

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Policy date
31 March 2026

Next review
31 March 2027

Policy owner
Board of Trustees

Version
2.4 - 22 October 2026

1. Our commitment and the adult's rights

Everyone who encounters Roots for Change UK's work should be treated with dignity and have their privacy and choices respected. Roots for Change UK CIO, registered charity 1209308, will take reasonable steps to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation and help adults access support. This policy applies to trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors and partners. It covers community learning, wellbeing, aid distribution, home visits, transport, online contact and overseas work.

An adult is anyone aged 18 or over. In England, section 42 of the Care Act 2014 concerns an adult who has care and support needs, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and cannot protect themselves from it because of those needs. It applies whether or not the council meets those needs. The local authority decides whether its statutory enquiry duty applies. Staff and volunteers must raise reasonable concerns promptly; they do not need to prove that the threshold is met.

Ask the adult what matters to them and what outcome they want. Our response should support their choices, prevent harm where possible, provide proportionate protection, involve the right agencies and be accountable. Disability, older age, poverty, another first language or migration-related needs do not by themselves mean that someone lacks capacity or cannot protect themselves.

Offer appropriate help even where the Care Act criteria are not met. This may include police, health, domestic-abuse or other support. Follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy as well if children may be affected. Before work begins outside England, confirm the local law and referral arrangements for that location.

2. Responsibilities and reporting routes

Before relevant services begin, trustees must appoint a suitably trained Adult Safeguarding Lead, arrange trained cover and identify a trustee without a conflict of interest to receive concerns about the lead. A suitably qualified person may hold both the adult and child safeguarding roles, provided each responsibility and cover arrangement is recorded. The Board must provide the resources, specialist advice and secure case records needed. Trustees remain responsible for safeguarding when day-to-day work is delegated.

The activity lead must give staff, volunteers and participants the names and safe contact details of the safeguarding lead and cover, and record them in Annex C. Everyone working for the charity must know the external routes in Annex A. Use those routes directly if internal contacts are unavailable, implicated or ineffective. An activity must not start without its essential safeguarding arrangements.

For an adult safeguarding concern, call the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) directly on +44 7960 287537. To request a confidential callback by email, write to info@rootsforchangeuk.com with a safe way to contact you. Do not send case details or sensitive attachments to this general inbox. The

telephone and email are not emergency services. If the lead cannot be reached or is implicated, contact the person providing cover, a trustee without a conflict of interest or the statutory services in Annex A. Contact emergency services directly about immediate danger.

The lead coordinates referrals, records decisions, follows up actions and supports the adult's involvement. Trustees receive reports on safeguarding and any concerns that require their attention. Everyone must report concerns promptly, cooperate with lawful enquiries and protect people who raise genuine concerns from retaliation.

3. Recognising abuse and reducing risk

Abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, financial or organisational. It includes domestic abuse, coercive control, neglect, acts of omission, self-neglect, modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation, including online or through a position of trust. Look out for injury, fear, restricted contact, unexplained loss of money, pressure to sign documents, unsafe living conditions or difficulty obtaining necessities. Consider the whole situation and listen to the adult's explanation. A single sign does not establish abuse.

Assess the risks before a service starts and whenever needs, staffing or circumstances change. Cover accessibility, lone working, one-to-one support, home visits, transport, handling money, communication and partner arrangements. Complete Annex C and provide suitable supervision. Stop or change the work if essential safety measures cannot be put in place.

- Follow the Volunteer Policy and complete the recruitment checks, references, induction and supervision appropriate to the role. Assess eligibility for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks against the actual duties. Contact with an adult at risk does not automatically make a role eligible for every check. Obtain the checks the role is eligible for and record the suitability decision before duties are authorised.
- Explain any DBS requirement before the person applies. Ask only for criminal-record information that can lawfully be disclosed; do not require protected or filtered information. Assess applicants fairly, considering the role, relevance of any disclosure, seriousness, time elapsed and current risk. Discuss concerns with the applicant and record the decision. Restrict access to certificate information and give applicants access to these recruitment rules.
- Keep professional boundaries. Exploitation, abuse, coercion, private loans, personal financial gain and gifts that create dependency are prohibited. Do not use an adult's bank card, PIN or online banking credentials. Any authorised handling of money needs a recorded purpose, receipts and an independent check of the amounts received and spent.
- Access to support must not depend on publicity, donations, personal relationships or sharing unnecessary information. Offer communication aids and suitable independent interpretation. Do not ask a suspected abuser to translate.
- Staff must work within their competence and authority. Personal care, medication, clinical tasks, physical restraint and other specialist interventions require a specific lawful delivery plan, any required registration or permissions, insurance, checks and training before the service starts.
- For home visits and transport, agree the itinerary, check-in and check-out arrangements and emergency contact. Confirm suitable personnel, vehicles and insurance. Obtain the adult's agreement and assess whether two workers or further safeguards are needed. Do not leave a worker or participant exposed to a risk that has not been properly addressed.

