

Aim

This policy and procedure is written to enable the committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns.

We recognise that we have a duty of care and we are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who comes in to contact with our organisation, including all participants in any of our activities.

Safeguarding includes incidents between participants, concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a member or visitor may be experiencing outside of the Centre's activities, health related issues or previous or pending criminal convictions.

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of the Centre to safeguarding their members and to try to ensure that everyone involved in our activities is aware of what to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within the group.

This policy works alongside our **Equality and Diversity Policy** to complete our framework for safeguarding.

Scope

This policy applies to everyone involved with the activities of the Centre, including the committee, members and visitors.

The policy applies to all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of those taking part in our activities and in the wider community.

Commitments

- We believe that everyone within our group has a duty of care to its members, and are committed to upholding this safeguarding policy in order to protect our members.
- We recognise that while it is the responsibility of the relevant statutory agencies to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns. We will try to ensure that all members know how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns. This will be done via the annual newsletter, and by posting this policy on our website, and by leading by example.
- Where abuse or neglect is suspected we will aim to respond in a prompt and efficient manner to any situation where there is a risk of, or perceived risk of, harm.
- We do not hold any statutory authority and so matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities, to the National Trust supporter's group advisors, and to the police in an emergency.
- We will put the well-being of those at risk of harm first, will treat them with respect and dignity, and will support their views and wishes unless there are overriding reasons not to do so.
- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

- We recognise that those involved in incidents have the right to privacy, to lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so, to choose how they live their lives, and to the protection of the law.
- We will treat everyone equally regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.
- We will strive to create an atmosphere of friendship, care and concern at all our activities so that members and others will feel secure in voicing their concerns.

Safeguarding procedure

These procedures aim to cover, but are not limited to, those who exhibit

- health concerns that could put themselves or others at risk
- convictions (previous or pending) that include offences of a sexual or violent nature
- inappropriate behaviour exhibited by a member including sexual advances
- bullying, aggression or violent behaviour
- harassment and/or discrimination
- extremist or terrorist behaviour

Incidents can be face to face as well as via electronic communications or on social media platforms.

Course of action

1. In the first instance we ask anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern to speak to a member of the committee as soon as possible.
2. If the person is in immediate danger, or in need of urgent medical assistance, the committee member will contact the relevant emergency services.
3. No committee member should act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern, and should report any issues raised to them to the other members of the committee as soon as possible.
4. The safety of the adults at risk will be ensured as a priority; the steps necessary for this will be discussed and agreed by members of the committee.
Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the committee will contact the relevant authorities and the National Trust for advice and support.
5. The steps taken will be documented and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The Centre will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed but it may have to be shared with relevant authorities on a 'need-to-know' basis only.
6. As far as possible, the adult at risk's wishes will be respected as to whether or not to refer any concerns to the authorities. However, it may be necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of themselves and others at risk.

7. Once the safety of all concerned has been assured, the committee will then gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. The Committee will contact the National Trust for advice and assistance in taking the next steps.
8. A risk assessment will be written to consider the level of risk and the action that needs to be taken accordingly. Assessment of risk will include: risk to the individual member, risk to others within the group, reputational risk for the individual Centre and for the National Trust as a whole.
9. Once the risk assessment is completed, the committee will decide as to the most appropriate course of action. This could include excluding members from certain events or requesting that a member attends certain events with a carer/companion.
10. All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential to the committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies.
11. Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, the Centre will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse, as well as any member who becomes aware of an allegation. This will be done in so far as it does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.

Adoption and review

This policy will be made available to all members of the Centre either by email or by post, and will be available on our website.

This policy will be reviewed every year in August.

Signature (Chair)*Carole Taylor*.....

Signature and position on committee*Gill Cope Talks Organiser*.....