



# Cotswold Boatmobility Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Introduction

Cotswold Boatmobility is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all participants, volunteers, and staff. This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding vulnerable individuals, including those with mobility or learning disabilities, their friends, families, and carers. We recognize our duty of care to protect everyone involved from harm and to promote their welfare.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Cotswold Boatmobility volunteers, staff, trustees, and any other individuals involved in the charity's activities. It covers all aspects of safeguarding, including recognizing and responding to abuse, ensuring the safety of participants, and managing risk.

## 3. Terms and definitions

**Safeguarding means:** Protecting people's physical health, mental wellbeing, and human rights.

**Child or Young Person:** Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

**Vulnerable Adult:** An adult is deemed vulnerable if they:

- Have needs for care and support
- Are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
- As a result of those care and support needs, are unable to protect themselves from the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect
- Lack capacity in order to protect their human rights

## 4. Principles

**Safety First:** The welfare of all participants, particularly vulnerable individuals, is our primary concern.

**Empowerment:** We respect and promote the rights of individuals to make their own decisions, where possible.

**Prevention:** We aim to minimize risks and prevent harm by implementing appropriate safeguarding measures.

**Proportionality:** Our safeguarding responses will be appropriate to the level of risk presented.

**Partnership:** We work closely with carers, families, and relevant agencies to ensure comprehensive support and protection.

**Accountability:** All volunteers and staff are responsible for safeguarding, with clear roles and responsibilities outlined.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

**Trustees:** Ensure safeguarding is integrated into the charity's governance and that policies are regularly reviewed and updated.

**Safeguarding Lead:** A designated individual responsible for overseeing safeguarding practices, providing guidance, and handling concerns or incidents.

**Team Leaders:** Responsible for ensuring the safety of participants during activities, overseeing the implementation of safeguarding procedures, and reporting any concerns to the Safeguarding Lead.

**Volunteers and Staff:** Must follow safeguarding procedures, attend relevant training, and report any concerns to the Team Leaders or Safeguarding Lead.

## 6. Recruitment and DBS Checks

DBS Checks:

**Team Leaders and Specific Roles:** All Team Leaders and volunteers or staff in roles involving direct, unsupervised contact with vulnerable participants must undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

**Other Volunteers:** Volunteers who assist in activities but do not have unsupervised contact with vulnerable individuals do not require a DBS check. However, they must work under the supervision of a DBS-checked Team Leader or staff member.

**Trustees:** Trustees with direct involvement in activities or decision-making regarding safeguarding should also undergo an Enhanced DBS check.

Recruitment Process:

- Ensure all applicants are aware of the safeguarding responsibilities associated with their role.
- Conduct interviews that include questions about safeguarding awareness.
- Obtain at least two references for new volunteers or staff, particularly for those requiring a DBS check.

## 7. Safeguarding Procedures

### Carers' Responsibilities:

- Participants who require care are accompanied by their carers during all activities. Carers are responsible for the direct care and supervision of those they support.
- Cotswold Boatmobility volunteers and staff will assist with activities but will not take on the role of personal carers.

### Risk Assessments:

- Conduct risk assessments for all activities to identify potential hazards and implement control measures to minimize risks.
- Regularly review and update risk assessments to ensure ongoing safety.

### Incident Reporting:

- Volunteers and staff must report any safeguarding concerns, incidents, or suspicions of abuse immediately to the Team Leader or Safeguarding Lead.
- The Safeguarding Lead will document the concern, follow up with appropriate actions, and, if necessary, liaise with external agencies such as social services or the police.

### Training:

- Provide safeguarding training for all volunteers and staff, ensuring they understand the principles of safeguarding, how to recognize signs of abuse, and the procedures for reporting concerns.
- Ensure regular refresher training is available to keep safeguarding knowledge up to date.

## 8. Code of Conduct

### Behavioural Guidelines:

- Treat all participants, carers, and other volunteers with respect and dignity.
- Avoid situations where a volunteer or staff member is alone with a participant without a carer present. Cotswold Boatmobility is not responsible for any lift sharing away from the Harper's Field site. Volunteers need to ensure that they have adequate insurance cover.
- Do not engage in physical contact with participants beyond what is necessary for the activity and always with the participant's and carer's consent.
- Respect the privacy of participants, especially in sensitive situations such as personal care, which is the responsibility of their carers.

## Boundaries:

- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Do not give personal contact details to participants or carers outside of official communication channels.

## 9. Managing Allegations

### Procedure:

- Any allegations of abuse or misconduct against a volunteer or staff member will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.
- The Safeguarding Lead will coordinate the investigation, maintaining confidentiality and fairness throughout the process.
- If the allegation involves a criminal offense, the police will be informed immediately.
- Volunteers or staff members involved in allegations may be suspended from their duties pending the outcome of the investigation.

### Support:

- Provide appropriate support to the individual making the allegation, as well as to the volunteer or staff member involved, ensuring fairness and sensitivity.

## 10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

### Confidentiality:

- Safeguarding concerns and incidents will be handled with the utmost confidentiality, sharing information only with those who need to know.
- Personal information will be managed in accordance with data protection laws.

### Record Keeping:

- Maintain accurate records of all safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and outcomes.
- Store records securely, ensuring access is restricted to authorized personnel.

## 11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in legislation, guidance, or operational practices. All volunteers and staff will be informed of any updates or changes to the policy.

## 12. Conclusion

Cotswold Boatmobility is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all participants, volunteers, and staff. Through adherence to this policy, we aim to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where everyone can enjoy accessible boating experiences.

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Approved by Mattie Ross Chair of Trustees

17 March 2025

Next review March 2026