Basic information

Both our current Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer can be contacted at safeguarding@workersliberty.org. If you wish to contact one or other of these officers separately send your message via awl@workersliberty.org, marked for their attention and this message will be treated in confidence. These officers can be contacted by both members and non-members who have concerns. For reasons of online safety the officers are not named here, but will reply personally to anyone and everyone who communicates at the above address.

The AWL keeps an up-to-date list of comrades who have Enhanced DBS checks.

Safeguarding Policy

Preamble to Safeguarding Policy
Our project is to build an organisation of active revolutionaries who are able to think for themselves, play a role in educating themselves and each other and be prepared to fight for their ideas within the organisation and wider movement and often in hostile environments.
We aim to persuade young people of our ideas and to go out and fight for them. Some of this work is tough and can be at times “uncomfortable”.

We are concerned that our organisation does not infantilise young people as many institutions and organisations in capitalist society do. We strive to always treat them as thoughtful, capable young adults, while at the same time recognising that young people up to the age of 18 and vulnerable adults are special groups that require some specific safeguarding.

Below is a safeguarding policy defining what we mean by safeguarding and the procedures we will adhere to if there are concerns for under-18s and or vulnerable adults in the AWL.

This policy can only apply to our own events and surrounding social activities and to our members and participants at such events and activities. It cannot apply to non-members/supporters or participants at other events. It is distinct from support we give members/supporters in experiencing abuse in other organisations and environments (eg. bullying at work, in their trade union, from other left groups, or from parents, carers or partners).

Safeguarding Policy
This Safeguarding policy applies to all participants, volunteers, helpers, members, staff, including senior organisers and anyone working or volunteering on behalf of the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty
The purpose of this policy is:
* to protect young people (up to the age of 18 years old) and vulnerable adults who attend Alliance for Workers Liberty branches and events and participate in social activities around these meetings and events. For all other participants see the Code of Conduct.
to provide volunteers and staff with the overarching principles that guide the Alliance for Workers Liberty’s approach to safeguarding and child protection.

What is safeguarding?
Safeguarding is the broader preventative and precautionary approach to planning and procedures that need to be in place to protect children and young people and vulnerable adults from any potential harm or damage. It is more than child protection, although child protection is one important aspect of safeguarding. Child protection involves recognising signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or of neglect and acting on it.

Safeguarding Principles
The Alliance for Workers’ Liberty recognises that:
* the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
* all young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
* some young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
* working in partnership with young people and vulnerable adults and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s and vulnerable adults welfare. Outside organisations may inform and influence our practice and procedures.

Our underlying safeguarding principle is that all young people and vulnerable adult members/supporters will be protected from abusive behaviours and attitudes that fit the following areas of abuse: physical, sexual and emotional.

To achieve this aim:
The needs of the young people are central to all activity planning they will be involved in. This will include where possible careful consideration of venues booked and used. Where under 18s are participating, we will avoid 18+ venues where possible.
Open communication with members of all ages and effective planning will support safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.
Anyone has the right to speak out about behaviour and attitudes they find uncomfortable within the three defined areas of abuse. They should know in advance whom they should speak to, and be confident they will be listened to.
The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for seeing to it that sufficient organisers do basic safeguarding training (which can be completed online for free).
Risk assessments must be undertaken for work and activities planned involving young people and vulnerable adults, e.g. taking part in a potentially dangerous demonstration, sleeping arrangements at summer camp, particularly hostile political environments. This will not be done with a view to preventing anyone from participating but to consider what we can do as extra to help make participation as safe as possible.
Personal details of members are held securely in accordance with data protection policy.
The Safeguarding Officer and their Deputy will be appointed each year by the incoming National Committee [will be appointed on 12.1.19], and generally will be chosen from among members with safeguarding experience in their outside work. They are the first port of call for all safeguarding concerns, and responsible for overseeing and monitoring safeguarding across our activities.

Any member of the AWL aware of concerns regarding a child or young person (under 18) or vulnerable adult must report them as soon as feasibly possible to the Safeguarding Appointed Person, even if this is against the wishes of the individual. If concerns regarding any child or young person (under 18) or vulnerable adult are reported to Branch Organisers, Executive Committee (EC) Members or Disputes Committee (DC) members at any stage of this process, they must report them as above.

If the concerns are about the Safeguarding Appointed Person they should be reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Appointed Person and to the DC and EC.
Basic Safeguarding Awareness

Safeguarding in context (from our policy):
“We are concerned our organisation does not infantilise young people as many institutions and organisations in capitalist society do. We strive always to treat them as thoughtful capable young adults, while at the same time recognising that young people up to the age of 18 and vulnerable adults are special groups that require some specific safeguarding”.
“This (Safeguarding) policy can only apply to our own events and activities and to our members and participants at such events and activities”.

