

Welcome to the regular RNIB Safeguarding Update

Safeguarding is a clear priority for our staff and customers and, to reflect this, we want to share the progress we are making with you all and remind you of the support available if you have safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding is integral to everything we do at RNIB. We take safeguarding seriously.



Welcome to the regular RNIB Safeguarding update.

April has arrived and as we start to enjoy the Spring, we bring you the latest edition of the Safeguarding newsletter, complete with updates, insights and stories into the world of safeguarding at RNIB.

This month, we hear from Rhea Gardener, a Business Support and Case Officer from the Safeguarding Team.

Rhea shares valuable insight into how safeguarding has evolved at RNIB over the last 12 months, as well as her ambitions for this year.

Next, we learn what it means to be a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), from Cathie Burke, who first started working with RNIB in 1994. With the experience of serving as an ECLO for 17 years (one of RNIB's first!), Cathie shares her insight, including how her role has changed and best practice for safeguarding.

We also share an example of a positive safeguarding case, which met our thresholds for high quality reporting. It highlights how sensitive cases can be handled with both care and efficiency. And finally, we share a Customer Surveys update, and take a look at the latest audit findings.

Thank you once again for your continued contribution to the safeguarding efforts of RNIB.

Sandra Cornwall,
Head of Safeguarding, RNIB

What is the main focus of your role?

My role involves giving administrative support to fellow colleagues in the Safeguarding team and providing safeguarding advice to staff members, once a week, while I cover the advice line (020 7391 2103).

What has changed since your last safeguarding interview in 2021?

I have taken on more within my daily role – I am currently covering aspects of the Safeguarding Training Manager's role while they are on placement. This has allowed me to learn about other aspects of the training offered to RNIB staff members, as well as take on new tasks including data collation and monthly report creation.

Have you noticed any changes in the way safeguarding is perceived and treated at RNIB in that time?

I have noticed that staff are more

confident when speaking about safeguarding and identifying concerns. They also seem more confident in deciding if a potential concern meets the threshold for referral.

What do you want to achieve in the next 12 months?

I would like to work through the Safeguarding Development Plan, incorporating my role in leading the customer, staff and volunteering surveys. All of these will be carried out over the year.

What is the one thing you would ask readers to remember when they think about safeguarding?

It's important to remember that safeguarding is everyone's business – the team is always on hand to support, but we must all be vigilant and mindful of safeguarding concerns. We cannot be complacent.



Safeguarding in practice: Reporting concerns and positive outcomes

One of our recent case files involved an ECLo customer, who was accompanied in clinic by a carer employed by another charity.

The carer made a disclosure/allegation of alleged neglect which was directed towards the RNIB customer by another employee in the carer's organisation.

The ECLo attempted to engage the customer in conversation to gather more information; however, mental capacity concerns were identified, and they were unable to determine the customer's views and wishes.

The ECLo team, including the team's DSL, consulted with the Safeguarding team which advised re-establishing contact with the carer and informing them of their responsibility to report this internally under a safeguarding allegation, or a whistleblowing process.

The Safeguarding team clarified that a threshold was met for RNIB to share this information with Adult Social Care. However, before we could do this, we needed to seek the consent of the person who made the disclosure/allegation before identifying their personal and sensitive data within the referral.

We agreed a period of seven days to re-establish contact which was proportionate against the level of risk disclosed, however the carer did not respond to any attempts to re-establish contact.

The Safeguarding team consulted with RNIB's Information Governance team and advised the ECLo to process the referral to Adult Social Care without identifying the carer. We clarified that we have that information, and should they require it, in order to take any action, they must clarify the legal grounds that will permit RNIB to share this personal and sensitive data. Adult Social Care has accepted the referral and is undertaking an investigation.



Stories from RNIB: How Designated Safeguarding Lead Cathie works to create a consistent approach



Cathie Burke, ECLo Service Manager, tells us about her RNIB career as a pioneering ECLo in the 90s and how

safeguarding is embedded in the team's thoughts and processes.

"I first started working with RNIB in 1994 as a support worker at RNIB Loughborough College and remotely in Southfields College Leicester. I later became one of the early ECLos and worked for 17 years across three different NHS Trusts before becoming ECLo Service Manager for the awesome North East ECLos.

"Since I started, my role as a DSL has changed a lot, particularly in two areas. Firstly, I no longer have to wrangle with Eclipse, which was often very hard to navigate – thanks Safeguarding team for taking on that burden! Secondly, I have become far more comfortable and confident as a DSL. Partly through experience of dealing with concerns, but also through active discussions on our training sessions.

