**Working with village and community halls to improve safeguarding in rural areas**

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is calling on England’s 10,000 village halls to make sure policies and procedures are in place to keep everyone safe.

The charity which heads up England’s largest rural grouping of community support agencies will be raising an awareness of measures that can be taken by halls to protect individuals from harm as part of Safeguarding Adults Week 2020 which begins Monday 16 November.

Paul Dixon, ACRE’s Rural Evidence Manager said: “We want volunteers managing village halls to understand they have an important part to play in creating safe spaces for members of their community, especially when it comes to protecting younger or more vulnerable rural people. Over the campaign week we will be highlighting the importance of having safeguarding policies and procedures in place, how everyone has a responsibility to look out for others, and where to find help”

Safeguarding Adults Week 2020 is a national campaign run by [Ann Craft Trust](https://www.anncrafttrust.org/safeguarding-adults-week-2020-links-and-resources/). ACRE’s involvement in this national campaign is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and has the aim of sharing resources and best practice amongst community groups.

[A recent national survey](https://acre.org.uk/news/2020-10-13-extent-of-rural-economic-and-social-benefits-from-village-and-community-halls-revealed) conducted by ACRE showed that village halls are a vital asset for many rural communities. 60% of halls provide the only meeting space in the local area, whilst 80% of respondents knew someone whose lives had changed for the better as a result of joining activities at their local hall.

Halls can continue to improve lives through adopting effective safeguarding practices and policies, to ensure that everyone is protected in rural areas.

Expert village hall advisers, employed by members of the [ACRE Network](https://acre.org.uk/in-your-area/network-members/) will be on hand in every county to help management committees understand information about safeguarding and put in place policies and procedures suitable for use in their hall.

*Follow us on* [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/ACRE_national) *and* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/ACREnational) *to receive updates on our work throughout National Safeguarding Week.*