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Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Guidance for Tourist Guides

The Institute of Tourist Guiding is the officially recognised standard-setting and awarding body for tourist guiding in England, Northern Ireland and Jersey. We are committed to protecting children and vulnerable adults, and also guides' protection against complaints and accusations. This statement covers the policies and procedures the Institute recommends to help keep children safe and respond to child protection concerns. It is based on advice about such statements from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and guide training course modules. It is important that it is observed closely and uniformly by all guides.

Our Policy and Guidance for Guides are as follows:

I. Adult supervision

- In reply to anyone seeking to arrange a tour for a group of children or vulnerable adults, the initial response should cover the following:

“The safety and supervision of the [children/group] remains the responsibility of the person booking a tour. You should not include the guide[s] when assessing the appropriate number of responsible adults to be present. We recommend there should be at least two adult carers, with the adult to child ratios set by the NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children-guidance/>”

- Any group of children or vulnerable adults on a booked tour **should therefore have at least two adult carers present** including one who knows the children or the vulnerable adults concerned.
- **However**, note that an individual school or other organisation making the booking may decide that one adult is sufficient in the light of its own risk assessment (which the guide should ask to see in writing).
- **In the case of families**, the adult member(s) of the family is/are responsible for the children's safety and conduct and must remain present at all times.
- **If there is only one carer** with a group on a walk and that carer has to leave - for example to take someone to the toilet - the whole group must follow.
- At the beginning of a tour the guide should emphasise that an adult carer must stay at the end until the last member of the group leaves with a responsible adult.
- **If on the day there is no carer** present, the guide should refuse to continue with the tour.



2. Guides should aim never to be alone with a child/children or vulnerable adult(s).

- **If it becomes unavoidable** that a guide is alone with a child or vulnerable adult, the guide must always keep in the public view. This is particularly important on walks which take place in confined spaces, or in the dark or poor light.
- There is sometimes an expectation that the guide will take sole charge, e.g. when a tour is booked by a family or someone with a particular cultural background. This guidance still applies, and guides should be alert to the risks and take action to avoid the situation.

3. Conduct of the tour: keep physical contact to an absolute minimum (or not at all). For instance:

- Organising the group into smaller units, or asking them to handle or wear anything, should be left to an adult carer.
- Sometimes children will take hold of your hand; don't push them away but try to find an excuse to get them to take their hand away – e.g. ask them to hold or point to something.
- If a child falls over or hurts themselves you should not apply any first aid (again, that is for an adult carer to deal with) and do not give them antiseptic cream/plasters etc.
- Be alert to any situation where children would not be treated equally, or where it could be construed as “grooming”. (Examples: prizes, e.g. in games or treasure hunts; giving sweets, even with a parent's/carer's permission - they will have been taught not to take sweets from strangers (that includes us); and they may have relevant medical conditions or allergies.)



FAQs

Q Who is a child or vulnerable adult?

A For the purposes of this guidance:

- A 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (ref: the Children Act 1989)
- A vulnerable adult is defined as someone who is over 18 and "Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."
(<http://www.safeguardingmatters.co.uk/the-new-disclosure-and-vetting-service/in-the-news/recent-cases-relating-to-vulnerable-adults/>)

In more detail, adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:

- Has a learning or physical disability
- Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity
- Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare
- Is detained in custody
- Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability
- Is living in sheltered or residential care home
- Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Q How many adults should accompany a group of children or vulnerable adults?

A NSPCC recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

- 0 - 2 years - one adult to three children
- 2 - 3 years - one adult to four children
- 4 - 8 years - one adult to six children
- 9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
- 13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

Note that:

- NSPCC recommend having at least two adults present, even with smaller groups of children and young people.



- Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum. You should ensure a risk assessment has been prepared for each activity.
- Schools and other organisations in the education or early years sectors may have their own ratios.
- If young people are helping to supervise younger children, only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children/>

Q *Can I advertise a tour aimed at groups of children etc (examples: ghost tours, country walks...)?*

A A guide or guide-led agency promoting such a tour should carefully describe the tour content, and clearly state that if any under 18-year olds take part, the appropriate number of responsible supervising adults should be in attendance. The party booking the tour should be asked to draw up its own risk assessment, and in the absence of one, the guide should do this.

