



FAQ – Safe from Harm Assessment

Why is this important for the Movement?

It is the right of every child, young person, and adult to be safe in Scouting. We cannot fulfil the mission of Scouting to contribute to the education of young people if they are not safe. Safe from Harm is everyone's responsibility.

World Scouting is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all young people in the Scout Movement, and beyond. A safe environment enables the self-development of young people, as well as the creation of positive and healthy interpersonal relationships between all.

The importance of keeping children and young people safe from harm has a long history in the Scout Movement, starting in early 1990s. Since then, World Scout Conferences have taken an essential step by making child, youth and adult safeguarding a membership requirement for all Member Organizations of WOSM.

Despite the adoption of the [World Safe from Harm Policy](#) in 2017, WOSM research shows that many NSOs still have to significantly strengthen the implementation and compliance of Safe from Harm in their organisation. WOSM has therefore developed [Safe from Harm Assessment Guidelines](#) to help NSOs with understanding the expectations and minimum criteria to be achieved.

What does this mean for my NSO?

The World Scout Conference has urged all NSOs to make child and youth safeguarding a top priority and to implement Safe from Harm measures at all levels of their organisations.

As a WOSM Member Organization, you are expected to follow the requirements outlined in the Safe from Harm Assessment Guidelines. Your NSO will be, as part of its WOSM membership requirements, be asked to share the following Safe from Harm documents and information to WOSM as of the annual reporting cycle of 2023 (May to October):

1. Your national Safe from Harm policy
2. Your NSO Safeguarding Reporting procedure
3. The Contact details of the Safe from Harm coordinator in your NSO
4. A report of the **Safe from Harm Self-Assessment** of your NSO

WOSM will continuously offer support to your NSO to implement or strengthen child safeguarding mechanisms through WOSM Services. Through WOSM Services, your NSO has access to tailored in-person support from WOSM Consultants as well as resources, such as toolkits, templates, and best practices.

What are the Safe from Harm Self-Assessment and the WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment?

Similar to the GSAT Assessment, the Safe from Harm Self-Assessment is a tool that an NSO can use to assess its capacity, measure its achievements, and identify gaps or areas of improvements in implementing Safe from Harm.

From 2025 onwards, your NSO will be required, as a WOSM membership obligation, to conduct a Self-Assessment every two years. Your NSO will be required to share the report with WOSM, which will use it as a basis for feedback and further support.

In addition to a Self-Assessment, your NSO can also voluntarily request a WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment. These assessments are based on the same criteria as the Self-Assessment,



but are delivered by a trained assessor and a Safe from Harm Consultant. Assessments can be delivered virtually or in-person.

WOSM will also carry out randomized WOSM Safe from Harm Assessments to ensure the implementation of Safe from Harm across the Movement.

How will WOSM handle the Safe from Harm reporting of NSOs that are Federations?

If your NSO is a Federation, Article V.6 of the WOSM Constitution applies. This means that the Federation is responsible to ensure that its constituent associations (National Scout Associations) meet the membership requirements, including those for Safe from Harm. So as a Federation, you will need to make sure that each of your NSAs submits the Safe from Harm documents and the Self-Assessment report as part of the annual reporting cycle. Compliance will be assessed by WOSM on a Federation level – meaning that if one of your NSAs is not compliant, the Federation as a whole cannot be considered compliant.

What happens once my NSO has submitted the required information through the annual reporting?

Each Region will form a Regional panel, composed of volunteers & staff assessors and experts on Safe from Harm. Training and induction will be provided to the panels and will receive support and guidance from a Global panel.

Each Regional panel will review the Safe from Harm documentation & Self-Assessment Report your NSO submitted through the annual reporting process. The panel

- will write a written recommendation with feedback to your NSO based on its review,
- may recommend to your NSOs to request a WOSM Service in a specific Safe from Harm area or ask your NSO to undertake a (in-person or virtual) WOSM Assessments.
- share regularly a consolidated report with recommendations on how to strengthen NSO compliance on Safe from Harm to their Regional Scout Committee.