4. Consent, capacity and choice

Speak with the adult, privately where safe. Explain the concern, options, possible consequences and proposed information sharing in a way they can understand. Ask what they want to happen and whether they agree to a referral or support. Record their views, consent or refusal, and any fear or pressure affecting their decision.

Apply the Mental Capacity Act 2005 where relevant. Start by presuming capacity, give the person practical support and recognise that an unwise decision does not mean they lack capacity. Capacity relates to a particular decision at a particular time. A person lacks capacity for that decision only if an impairment or disturbance of the mind or brain prevents them from making it. The assessment considers whether, with suitable support, they can understand, retain, use or weigh the relevant information and communicate their decision.

If there is reason to doubt capacity, seek an assessment by someone competent to assess the decision and obtain health or social-care advice when needed. Record the decision being considered, support tried, evidence and outcome. Staff must stay within their role and authority. Where action is needed for a person who lacks capacity, identify the lawful decision-maker, consider the person's wishes and best interests, consult the appropriate people and choose the least restrictive lawful option. Being a relative does not in itself give someone decision-making authority.

Respect a refusal by an adult who has capacity for the decision unless there is a specific lawful reason to act or share information despite it. Assess any risks to others, coercion, serious harm or crime, statutory duties and relevant public-interest justification. These considerations require a proportionate decision with recorded reasons. Ask adult safeguarding or another appropriate specialist for advice if unsure, without identifying details initially where that is sufficient. Do not delay emergency help.

Self-neglect or repeated refusal is not a reason to withdraw support automatically or force an intervention. Explore barriers, build trust, offer accessible help and seek a coordinated assessment where risk is serious. Ask the local authority about independent advocacy if the adult has substantial difficulty participating and no appropriate person to support them.

5. Responding to a concern

In the UK, call 999 if someone is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention. Take proportionate steps to reduce the danger without putting others at risk. Listen calmly, acknowledge the concern and explain that it may need to be shared with someone who can help. Do not promise secrecy, confront the person accused or investigate the allegation yourself. Preserve existing evidence without circulating it.

Tell the safeguarding lead without delay by calling +44 7960 287537. If the lead is absent or implicated, contact the person providing cover or a trustee without a conflict of interest. Refer directly to adult safeguarding or the police where necessary. Do not wait for internal permission, a completed form or a scheduled meeting. Use Annex A and explain the adult's location, needs, risks and views, including any capacity or consent issue.

The lead must decide promptly whether an adult safeguarding referral, police involvement or another response is needed, taking statutory advice where appropriate. Normally contact the authority where the abuse occurred or where the adult is now at risk. Explain any involvement of other areas and ask the agencies to agree who will lead. Uncertainty about residence or funding must not delay a concern being raised.

Use Annex B to record the referral, recipient, reference, response and agreed actions. Complete the authority's professional referral process as directed. Check receipt by the next working day at the latest, and sooner where the risk requires it. Chase a missing response and contact the duty manager or follow the local escalation procedure if safety remains unresolved. If no referral is made, record the reasons, alternative support, responsible person and review date.

6. Concerns about people working for the charity

If a concern involves a worker, volunteer, trustee, contractor or partner, report it to a trustee without a conflict of interest and the appropriate statutory service. Bypass anyone implicated. Follow the local adult safeguarding procedure for people in positions of trust and seek advice on communication, temporary changes to duties and further enquiries. Keep the adult safe, treat the person accused fairly and avoid prejudicing police or safeguarding enquiries. Record that any temporary protective action does not establish guilt.

Continue dealing with the concern after a suspension, resignation or placement ends. If the charity is a regulated activity provider and the legal conditions are met, make a DBS barring referral. This includes cases where permission would have been withdrawn but the person left first. Referring to the police or local authority does not remove this duty. Record the assessment, action and date. If children may also be affected, follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the local authority designated officer (LADO) route where appropriate.

Trustees must promptly assess whether to make a serious incident report to the Charity Commission and notify any other relevant body, such as the police, a regulator, insurer, funder or professional body. Consider Care Quality Commission (CQC) reporting where the activity falls within its remit. Record decisions and reasons, make urgent protection referrals first and follow through on the action needed.

7. Confidentiality and records

Make a factual, dated record promptly, normally on the same working day. Include the adult's own words, observations, views, capacity and consent considerations, actions and who was told. Separate facts, information reported by others and opinion. Keep the original entry and add corrections as dated additions. Record only what is needed and keep safeguarding cases separate from general participant, volunteer and fundraising files.