Considering the four categories of abuse in the context of our organisation, events and activities and surrounding social activities.
• Physical: unwanted physical contact, aggressive or non-aggressive
• Sexual: non-consenting, unwanted, an unequal power dynamic this could be age or position inside our organisation, harassment and predatory behaviour.
• Emotional: manipulation, humiliation, bullying.
• Neglect: least definable in our context.
(the above are definitive examples)

With the above in mind we all need to be:
• aware
• alert
• considerate.

We need to be prepared to raise ANY concerns with an appropriate comrade as soon as they arise. This will be the safeguarding lead at an event or a trusted comrade who you know will not treat any shared information as ‘gossip’.
Raising concerns about something that has been observed, heard, passed on second hand, or shared with you as a concern does not, necessarily mean it is a big issue that requires dramatic action. It means we are practising safeguarding and, in most instances, taking some small but appropriate action will prevent a situation or incident getting worse. Raising concerns provides an opportunity to talk it through, consider the implications and consider ‘what next’.
Mostly further action will be to remind comrades/fellow travellers about comradely behaviour, our code of conduct and safeguarding policy. Other times it will require following the more formal route outlined in our Complaints and Grievances policies and procedures.
Serious breaches in safeguarding will lead to serious responses and this will mean overriding the wishes of the abused if they want to keep the police out of a matter. Rape or other serious assault, sexual or physical, has to involve the police.

Procedure

Raising a concern for consideration at an event

Raise your concern with a safeguarding lead at the event. Talk it through. It might be possible to agree ‘what next’ at the time. It might be that be there is no agreement;
the safeguarding lead will immediately pass on the concern to the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy for further consideration. They may raise it with the EC or DC directly or even the police in cases of serious sexual or physical assault. All concerns, even if resolved at the time, will be reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

*Reporting a more general concern formally*

If you wish to report a more general concern do so to the Safeguarding Officer, the EC or DC. The EC or the DC will in all cases share information with the Safeguarding Officer. This will be investigated and reported on appropriately or in the most serious cases reported directly to the police.

On raising and reporting concerns always make every effort to clearly distinguish what is FACT what is OPINION and what is HEARSAY. Once concerns have been raised for consideration or formally reported it is important for the political health of individuals and the group that people refrain from gossiping and ‘sharing’ further. Nothing of any substance can be gained from such action though a lot of damage can be caused.
Safeguarding procedure checklist for setting up safeguarding at events and activities

Our current procedure is as follows:

* Establish who is the safeguarding lead in advance of an event or meeting. This person will have an Enhanced DBS and training in safeguarding.
* The AWL Safeguarding Officer or Deputy will ensure the safeguarding lead is up-to-date/confident with our safeguarding policy and procedures.
* Inform the event (verbally or in written form, e.g. on a printed agenda) who is the safeguarding lead and how they can be contacted; it is often necessary to have a different safeguarding lead for the evening post-event social, make this clear and how they, too, can be contacted.
* At big events brief stewards about the safeguarding procedures for that event.
* Remind all comrades where they can find safeguarding policy and procedures.
Safeguarding training

The following questionnaires are aimed at raising and reinforcing safeguarding awareness among comrades. Model answers to these questionnaires will be provided on request by writing to awl@workersliberty.org.

Safeguarding questionnaire 1

Basic Safeguarding Awareness

After thoroughly reading the safeguarding policy, and basic safeguarding awareness document (printed above) complete the following questionnaires to confirm understanding. Discuss the answers with a comrade or comrades, check answers with model answers. Keep this document as evidence of training. Questions may have more than one correct answer.

1. Who is the Safeguarding Lead in your organisation or at your event?

2. Who would you contact if you had safeguarding concerns about the safeguarding approved lead?

3. What is Whistleblowing?

4. Who has a responsibility to safeguard children and young people?
   a. Everyone who has contact with children in a professional capacity;
   b. Designated safeguarding lead;
   c. The EC and NC;
   d. Branch organisers.
5. List the four categories of abuse and examples of such abuse (most likely, if at all, in social activities after the event).

   a. 

   b. 

   c. 

   d. 

6. Which of the following maybe considered ‘physical’ abuse?

   a. Threatening a comrade, contact or fellow traveller with aggressive behaviour;
   b. Hitting, slapping or kicking a comrade or contact or fellow traveller;
   c. Unwanted/unsolicited physical contact, eg. repeatedly hugging after being asked not to do so.

7. Which of the following may be considered ‘emotional’ abuse?

   a. Regularly putting young comrades down;
   b. Mocking and humiliating young comrades;
   c. Arguing with a comrade over a political difference.

