



Safeguarding Policy

Date Adopted: 27th May 2026

Next Review Date: 27th May 2027

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed by the trustees every year or sooner if legal guidance changes.

Purpose of the Policy

The West Kent Badger Group is committed to safeguarding practices that help ensure the safety of children, young people and adults at risk whilst taking part in our group activities and in the wider community.

This policy helps everyone involved in our group:

- ✿ be aware of our legal responsibilities
- ✿ understand the safeguarding risks in the Group
- ✿ know what to do if they have a concern about the well-being or welfare of any child, young person or adult at risk that comes into contact with our group.

This safeguarding policy, and associated procedures, apply to all individuals involved in the Group, including trustees, members, and volunteers. The policy applies to all concerns about the safety of children, young people and adults at risk while taking part in our group and the activities we run, or while in the wider community.

Safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility that involves continuing commitment from all involved to create and maintain a safer environment for everyone.

The policy will address the following areas of safeguarding:

- Children and Young People Safeguarding
- Adult Safeguarding

Code of Conduct

When working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we are acting in a position of trust. We recognise that keeping our group safe is everyone's responsibility, and we expect our members, volunteers, and trustees to behave according to the following values:

- All have an equal right to protection from abuse and to be kept safe from harm regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- We recognise some are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- We listen to and respect everyone in the group.
- We use language that is appropriate for age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory.
- We encourage a culture of honesty, where everyone feels comfortable pointing out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- We know it isn't always easy to be vocal about concerns – for ourselves or other people, so promote a culture of active listening.
- All allegations and suspicions of neglect and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

This means with children, young people and adults at risk, we will never:

- Promise to keep secrets – safeguarding relies on sharing concerns appropriately with other agencies.
- Allow suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect to go unreported.
- Act in a way that is threatening, abusive or bullying.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Enter into a sexual or intimate relationship with an adult at risk.

Types of abuse

There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional/psychological abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Modern slavery and child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming

- Financial abuse
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

NB: The list above is not exhaustive

Abuse may be:

- A single act or repeated acts, an act of neglect or a failure to act, or multiple acts.

Scope

This policy applies to anyone involved in activities on behalf of the group. We will seek to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead.
- Adopting best practices through our policies, procedures and code of conduct.
- Providing effective support for volunteers through training and support, and ensuring volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes.
- Recording, storing and using information in line with data protection legislation.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involve children, young people, adults at risk, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against trustees, members and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, adults at risk, members, trustees and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures per the law and regulatory guidance.

The Group recognises that the local authority has the main legal duty to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk, and we are committed to working with them and our local Safeguarding Adults Board.

Definitions

Adults

As defined in the Care Act 2014, an adult at risk of abuse or neglect is aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect,
- and as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

Children and Young People

A child or young person is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Legislation

This policy, and the practices within it, are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance, including:

- The Care Act 2014; and
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (which protects people's right to make their own decisions in any situation where they are able to do so).
- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Whistleblowing

People within the group must have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another member or volunteer. There is also a requirement by the group to protect whistleblowers.

Procedures

Anyone in the group who works with children, young people and adults at risk in group activities will be given an induction which covers the safeguarding policy and procedures of the group. They will be trained in: our code of conduct; definitions of abuse and harm; recognising signs of abuse; and how to respond to concerns and disclosures. All volunteers will know who is the designated safeguarding lead, and that they should go to them with any concerns.

The designated safeguarding lead will be offered further training (if applicable) to ensure they are clear about their role, and what action to take in response to different concerns.

We will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all volunteers for whom we are legally required to do so.

Responsibilities

All active volunteers, trustees and members of the group, will understand the need to protect the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with the group. All volunteers who have contact with children, young people and adults at risk should:

- Be aware of issues of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Act promptly on any concern or suspicion that a vulnerable adult is being abused or is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited.
- Ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation is reported to the Safeguarding Lead of the group.
- The Safeguarding Lead is the nominated representative who is responsible for protection and the implementation of this policy.
- All those involved in activities in the group will be made aware of the named representative and how best to contact them.

If the group, during its normal activities, takes photographs of children, young adults or adults at risk participating in activities and events, at all times will obtain written permission from them or a carer as appropriate before any photographic material is used in the public domain.

Monitoring & Reporting

Any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be reported as soon as possible, on the day of the incident, to a volunteering supervisor, committee member or the Safeguarding Lead.

Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in several ways including a comment made, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

Any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be recorded by the observer/s as appropriate, preferably by writing it down.

As soon as possible, note exactly what was said or heard in the person's own words.

- Note the date, time and precise location of the incident.
- Identify who else was present or involved.
- Give clear details of known events relating to the incident.
- Explain what gives cause for concern.

NB: Factual evidence should be noted, not opinions or thoughts.

The incident details must be given to the Safeguarding Lead once completed. All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, dated, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Policy.

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to liaise with other relevant agencies such as the police or local authority safeguarding team, where necessary, and seek clarification from the Local Authority. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the Police and/or family or carers will be informed immediately as appropriate.

Contact Details

1. Nominated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Sheila Birkin

Phone:

Email:

2. NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000