Q *What if it is a regular walk or other activity promoted to the public with individual ticket sales?*

A You should make clear if it is suitable or not for children (examples: “Not suitable for a very young child” or “Not suitable for children aged under 12”). If children can attend you need make clear every child must be accompanied by an adult in any advertising and promotion of the walk/tour. In these scenarios you could get one child with two parents or two children with one parent. At the start of the walk you should make clear that the parent(s)/carer(s) remain responsible for the child and their safety. If a parent wants to leave the child in your care and collect the child at the end of the tour, you should politely refuse to take the child or ask the parent to remain throughout the tour.

Q *When should the guide draw up a risk assessment?*

A A tour operator or booker responsible for the tour should offer the client a risk assessment to support advice to carers/responsible adults in advance of a tour about the environment in which the guiding will take place. While the tour operator or booker should lead on this, it is the responsibility of all those concerned – including guides – to ensure that the risks associated with any tour are properly identified and mitigated. Guides should make sure their capacity for risk assessments is current, so that they can make one if it is not available, or if the guide is promoting the tour. The Institute’s members qualify after rigorous training



including tour planning, part of which concerns risk assessment, taking account of site specific issues and clients with disabilities or who are young or vulnerable or have other special needs. Increasingly, modules on faith guiding are also undertaken.

Q Do I need to get a DBS check?

A We are not recommending that guides be routinely covered by a DBS check because this guidance is firmly based on guides working at all times with at least one supervising adult. Also, note that while an employer has the option to apply for an enhanced DBS check to cover a guide likely to work frequently or regularly with children or vulnerable adults, this would not cover a guide for similar work for a different employer. Driver-guides are required to apply for an enhanced DBS check through the local authority that licenses them for private hire.

Q What is the DBS?

A The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. A “Basic DBS Check” searches for any unspent criminal convictions and can be applied for by individuals. But only the “Enhanced DBS Check” searches the adult or children's barred lists to check that the applicant is suitable to work with these groups. An individual cannot access an enhanced check themselves; this must be applied for by the organisation the individual is working or volunteering for, and takes an average of 10 days to come through.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Q Is this issue covered in the guiding organisations' codes of conduct?

A The Institute of Tourist Guiding has a robust Code of Professional Conduct which its members also need to take into account when asked to lead tours for children or vulnerable adults. The Code commits guides to upholding a duty of care to clients, and to always be courteous, professional, ethical, flexible and collaborative towards clients, visitors, colleagues and site staff. As independent self-employed people, guides are expected to respect these high standards of conduct, and any local site guiding rules. There is a defined procedure for complaints, and breaches of the Code, if upheld, can lead to severe sanctions.

Q What should I do if a safeguarding issue or complaint occurs in connection with a tour?

A The matter should be drawn to the attention of the tour operator or booker. Your guide membership organisation may also be able to support you. Any potential complainants should be referred to the Institute of Tourist Guiding, for



follow-up under the complaints procedure – see

<https://www.itg.org.uk/about/policies-procedures-and-documents/complaints-policy-and-procedure/>

Q How should I deal with photography during my tour?

A Tours offer environments where photographs and videos may be taken, stored or shared in many ways e.g. between the guide and client, on social media, advertising etc. Some children, parents or carers may not be comfortable with images of themselves or their children being taken, if, for example, they are worried about perpetrators of abuse tracing them online, or there are religious or cultural reasons for choosing not to be photographed. Ask accompanying adults to intervene if you are concerned with other tour participants or the public taking images.

Q Can I use images of families and children on my material promoting my tours?

A Always ask permission. It is advisable to ask for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image. Explain what images will be used for, and how they will be stored. Do not disclose personal information about individual children and do not use images showing any identifying information (for example a school uniform with a logo). Be aware of GDPR and legal consent implications, among other potential risks associated with sharing images of children, especially online.

Q Where can I get further advice and support on these issues?

A The NSPCC helpline offers help, advice and support to parents, professionals and families. It can be contacted at help@nspcc.org.uk or 0808 800 5000 or by online form at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/nspcc-helpline/>

This guidance was drawn up with reference to arrangements in England. Guides operating in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales should check with local guiding associations for any differences that would apply to the above guidance.