8. Which of the following maybe considered ‘sexual’ abuse?

   a. Predatory sexual behaviour from a comrade. This could be an older comrade or a peer;
   b. Unwanted non-aggressive sexual advances;
   c. Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing;
   d. Mutual flirting.

   Note: Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other young people.
9. What will you do if you have concerns about a someone’s behaviour towards another comrade, contact or fellow travellers?

a. Mind your own business they’re all grown-ups and it’s not our business to manage other people’s behaviour;
b. Raise the issue with your Branch Organiser or Safeguarding Lead;
c. Keep a written record of your concerns and the action you have taken;
d. Wait to see if anyone else has any concerns before reporting;
e. Seek advice about taking the matter through the Complaints and Grievance procedures.

10. What will you do if a young person discloses abuse to you at one of our events or activities (social or political)?

a. Listen carefully and agree to respect confidentiality;
b. Listen carefully but make no promises about not telling others;
c. Listen carefully but say if it is of a serious nature, such as, but not only, sexual assault, you will have to tell the safeguarding lead and or the police;
d. Listen carefully then take on the accused in an effort to sort it out.

11. Which of the following should you not do if a young person discloses abuse to you?

a. Listen and respect their desire for total confidentiality;
b. Agree with them not to tell anyone but decide afterwards you need to get it ‘off your chest’ and tell your best mate in the group;
c. Ask leading questions to get the answers you want to hear;
d. Tell them you’re busy but you will speak to them later.

12. Where in the organisation will you find contact details of people you should report to if you have concerns about the well-being of a young person?
# Questionnaire 2

## Is This Abuse? Are You Concerned?

This questionnaire is written to help comrades consider issues relevant to both safeguarding and our code of conduct.

Look at each of the examples below and decide how concerned you would be about each situation.

Score 0 – 5, with 0 being ‘no concern’ and 5 ‘very concerned’.

Make a note of what, if any, category of abuse is indicated. Make a note about what action, if any, you will take.

1. An 18 year old new comrade is very upset, he says he’s been bullied by an older comrade. You ask what happened and he says ‘She shouted at me because I said I don’t want to attend a conference. She said I was a lazy wimp’.

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<th>Level of concern</th>
<th>Category of abuse</th>
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What action, if any, will you take?

2. A young female contact complains she is being phoned too often by an older male comrade. He is trying to get her to do various political activities but she feels harassed and says there’s just something not right about it.

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What action, if any, will you take?
3. Paula, a young comrade with ‘special needs’ goes along to a house party with other young comrades after one of our political events. All comrades are drinking alcohol except for Paula. Comrades get into a political argument that soon gets out of hand. Paula finds this very stressful and when she tries to talk to one of the young comrades they are too drunk to be of any use.

Paula has had a really stressful experience and retells her story a few days later when contacted by a comrade about doing a paper. She says she no longer wants to be involved.

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What action, if any, will you take?

4. Comrades are in the pub after one of our weekend or day schools. One young, new comrade is looking subdued. You go over and ask if she enjoyed the school. She looks all tearful and says the comrade whose flat she stayed at last night kept her up all night talking about imperialism and then when couldn’t stay awake any longer the comrade made an unsolicited sexual advance on her.

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What action, if any, will you take?
5. A young comrade approaches you and asks if he can tell you something in the strictest of confidence. You say, ‘Yes, of course. will we go somewhere more quiet?’ The comrade discloses to you that he is in a relationship with another male comrade who is physically abusing him. He says the abuse sometimes takes the form of being forced to have sex and things get very violent and he says he’s terrified.

Level of concern

Category of abuse

What action, if any, will you take?

6. A young fellow traveller meets a group of young comrades in the pub after one of our events. There are other comrades in the pub too. The fellow traveller is approached by an older comrade and they get into a political discussion which quickly this escalated into a bigger disagreement and the older comrade starts to shout and demand the fellow traveller explains herself more. It’s apparent the fellow is strong willed and able to conduct an argument but it all starts to sound unfair and inappropriate.

Level of concern

Category of abuse

What action, if any, will you take?

7. You get a phone call late one night a youngish comrade (25) is crying she says she needs to talk about an awful event that happened 2 years earlier. She says someone who was then in the group raped her. She is inconsolable and very distressed. With her agreement you get in a cab and go round to her flat. She talks all night and asks to swear you’ll never tell a living soul.

Level of concern

Category of abuse
What action, if any, will you take?

8. Two young comrades have a fall out and the row extends to social media. Both get embroiled in saying awful things about each other. Then one comrade over steps the mark and tells a very personal and sensitive ‘secret’ the other comrade had shared with her when they were ‘friends’. This public disclosure causes great upset to the point where the comrade slighted refuses to leave her house and says she’s very depressed.

Level of concern                                               Category of abuse

What action, if any, will you take?