

Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy

Document Control

Item	Detail
Policy Title	Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy
Document Reference	ORG/HR/012
Version	1.0
Effective Date	
Next Review Date	

1.0 Purpose and Legal Basis

This section establishes the fundamental purpose of the policy and anchors it within the relevant legal framework. For the charity, safeguarding is a core expression of its duty of care and is essential for maintaining the trust of its unique and potentially vulnerable beneficiary community.

1.1 Purpose

The core objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a robust framework to protect vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, and neglect during any activity associated with the charity.
- Define clear and mandatory procedures for all trustees, volunteers, and contractors to follow for raising and responding to safeguarding concerns.

- Ensure the charity meets its legal and regulatory obligations, thereby protecting its beneficiaries, personnel, assets, and reputation.
- Foster a culture of safety, vigilance, and transparency across the entire charity, where everyone understands their role in safeguarding.

1.2 Legal and Regulatory Basis

This policy is grounded in the key legal and regulatory frameworks that govern safeguarding for charities in the United Kingdom. It is designed to ensure full compliance with:

- The Care Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Charities Act 2011
- Guidance from the Charity Commission for England and Wales
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This legal basis informs the comprehensive scope of the policy's application.

2.0 Scope

The strategic importance of a clearly defined scope cannot be overstated. This section ensures the policy's principles are applied universally across all of the charity's activities and interactions, leaving no room for ambiguity.

2.1 Who This Policy Applies To

This policy and its procedures are mandatory for all individuals acting on behalf of the charity, including:

- The Board of Trustees
- All Volunteers acting on behalf of the charity
- All contractors or third-party service providers engaged by the charity

2.2 Who This Policy Protects

This policy is designed to safeguard all vulnerable adults with whom the charity interacts, with a primary focus on its beneficiary community. As defined in Clause 3(1) of the charity's Constitution.

This scope is formalised through the commitment articulated in the following policy statement.

3.0 Policy Statement

This policy statement is the Board of Trustees' formal and unequivocal commitment to safeguarding. It serves as the guiding principle for all procedures detailed within this policy.

The Board of Trustees of the charity affirms its absolute commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults. We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse and neglect. The charity is dedicated to creating a safe and supportive environment for its beneficiaries, and it will act swiftly, appropriately, and without hesitation in response to all safeguarding concerns.

To implement this commitment consistently, it is essential to establish clear definitions for the key terms that govern the policy.

4.0 Definitions

Establishing clear, shared definitions is a prerequisite for the consistent and correct application of this policy, ensuring all parties understand their duties and the key concepts involved in protecting vulnerable adults.

Term	Definition
Vulnerable Adult	An individual aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
Safeguarding	Proactive measures to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of individuals, which allow them to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect.
Abuse	A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. The primary categories are: physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, financial or material, neglect, discriminatory, and modern slavery.
Safeguarding Concern	A suspicion or allegation that a vulnerable adult is, has been, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	The Trustee who is formally designated by the Board to take the lead responsibility for all safeguarding matters within the charity.
---	--

These definitions provide the foundation for the operational procedures required to put this policy into practice.

5.0 Procedures

This section forms the operational core of the policy. These step-by-step procedures are mandatory and provide a clear, consistent, and lawful pathway for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns.

5.1 Principles of Safeguarding

All safeguarding activities undertaken by the charity must be guided by the following six core principles:

- **Empowerment:** Supporting people to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
- **Prevention:** Taking action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** Providing the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection:** Offering support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership:** Working in partnership with local communities and statutory services to find solutions.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring transparency and accountability in all safeguarding practices.

5.2 Recognising Abuse and Neglect

All individuals covered by this policy must remain vigilant to the signs of abuse and neglect. While not exhaustive, the following indicators should prompt a safeguarding concern to be raised.

- **Physical Abuse:** Unexplained injuries, bruises, cuts, or burns; flinching at physical contact.
- **Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** Anxious, withdrawn, or fearful behaviour; low self-esteem; changes in appetite or sleep patterns; reluctance to be left alone.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Unexplained bruising to thighs, buttocks, or genital areas; stomach pains; sexually transmitted infections; pregnancy; unusual or explicit sexual knowledge; fear of a particular person.

- **Financial or Material Abuse:** Unexplained lack of money; sudden changes in a will or other financial documents; unpaid bills despite having sufficient income; unusual or inappropriate purchases; sudden interest from new acquaintances in the beneficiary's compensation or grant awards.
- **Neglect:** Poor personal hygiene; unsuitable or inadequate clothing; untreated medical issues; malnutrition or dehydration; failure to manage complex, long-term health conditions; signs that an individual is not receiving necessary care related to their specific medical history.
- **Discriminatory Abuse:** Being denied access to services or excluded from activities due to a protected characteristic; experiencing harassment, slurs, or derogatory remarks related to age, disability, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.
- **Modern Slavery:** Signs of physical or psychological control by another person; appearing fearful, withdrawn, or distrustful of authorities; lacking personal identification documents; having few personal possessions; living in poor or overcrowded conditions.

