

# Safeguarding Policy

**Last reviewed:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013

**Next Review:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014

## 1. Definition

Thames Valley Maintenance ("TVM") is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people who are involved, in anyway, with TVM's work. The guidelines and procedures set out in this policy will apply equally to any vulnerable adults involved in TVM's work, and any reference to a child or a young person shall be read as a reference to a vulnerable adult also.

## 2. Principles

Children and young people should be treated with care, respect and dignity. For the purposes of the Disclosure and Barring Service (and previously the Criminal Records Bureau), a child is defined as someone who is under 18 (or under 16 if the child is employed). TVM also uses this definition

Everyone who works for or with TVM in any capacity has a responsibility for the protection and welfare of the children and young people we meet in our work. We know that people who work for TVM will be perceived by children and young people as trustworthy.

TVM acknowledges that some of its employees may be or become vulnerable adults. Where this is the case, TVM will carry out appropriate risk assessments and implement any adjustments necessary to ensure that they can work safely.

TVM's intention is that its staff should never be alone with a child or young person in the course of their work. Any activity with children and young people should be planned accordingly. However, TVM recognises that in some circumstances this may be unavoidable and in all cases, the Safeguarding Behavioural Guidelines which form part of this document must be followed by all staff.

Any offer of work made by TVM in respect of a position which may involve working with children, young people or vulnerable people will be subject to a satisfactory DBS (formerly known as a CRB check). This applies to individuals engaged on any type of contract (e.g. employment, casual or freelance contracts).

A risk assessment should be carried out whenever children, young people or vulnerable people undertake activities with TVM.

Children and young people may not carry out paid work for TVM unless authorised by parent / guardian.

Managers offering work experience placements must do so in compliance with TVM's work experience policy.

### **3. Directors**

They will:

- ensure that TVM staff are aware of the requirement to work in compliance with TVM's Safeguarding Policy;
- be the point of referral for questions in relation to TVM's Safeguarding Policy.
- be the point of referral for anyone who, during the course of their work for or other involvement with TVM, believes that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, is told by a child or young person of a child welfare issue; or believes that a person may pose a risk of harm to any child; and keep a record of any safeguarding issues which arise.

### **4. DBS Checks**

If an individual begins work with TVM before a satisfactory DBS check is received, their manager must, complete a risk assessment. Such a risk assessment is likely to mean that the individual will be placed on restricted duties and cannot work unsupervised with children or young people.

The individual's manager will be responsible for ensuring a plan is in place in respect of these restricted duties and this will be authorised by a more senior manager. If restricted duties are not possible, the individual will not be allowed to start work with TVM.

### **5. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

In most circumstances, individuals who are convicted of offences are regarded as "rehabilitated" after a defined period of time and at that point, their conviction is said to be "spent". Normally, once a conviction is spent, the convicted person does not have to reveal or admit the existence and the conviction is treated as though it had never occurred. However, where the individual is required to work with children, young people or vulnerable people, all convictions (whether spent or unspent) will be disclosed by the DBS.

### **6. Site Visits**

TVM's staff attending any site must do so in full compliance with this Safeguarding Policy.

Any member of TVM's staff who, in the course of their work, becomes concerned about the welfare of a child must share that concern immediately with the Site Safeguarding Contact, or if that is impossible, with TVM's Directors.

If the notification is made directly to the school, the staff member who makes the notification should follow up immediately on their return to the office with TVM's Managers.

## 7. Health and Safety

Any activity which involves a child or young person must be subject to a risk assessment.

The risk assessment must set out what arrangements are in place for their care and supervision e.g. by a school, parent, guardian or chaperone and how these will be communicated to the appropriate parties.

The health and safety controls in place will include those needed for:

- the people the children or young person will meet;
- the environment they will be in;
- the equipment they will be using;
- the activity they will be doing;
- the way the activity will be organised and carried out;
- the pattern and hours of their activity; and
- any transport arrangements.

## 8. Transport and Accommodation

### Transport

If children are being transported on behalf of TVM they must be accompanied by their parent, guardian, chaperone or teacher. TVM has a duty of care for young persons between the minimum school leaving age and under 18 if they are travelling on behalf of TVM.

## 9. Secure Handling and Safekeeping of DBS Disclosures

### General Principles

TVM complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of DBS disclosures (each a “**Disclosure**”) and Disclosure information. TVM also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.

### Storage and Access

Hard copies of DBS information are kept securely in locked cabinets for the periods of time detailed in the ‘Retention’ paragraph below.

In most cases, TVM will keep an electronic record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment or other decision taken. These electronic records are password-protected and access will be restricted to TVM’s Safeguarding Managers. These records will be retained until either you leave the business or your DBS record is updated by making a subsequent check.

## **Handling**

Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. TVM recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it. TVM maintains a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed.

## **Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

## **Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, TVM will shred the disclosure certificate unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the decision being disputed, in which case it will keep a hard copy of the certificate until the dispute has been resolved. The maximum period for which certificates would be retained is in accordance with the applicable data protection legislation.

If, in very exceptional circumstances, TVM considers it is necessary to keep hard copies of this information for longer than six months, TVM will consult the DBS and give full consideration to the data protection and rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

## **Disposal**

All records will be deleted or destroyed securely (for example, by shredding) when they are no longer required or the prescribed retention period has elapsed.

### **Appendix – Safeguarding Behavioural Guidelines**

1. Everyone who works for TVM in any capacity (including all staff and anyone working for TVM subcontracting will follow all of these Behavioural Guidelines whenever their work brings them into contact with children, young people or vulnerable people. All references to "child" or "children" in these Behavioural Guidelines should be read as a reference to children, young people and vulnerable people.
2. Everyone who works for TVM has a duty to promote open, honest, trustworthy and respectful relationships with the people we meet in the course of our work.
3. Everyone who works for TVM will demonstrate proper personal and professional behaviour at all times during their works.
4. Everyone who works for TVM will behave responsibly during work-related social events, especially if children are present.

5. Everyone who works for TVM will work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations with children and encouraging open communication. We will ensure that the child is accompanied by a parent or guardian and wherever possible, all activities will take place in open-plan environments. If the activity has to happen in a room rather than an open-plan space, no adult should ever be left on his or her own with any child or children – two adults should always be present. If an emergency means that an adult is left alone with any child or children, the door to the room must remain open at all times.

6. Anyone working with children as part of their role with TVM will maintain a safe and appropriate distance at all times. We will engage in the minimum of physical contact with the child, and any necessary physical contact will be public and appropriate. TVM staff will not do things of a personal nature for any child that s/he is able to do independently.

7. TVM's staff will not engage children in discussions relating to personal matters (including any discussion of problems at home or emotional issues).

8. TVM's staff will respond appropriately to all concerns about a child's welfare, escalating the matter promptly in accordance with TVM's Safeguarding Policy.

9. Inappropriate or illegal behaviour will be treated extremely seriously and will result in action being taken in accordance with TVM's disciplinary policy.