

Nightingale Gardeners Safeguarding Statement/Policy

The aim of this statement/policy is to communicate the commitment of the Nightingale Gardeners Group to **safeguarding the welfare of anyone of any age or ability using the garden while volunteers are in attendance.**

In brief, in law, there are two groups recognised to be at particular risk of abuse: children and young people aged under 18 years and also [‘vulnerable’] adults who have care and support needs.

Adults most at risk of abuse include older people; people with a visual or hearing impairment; people with a physical disability; people with learning disabilities or mental health problems; and people living with HIV or AIDS who have care and support needs.

Abuse can happen anywhere, including in the community garden, by anyone. It includes physical, domestic, sexual/child sexual exploitation, psychological, emotional, financial/material, modern slavery, discriminatory, organisational, neglect or acts of omission, self-neglect and extremism or radicalisation. The County Council website <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/> has very good information on all of these.

In general, the garden is a happy place for people of all ages and abilities to explore and enjoy and we want it to be safe for them and also our volunteers.

Prevention

- The Gardeners will try to ensure the garden is safe by using signs by any hazards such as the nature pond and also by not leaving tools unattended. See the health and safety policy/statement for further details.
- During any activities in the garden, parents/carers remain responsible for the welfare of their children and young people and, especially, for assessing if the activity is safe for their child or young person.
- Nightingale Gardeners do not have insurance to cover children and young people under the age of 18 years volunteering. There might be very low risk tasks they can join in with but only with the close supervision of their parents/carers who remain responsible for them.
- Volunteers will be especially careful not to enter enclosed areas such as the club hut, polytunnel or tool shed with children and young people in the absence of their parents/carers. They will not accompany them to the toilet, offer any personal care or transport them in their cars.
- During their interactions in the garden, the child, young person or adult could be vulnerable to abuse by others, including volunteers. This abuse could include developing inappropriate affections but could also involve fabricating stories about inappropriate interactions. If the volunteer is anxious about this, he/she should quickly withdraw from the situation and speak to one of the Gardeners Group’s officers for advice.
- To help prevent accusations of abuse being made against volunteers they should never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. They should never engage in inappropriate touching of any form. They should avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison. They should not humiliate or frighten anyone or physically punish anyone. They should not deprive anyone or force anyone to consume food or drink.

Reporting concerns

During their volunteering, people might observe behaviour or signs in others that cause them concern that abusive behaviour might be taking place:

- If volunteers have any concerns, they should speak with one of the Group's officers.
- By law, any allegations of abuse from anyone should be reported and recorded (see below).
- Volunteers are considered to be 'members of the public', who all have a duty of care in law to protect the person from immediate harm, seek help and report within a working day their concerns. The County Council website has clear information about how to do this for children and young people or for adults. If a crime is suspected, the reporting person should contact the Police and/or ambulance on 999. There are multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASHs) for children and young people and adults, which are contacted via the County Council. You can complete an online form or use customer services: 0345 045 5202 or out of hours: 01733 234 724.

Complaints procedure

Nightingale Gardeners Group is volunteer-run, and we are bound to make mistakes. If anyone has an equal opportunities suggestion, worry or complaint about the Group, its members or our activities we really want to know. Contact the Secretary, including via the website contact details. The Group will take it seriously, aim to deal with it promptly and also with confidentiality. Where necessary, they will ask Cambridge City Council staff for advice.