



Serious Incident Reporting Policy

Date Adopted: 27th May 2026

Next Review Date: 27th May 2029

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed by the trustees every 3 years or sooner if legal guidance changes.

1. Purpose

This policy explains how the West Kent Badger Group identifies, responds to, records, and reports serious incidents.

The policy helps trustees to:

- Protect beneficiaries, volunteers, and the public
- Protect the West Kent Badger Group's funds, reputation, and ability to operate
- Meet Charity Commission expectations for responsible governance

2. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to:

- All trustees
- All volunteers
- Anyone acting on behalf of the West Kent Badger Group

Because the West Kent Badger Group is volunteer-only, everyone shares responsibility for raising concerns promptly.

3. What Is a Serious Incident?

A **serious incident** is something that has happened (or could happen) that could cause **significant harm** to:

- A beneficiary or vulnerable person
- A volunteer or member of the public
- The West Kent Badger Group's money, property, or data
- The West Kent Badger Group's reputation or ability to operate

Trustees should take a common-sense and precautionary approach. If in doubt, the incident should be discussed by the trustees.

4. Examples of Serious Incidents

Examples include (but are not limited to):

Safeguarding

- Abuse, neglect, or mistreatment of a beneficiary or vulnerable person
- Serious safeguarding concerns involving a volunteer or trustee

Financial

- Theft, fraud, or significant loss of funds
- Misuse of the West Kent Badger Group's money or property
- Serious weaknesses in financial controls

Governance and Legal

- Serious breaches of charity law or other legal obligations
- Serious unmanaged conflicts of interest
- Loss of important records or personal data

Operational and Reputational

- Serious injury to a volunteer or member of the public during West Kent Badger Group activities
- A major incident that stops the West Kent Badger Group operating
- Serious reputational damage or negative media coverage

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees

- Are collectively responsible for identifying and managing serious incidents
- Decide whether an incident must be reported to the Charity Commission
- Ensure appropriate action is taken and recorded

Chair (or Nominated Trustee)

- Acts as the main point of contact for serious incidents
- Leads trustee discussions and reporting where appropriate

Volunteers

- Must report any concerns or incidents as soon as possible to a trustee
- Do not need to decide whether something is “serious” — that is the trustees' role

6. What to Do If an Incident Occurs

If a serious incident is suspected or identified:

1. **Make people safe first**

Take immediate steps to prevent harm or further risk.

2. **Tell a trustee promptly**

Ideally the Chair, or another trustee if the Chair is unavailable (or the cause of the harm).

3. **Contact external authorities if required**

This may include the police, emergency services, local authority, or safeguarding bodies.

4. **Record what happened**

Keep a simple written record of the facts and actions taken.

7. Reporting to the Charity Commission

The trustees will report serious incidents to the Charity Commission as soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of them.

Reports will:

- Be made by a trustee (normally the Chair)
- Be factual, clear, and proportionate
- Explain what happened, the impact, and how the West Kent Badger Group is responding

The West Kent Badger Group recognises that reporting a serious incident is a sign of good governance, not an admission of fault.

8. Recording and Confidentiality

- Serious incidents will be recorded securely
- Information will be shared only with those who need to know
- Personal data will be handled in line with data protection requirements

9. Learning and Improvement

After an incident, the trustees will:

- Review what happened
- Consider what could be improved
- Update procedures or guidance if needed

The aim is to learn and reduce future risk, not to blame individuals.

10. Review of This Policy

This policy will be reviewed:

- At least every three years, or
- After a serious incident, or
- If Charity Commission guidance changes