

## Safeguarding Statement

Since its formation in 2011, A Focus on Nature has sought to encourage and connect young people aged 16 to 30 who share a passion for the natural world by successfully utilising a combination of social media, events and mentorship, reaching over 1000 individuals. Of our audience, we recognise that there will be young people under the age of 18, and vulnerable adults of which we define as those less able to protect themselves.

**A Focus on Nature believes that no person should ever suffer physical, sexual or emotional harm or abuse as a result of our activities. It is therefore a key priority to protect the welfare and safety of all our audience members, committee members, mentors, regional representatives and volunteers during the opportunities and activities we provide.**

### The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect young people and vulnerable adults of whom engage in our activities and opportunities;
- Provide committee members and volunteers with overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding;
- Protect committee members, mentors and volunteers through a clear framework of safeguarding policies and procedures.

### We recognise that:

- The safety of young people and vulnerable adults who engage with our networks cannot be compromised;
- All people have a right to equal protection from harm or abuse regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity;
- There are three main areas in our operations which pose potential risk:
  1. Our online presence through our social media and web based platforms
  2. Our mentoring programme available to people aged 18-30
  3. Our events which welcome young people to network with others to develop skills that benefit their career opportunities.

### To abate this risk, we will seek to keep young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Listening to and valuing their thoughts and contributions, and celebrating their successes;

- Understanding the specific needs of individuals with disabilities, and adapting opportunities to their requirements where possible;
- Making safeguarding training a key part of the induction of new committee members, regional representatives, mentors and volunteers;
- Regularly reviewing the activity of AFON's social media platforms and taking action against any form of discriminatory language, abusive speech and cyber-bullying;
- Making sure necessary checks are made when taking on new mentors and regional representatives. When required disclose checks, held by the Disclosure and Barring Service, will be attained;
- Regularly checking in with mentees to ensure happy and safe relationships with their mentors;
- Obtaining consent from the individual or their parent/guardian if we are to photograph members – especially if these photos were to enter the public domain;
- Being aware and satisfied by the safeguarding policy of any organisation that we will collaborate with;
- Providing a key point of contact at any event or occasion for any audience member or AFON representative, volunteer or mentor to disclose any concerns;
- Taking appropriate action should an incident occur.

We are committed to reviewing this policy every year.

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Last reviewed: November 2020