Connecting Boroughs

Safeguarding Policy

Charity Number: 1211291

Policy Owner: Connecting Boroughs CIO

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Review Frequency: Annually, or sooner where required

Next Review: September 2027

1. Policy Statement

Connecting Boroughs is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with the charity. Their welfare, dignity and safety are central to our work.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Trustees, staff, volunteers, sessional workers and partners acting on behalf of the charity must respond appropriately to concerns and must never ignore, minimise or conceal suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.

2. Purpose

This policy provides a clear framework for preventing harm, recognising concerns, responding to disclosures, reporting concerns and working with statutory and specialist agencies where necessary.

3. Scope

This policy applies across all Connecting Boroughs services and activities, including food and clothing support, children's clubs, community programmes, domestic abuse support, sports and recreational activities, events, trips, outings and online or digital communication.

4. Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare and safety of the child or adult at risk comes first.
- People should be treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination.
- Concerns should be acted upon promptly and proportionately.
- Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis where necessary for safeguarding.
- Children and adults should be listened to and their views taken seriously.
- Safeguarding action should not be delayed because information is incomplete.

5. Types of Harm

Safeguarding concerns may include physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, financial or economic abuse, exploitation, discriminatory abuse, organisational abuse, online abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, trafficking, modern slavery or other forms of harm.

6. Recognising Concerns

Signs of harm may include unexplained injuries, fear, sudden changes in behaviour, hunger or poor hygiene, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, disclosure of abuse, controlling relationships, missing episodes, unexplained financial problems or concerning interactions with adults or peers.

No single sign proves abuse. Concerns should be recorded and considered in context.

7. Responding to a Disclosure

- Listen calmly and take the person seriously.
- Do not promise secrecy or absolute confidentiality.
- Do not interrogate, investigate or ask leading questions.
- Reassure the person that they were right to speak up.
- Record what was said as accurately as possible.
- Report the concern promptly through the charity's safeguarding procedure.
- Take immediate emergency action where someone is in immediate danger.

8. Safeguarding Lead and Trustee Oversight

Connecting Boroughs will identify an appropriate safeguarding lead or responsible person to coordinate safeguarding concerns and referrals.

The Board of Trustees retains overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and monitored.

9. Reporting Concerns

Safeguarding concerns should be reported promptly to the designated safeguarding lead or another appropriate senior person. If the concern involves that person, it must be reported to an alternative trustee or responsible lead.

Where there is immediate danger or a serious crime, emergency services or police should be contacted directly. Relevant local authority safeguarding services should be contacted where statutory safeguarding support or referral is required.

10. Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers or Trustees

Any allegation or concern about a person working with or representing Connecting Boroughs must be taken seriously and managed without compromising the safety of beneficiaries or the fairness of the process.

Where relevant, external safeguarding authorities, police, the Disclosure and Barring Service or other bodies should be contacted in accordance with applicable duties and guidance.

11. Safer Recruitment

Roles involving children or adults at risk should be assessed for safeguarding risk. Recruitment may include identity checks, references, role-appropriate DBS checks where legally eligible, induction, safeguarding expectations and ongoing supervision.

12. Professional Boundaries

Adults working with beneficiaries must maintain appropriate boundaries. They must not exploit their position, form inappropriate relationships, use degrading discipline, exchange inappropriate messages or create unnecessary one-to-one situations that increase safeguarding risk.

13. Children and Young People

Children should be supervised appropriately for the activity, their age and individual needs. Attendance, collection, trips, transport, behaviour, photography and missing-child procedures must be managed under the charity's relevant policies.

14. Adults at Risk

Safeguarding adults should respect the person's wishes and independence while responding appropriately to abuse, neglect or serious risk. Capacity, coercion, immediate safety and the involvement of others should be considered where relevant.

15. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse disclosures should be handled sensitively and confidentially. Staff and volunteers must consider risks to children and adults at risk and must not disclose a survivor's location or support arrangements to an alleged perpetrator or unauthorised person.

16. SEND and Communication

Disability, SEND or communication difficulty must never be used to dismiss a safeguarding concern. Reasonable steps should be taken to enable people to communicate concerns in a way that works for them.

17. Child-on-Child Harm

Bullying, violence, sexual harassment, sexualised behaviour, coercion, exploitation or other harmful behaviour between children must not be dismissed as ordinary banter or an inevitable part of growing up. Concerns should be assessed and managed as safeguarding matters where appropriate.

18. Online Safety and Communications

Digital communication with beneficiaries must remain professional. Sensitive safeguarding information must not be discussed in inappropriate WhatsApp groups or public channels. Images and personal information must be handled under the charity's consent, communications and data-protection arrangements.

19. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Safeguarding information should be shared only where necessary and proportionate. Data protection law does not prevent appropriate information sharing for safeguarding where there is a lawful basis.

Consent should be considered where appropriate, but a lack of consent must not prevent necessary action where there is a compelling safeguarding reason.

20. Recording

Safeguarding records must be factual, dated, secure and distinguish between observation, disclosure, allegation and opinion. Records should include the concern, action taken, decisions made and relevant referrals.

21. Whistleblowing

Anyone who believes safeguarding concerns are being ignored, concealed or mishandled should use the charity's Whistleblowing Policy or an appropriate external route. Retaliation against a person who raises a genuine concern is not acceptable.

22. Serious Incidents

Serious safeguarding incidents must be escalated to trustees and considered under the charity's Serious Incident Reporting Policy, including whether regulatory reporting is required.

23. Training and Awareness

Trustees, staff and volunteers should receive safeguarding information and training appropriate to their responsibilities. Safeguarding should form part of induction for relevant roles.

24. Review After Incidents

Significant safeguarding incidents should be reviewed to identify lessons, strengthen controls and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Related Policies and Documents

- Governance and Decision-Making Framework;
- Risk Management Framework;

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy;
- Data Protection & UK GDPR Policy;
- Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Financial Controls & Financial Management Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy; and
- Serious Incident Reporting Policy.

Approval and Review

This document will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at least annually and sooner where legislation, guidance, activities or organisational arrangements materially change.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: _____

Date approved: _____

Signed on behalf of the trustees: _____

Next review date: _____