5.3 Reporting a Safeguarding Concern (Internal Procedure)

The following mandatory steps must be followed by anyone with a safeguarding concern:

1. Any trustee, volunteer, or contractor who has a concern, however minor, must report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.
2. The report should be followed up with a written account providing a factual, objective description of the concern. It should detail what was seen or heard, when, and by whom. Opinions and interpretations should be avoided.
3. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Information relating to a safeguarding concern must be shared only on a strict need-to-know basis with the DSL and other relevant parties involved in the formal process.

5.4 Responding to a Disclosure

If a vulnerable adult discloses abuse directly, it is vital to respond calmly and professionally. You must:

- Listen carefully and patiently to what they are saying. Do not interrupt or press them for details.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. Explain that you have a duty to share the information with the DSL to get them the right help and support.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Report the disclosure immediately to the DSL, following the procedure in 5.3.

5.5 Escalation to External Authorities

The DSL, following consultation with the Chair or Board where appropriate, will escalate a concern to external agencies if there is a reason to believe a vulnerable adult is at immediate risk of significant harm, or if a criminal offence may have been committed. The

primary external agencies for escalation are the local Adult Social Services and, where a crime is suspected, the Police.

5.6 Safer Recruitment of Volunteers and Trustees

The charity is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that only suitable individuals are appointed to roles within the charity. This will include appropriate vetting procedures for relevant roles, including obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks as specified in the charity's recruitment policies.

The effective execution of these procedures is contingent upon the clear allocation of roles and responsibilities.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are critical for ensuring accountability and the effective implementation of the safeguarding framework.

- **The Board of Trustees:** Holds ultimate responsibility for all safeguarding within the charity. As part of their duties under Clause 9 of the Constitution, they must formally approve this policy, ensure sufficient resources are allocated for training and checks, and appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) from among the trustees.
- **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Trustee:** Has operational responsibility for safeguarding matters. Their duties include:
 - Acting as the central point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
 - Maintaining a confidential log of all reported concerns and actions taken.
 - Providing advice and support to the Board, volunteers, and contractors.
 - Acting as the primary liaison with external statutory agencies such as Adult Social Services and the Police.
- **All Trustees, Volunteers, and Contractors:** Have a personal and collective responsibility to be aware of this policy, undertake relevant training as required, remain vigilant to the signs of abuse, and immediately report any and all safeguarding concerns to the DSL.

The formal implementation plan will ensure these responsibilities are understood and enacted.

7.0 Implementation

A formal implementation plan is necessary to embed this policy into the charity's culture and operations effectively, ensuring it is a living document that actively protects beneficiaries.

- **Communication:** This policy will be communicated to all trustees, volunteers, and key contractors upon its adoption. In line with Clause 11 of the Constitution, it will be provided to all new personnel as a mandatory part of their induction.
- **Training:** All trustees and any volunteers in roles that bring them into regular contact with beneficiaries will receive safeguarding awareness training appropriate to their role. This training will be refreshed periodically to ensure knowledge remains current.
- **Resources:** The Board of Trustees is responsible for allocating the necessary resources to implement this policy effectively, including any funding required for safeguarding training and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

The policy's effectiveness will be subject to continuous monitoring and review.

8.0 Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

Ongoing monitoring and regular review are essential to ensure this policy remains legally compliant, effective, and fit for purpose. This is a critical part of the charity's commitment to proactive governance. This proactive approach is critical to preventing the type of policy failures identified in past governance reviews, such as outdated safeguarding policies, and to maintaining the highest standards of care.

- **Reporting:** The DSL will provide a formal, anonymised report on all safeguarding matters to the Board of Trustees at least annually. This report will detail any concerns raised, actions taken, and lessons learned.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored using metrics such as the number of safeguarding concerns reported and resolved, and the percentage of relevant personnel who have completed mandatory safeguarding training.
- **Review Schedule:** This policy will be formally reviewed by the Board of Trustees annually, or more frequently if there are significant changes in legislation, Charity Commission guidance, or the charity's operations.

This policy forms part of a wider, integrated governance framework.

9.0 Related Policies

This policy operates as part of an integrated governance framework and should be read in conjunction with other key documents to ensure a comprehensive approach to safety, risk management, and compliance.

- The charity's Constitution
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy

- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment procedures for Trustees and Volunteers