"As a DSL, safeguarding calls always take first priority – my team knows they can call me to discuss these calls anytime. The ECLos are familiar with supporting patients with identified needs; the important thing is identifying when a need becomes an adult safeguarding issue, or a risk. My team is a good mixture of experienced and new ECLos – they also come from a very mixed employment backgrounds, which means their approach to safeguarding can vary. They have learned the importance of

dual reporting – with RNIB advising on process and approach.

"We include safeguarding in every 1-2-1 discussion with each ECLo and it is a standing item on our team meeting agendas. Where there is no recent team-related safeguarding issue to discuss, we use the recipe cards, which form part of our peer review each time we meet.

"My top priority as a DSL is regularly checking on the wellbeing of team members. This is a benefit of the DSL role as it acts as a bridge between the staff member and the Safeguarding team.

"My next priority is monitoring safeguarding records as they are time sensitive. I support my team with the basics of the forms, and they add in the detail of the conversation in order to speed up the processes.

"After that it is key to ensure Viewpoint records are appropriate and the safeguarding activity is logged and flag amended."

"As ECLos and ECLo Service Managers, we work with most teams across RNIB. We can ensure records are clear so that onward support is informed. Many times, you will suspect when a concern meets a threshold or not, but I always check every concern with the Safeguarding team as its insight is invaluable and their knowledge of processes and safety factors is always going to be better than mine."

Safeguarding Forums – help us ensure all the organisation is represented

Our forums are crucial in ensuring standards of safeguarding are maintained. Please read the questions and answers below to find out if you can help us ensure they are as efficient and useful as possible.

Does your team or service have a staff Safeguarding Forum representative?

We currently have around 40 staff safeguarding representatives in the forums, but there are areas of the organisation that are still not represented.

What are the staff Safeguarding Forums?

They provide a networking forum for RNIB workforce members to keep up to date on the latest safeguarding issues and for representatives to report information back to their teams/services. They also provide an opportunity for all members to bring any issues, or areas of improvement

to the forum, and the opportunity to share effective safeguarding practice from their teams.

When are the staff Safeguarding Forums?

The forums meet on a quarterly basis in January, April, July and October. The next staff forums will be taking place on 25 April, 18 July and 24 October 2023.

Over the last year, numbers have significantly reduced; it is important to have a healthy attendance as it is a key part of development for safeguarding.

How do I become staff Safeguarding

Forum representative?

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If you would like to be staff forum representative for your team/service, please email:
safeguarding@rnib.org.uk

Customer surveys

In November 2022, we began to undertake our customer surveys to get feedback on the interactions customers have had with the Safeguarding team. Customers we contacted had positive feedback of their experiences and were confident that their needs were met during the process. More detailed findings will be available soon and further surveys will be carried out this quarter.

97 per cent of these customers had positive feedback of their experiences and were confident their needs were met during the process. This is an increase of three per cent from last year.



Case file audit findings

We delivered six Eclipse audits relating to concerns that met threshold and six ViewPoint audits relating to concerns that did not meet threshold.

Each audit identifies strengths of practice and development areas across the following criteria: data standards and recording keeping, risk assessment, decision making, making safeguarding personal and mental capacity. Each file audit is awarded a grade (Inadequate, Requires Improvement, Good or Outstanding).

Eclipse: five were awarded a Good rating and one was awarded an Outstanding rating.

Viewpoint: four were rated Good and two were rated Requires Improvement.

One rated Requires Improvement related to psychological abuse. The record shows that a concern was identified however the record did not

clarify the impact of the psychological abuse e.g. if the customer felt intimidated/scared/belittled/humiliated by the alleged perpetrator and the record did not clarify if the customer has care and support needs that may prevent her from protecting herself from further harm.

The second case file rated Requires Improvement related predominantly to suicide risk however the customer also made a comment about her partner refusing to leave the house when asked too. The record states that the customer sounded panicked when sharing this information, however this information was not relayed to the safeguarding team when they sought advice.

As a result of these findings, both teams were asked to conduct a second risk assessment with the respective customers under support and guidance provided by the safeguarding team.

Contacting the team

RNIB is committed to safeguarding everyone who uses our services, or comes into contact with us.

The safeguarding phone line on **020 7391 2103** is operational Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Email safeguarding@rnib.org.uk or allegationsmanagement@rnib.org.uk

For safeguarding training queries and bookings please email

rnibsafeguardingtraining@rnib.org.uk

For more information on safeguarding visit the safeguarding hub for everything to do with safeguarding within RNIB: rnib.in/Safeguarding

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