

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

For the purposes of this policy:

- A child is defined as any individual under the age of 16 years.
- A young person is defined as person aged 16-18 years.
- An adult at risk or adult with a care and support need is a person who may be regarded as unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation by reason of illness, age, mental illness, disability or mental impairment. This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

The safeguarding of children, young persons and adults at risk is important for XRUK. While all groups require protection from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation, the approach to safeguarding differs due to legal and ethical distinctions.

Adults generally have the right to self-determination and autonomy. This means adults may choose to participate in activities that carry risk, including civil disobedience actions, provided they have the capacity to give informed consent.

Children and young people have a right to express their views, participate in social and political movements, and advocate for their futures. XRUK recognises and respects young people's agency and their role in climate and social justice movements. However, children are afforded additional legal protections, and XRUK has a duty of care to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

XRUK also recognises that persons between the ages of 16 and 18, whilst still legally minors, are able to act with increasing autonomy and as such, they can make certain decisions with regard to their own well-being. However, this needs to be balanced against the overarching responsibility which XRUK still has at law for any person who is still legally a minor.

XRUK activities may involve increased risk, including the possibility of arrest, police interaction, or other legal consequences. Participation in such activities must be based on informed consent. Children and young people must not be placed in situations where they are exposed to undue risk, coercion, or pressure to participate in arrestable actions. Where children and young people participate in these activities, appropriate measures must be in place.