The Regional panel will assess the information based on several levels:

- **Level 3** - if the submission is deemed **satisfactory**, your NSO will be qualified as compliant.
- **Level 2** - if the submission is deemed as **somehow satisfactory**, your NSO will be provided with feedback, including recommendations for a Safe from Harm Service to achieve full compliance status. Your NSO will then have 12 months to strengthen your Safe from Harm implementation, of which the results can then be reflected in your next annual reporting submission.
- **Level 1** - If the submission is considered '**unsatisfactory**', your NSO will be considered in a state of noncompliance and required to undertake a WOSM service to resolve the gaps within 12 months. The panel may also request a WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment with your NSO, and make recommendations for other measures as it deems appropriate to the Regional Scout Committee.

What is the timeline to meet the Safe from Harm requirements through Annual Reporting?

From the 2023 annual reporting cycle onwards, NSOs will be able to start submitting their Safe from Harm documentation and Self-Assessment Report. We will use this period to finetune the process and learn together as a Movement how we collectively strengthen our compliance.

In line with Conference Resolution 2021-04, the World Scout Committee aims to make compliance compulsory as of the closure of the 2025 annual reporting cycle (1 October 2025).



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That means that we expect all NSOs to have submitted their Safe from Harm documentation and Self-Assessment report by that date at the very latest..

After 2025, NSOs are required to update any changes to their Safe from Harm documentation annually, and submit biannually a Safe from Harm Self-Assessment report.

What will happen if my NSO does not meet the Safe from Harm requirements?

If you think your NSO might not meet the Safe from Harm requirements, please undertake a Safe from Harm Self-Assessment to identify where you might have challenges. With that information, please request a WOSM Service so we can help you in meeting the requirements.

If your NSO does not submit its Safe from Harm documentation and Self-Assessment report by 1 October 2025, or if the submission is considered '**unsatisfactory**', your NSO will be considered in a state of non-compliance and required to undertake a WOSM service to resolve the gaps within 12 months. The panel may also request a WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment with your NSO, and make recommendations for other measures as it deems appropriate to the Regional Scout Committee.

As of 1 October 2025, the intent is to fully impose the constitutional Safe from Harm membership requirement (v.5e - "...policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment for children...") as approved by the 2021 World Scout Conference. This means that non-compliance of your NSO from then onwards could be sanctioned with loss of certain membership rights as foreseen under the WOSM Constitution.

Where can I find the criteria of the WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment and Self-Assessment?

You can find the Safe from Harm Assessment Tool [here](#).

What are the types of criteria in the WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment and Self-Assessment?

The Safe from Harm Assessment covers 22 criteria divided in the five following dimensions: Child and Youth Safeguarding; Adult Safeguarding; Recruitment, Selection and Training of Adults in Scouting; Report, Response and Case Management; Education. The criteria and assessment are built on the same principles and best practices of GSAT.

If you undertake a Self-Assessment, your NSO will do a self-evaluation of how your NSO complies with the criteria. Guidance is provided in the Guidelines how to approach this.

If you choose to undertake a WOSM Assessment, you will have to put in a WOSM Service request through services.scout.org. WOSM will then assign a Assessor and Safe from Harm Consultant to your Service request, and work with your NSO to identify a suitable moment to conduct the assessment, either online or in person.

How will my NSO be supported to meet Safe from Harm requirements?

World Scouting is committed to support all NSOs to meet the Safe from Harm requirements and



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implement a safe Scouting experience for all.

NSOs are encouraged to request a WOSM Safe from Harm service to receive further support. Through the WOSM Service, NSOs are offered in-person support, resources such as toolkits and templates as well as best practices from other NSOs. You can also request a WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment with a trained Assessor and a Safe from Harm Consultant, either in person or virtual.

The WOSM Safe from Harm Service page is being restructured to match the structure of the Safe from Harm assessment tool to allow your NSOs to easily find corresponding resources, best practices and examples in areas where you feel you need to strengthen the knowledge or capacity of your NSO.

Should you have any further questions, please reach out to your Regional Support Center or to safefromharm@scout.org