Store records securely and limit access to authorised people. Verify each recipient's identity and role before sharing the minimum relevant information for a lawful safeguarding purpose. Record the purpose, lawful basis, recipient and reasons for sharing without agreement where relevant. Special-category information needs an Article 9 condition, and criminal-offence information needs the appropriate authority or condition. Data protection still applies to safeguarding; consent is one possible basis, but other lawful bases may apply.

Do not keep cases in personal accounts, uncontrolled messaging, shared publicity folders or the charity's general inbox. Report loss or unauthorised disclosure immediately to the safeguarding and data protection leads. Follow Annex D and Annex A of the Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

8. Partners, training and review

Before working with a partner, including overseas, trustees must carry out checks appropriate to the work and risk. Agree named responsibilities, accessible complaints and reporting routes, recruitment standards, local emergency contacts, lawful information sharing and monitoring in writing. Assess local reporting laws and risks, taking specialist advice where needed. Complete Annex C. Do not fund or continue an activity if essential protection cannot be provided.

Provide safeguarding induction before duties begin and training suited to each role, including consent, capacity, exploitation and referrals. Refresh learning at least annually and when risks or the law change. Keep a record and check understanding. Safeguarding leads need training in the local adult safeguarding procedures.

The Board must regularly review risks, incidents, near misses, partner arrangements, training and overdue actions, using confidential reports with only the necessary detail. Ask adults whether support and complaints routes work for them. Coordinate any investigation of service failures with statutory enquiries, assign the necessary improvements and check they are completed.

Make reporting accessible and allow a supporter or interpreter where needed. Use the Complaints Policy for concerns about how a case has been handled, without delaying safeguarding action. Policy date: 31 March 2026. Next scheduled review: 31 March 2027. Review sooner after a legal change, significant incident or substantial change in services. Record approval of substantive revisions and check contact details before work in a new area.

Annex A - Adult safeguarding contacts

In a UK emergency, call 999. For non-emergency police matters, call 101. Follow the authority's current professional referral instructions. Telephone about an urgent concern without waiting for a portal account or completed form.

For another English area, including London, contact the local council and ask for adult safeguarding or the emergency duty team. Explain any cross-boundary circumstances and ask the agencies to agree who will lead. Do not delay protection while resolving responsibility. Confirm overseas reporting arrangements separately before work begins.

Area / purpose	Contact / referral route	Urgent, unavailable or out-of-hours route
Roots for Change UK - safeguarding	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): +44 7960 287537.	If the lead is unavailable or implicated, contact trained cover, a trustee without a conflict of interest or the statutory services below. Emergencies: 999.
South Tyneside	Let's Talk: 0191 424 6000. Complete the Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Referral Form through the Safeguarding Adults Board procedure.	Emergency duty team: 0191 456 2093
North Tyneside	Social Care Contact Centre: 0345 2000 109. Professional reports through the My Care safeguarding portal; telephone for urgent advice.	Emergency duty team: 0330 333 7475
Newcastle	0191 278 7878: ask for Adult Social CarePoint. Follow the council's professional safeguarding form instructions.	0191 278 7878: ask for Emergency Duty Team.

Annex D - Retention and secure disposal of safeguarding records

Use this schedule alongside Annex A of the Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy. At each review, decide whether the records are still needed. Keep evidence subject to a documented legal, regulatory or investigation hold. The end of a service or the passing of six years does not by itself authorise deletion.

Record	Retention decision and responsible person
Safeguarding case, capacity/consent and allegations	Safeguarding lead and data protection lead retain while risk, enquiry, review, proceedings or a justified hold requires it. Set a review date no later than 12 months when opening the file. At closure record a case-specific reason and expected disposal or further review date, considering capacity, vulnerability, possible later disclosures, limitation issues and statutory/legal advice. Seek advice promptly if unsure and review temporary preservation rather than keeping records without a reason.
Routine service records	Keep only what is necessary for delivery, consent evidence or justified audit/claims purposes under the Privacy schedule. Remove emergency/adjustment details when no longer required, normally within three months of the final relevant activity unless a recorded reason requires longer. Move incident evidence to the restricted safeguarding file.
Recruitment and DBS	Follow the Volunteer Policy. Destroy DBS certificates and copies once the decision and any justified review are complete, normally within six months of the decision. Record the reason for any exceptional longer retention. Keep only the minimal permitted suitability record for the justified period.
Disposal	An authorised owner confirms that no hold applies and records secure deletion/shredding by category, date and authority, without preserving the deleted sensitive content. Address copies and backups through the secure deletion process.