of abuse or sexual abuse) - Dismissal of Committee members or volunteers involved with delivering the listening service (except for minor misconduct)	- Dismissal for minor misconduct (e.g. inactivity) - Allegations against, or dismissal of, volunteers not involved with delivering the listening service
Whistleblowing	- The Nightline makes, or considers making, a referral to the regulator regarding the parent body - The parent body begins a formal investigation or action involving the Nightline	General/minor complaints or concerns that are resolved quickly and without external intervention

11. Further reading

Safeguarding Guidance from the Charity Regulators

- [Charity Commission \(England & Wales\)](#)
- [Scottish Charity Regulator \(OSCR\)](#)
- [Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#)

Other charities

- [Ann Craft Trust](#)
- [NSPCC](#) (child safeguarding)
- [Protect](#) (whistleblowing)