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Reach Charity Ltd

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

February 2025

Notice to volunteers and staff using a paper copy of this guidance, the Intranet holds the most recent version of this guidance. Volunteers and staff must ensure they are using the most recent guidance.

Owner: Sarah-Jane Lowson (Operations Lead)

Policy Information Chart

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| --- | --- |
| **Title** | Reach Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy |
| **Document purpose/summary** | The purpose of this policy is:   * to protect vulnerable adults who receive Reach’s services from harm * to provide Reach volunteers, staff and members with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding * to provide clear guidance for all Reach volunteers, staff and members, on how to identify, raise concerns and respond to safeguarding matters affecting vulnerable adults. |
| **Owner** | Operations Lead |
| **Policy Department** | Safeguarding |
| **Ratification date** | 17/02/2025 |
| **Review date and frequency** | Every two years . Next review date by Policies Working Group May 2025 |
| **Consultation process** | To be reviewed by: BOT, adult Reach members,18-25 Retreat & Mentoring Programme Participants, Young Persons Advisory Group. |
| **Ratified by** | BOT |
| **Target audience** | All Reach Volunteers, Members, Staff and Trustees |
| **Circulation** | Electronic: Intranet  Written: Upon request to Reach Business Support  Please contact Reach Business Support if you require this document in an alternative format. |
| **Equality analysis checklist completed** |  |
| **References/ sources of information** | [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents) (2006)  [Making Safeguarding Personal](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/partners-care-and-health/care-and-health-improvement/safeguarding-resources/making-safeguarding-personal) (2009)  [Care Act](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents) (2014)  [NCVO Safeguarding Vulnerable Clients & DBS](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/volunteers-and-the-law/safeguarding-vulnerable-clients/#:~:text=Organisations%20who%20work%20with%20children,be%20able%20to%20protect%20themselves.) (accessed 130225)  [Strategy for dealing with Safeguarding Issues in Charities](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-dealing-with-safeguarding-issues-in-charities) (2013)  [Prevent Duty Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance#:~:text=The%20aim%20of%20Prevent%20is,support%20people%20susceptible%20to%20radicalisation) (2023) |

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| **Associated documentation/cross referenced policies** | [Reach Charity Children & Young Peoples Safeguarding Policy](https://www.reach.org.uk/our-policies-procedures) (2024)  [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](https://www.reach.org.uk/our-policies-procedures) (2021)  [Reach Behaviour Code](https://www.reach.org.uk/our-policies-procedures) (2025)  Social Media Policy (2025)  [Complaints Policy](https://www.reach.org.uk/our-policies-procedures) (2024) |
| **Supersedes document** | N/A |

**Executive approval is subject to the understanding that the policy Owner has followed the organisation process for policy ratification.**

**Document Review History**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version no.** | **Type of Change: Major,**  **minor, none or taken out of use** | **Date** | **Author of change** | **Description of change** |
| 1 | Major | 130225 | Sarah-Jane Lowson | New Policy |
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1. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Reach is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for Reach Charity to be truly representative of all sections of society and our volunteers and employees to feel respected and able to give their best. Reach is providing support for people with upper limb difference and their families from birth through until adulthood, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of young persons, vulnerable adults or the public.

2. Introduction

# Reach is a volunteer-led organisation working across the UK to support people with upper limb differences and their families.

We believe in protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of Reach in working together in promoting the adult’s welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect. Volunteers, trustees, employees, and members should be made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

3. Definitions

The Care Act 2014 definition of an adult at risk of abuse:

* Where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there)

(a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

(b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and

(c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

4. Key Principles of Adult Safeguarding

In the safeguarding of adults, Reach is guided by the six key principles set out in The Care Act 2014 and Making Safeguarding Personal. Reach aims to demonstrate and promote these six principles in our work:

* **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
* **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
* **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
* **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
* **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
* **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

5. Recognising the signs of abuse

Volunteers, trustees and employees are well-placed to identify abuse. The adult may say or do things that let you know something is wrong. It may come in the form of a disclosure, complaint, or an expression of concern. Everyone within the organisation should understand what to do, and where to go to get help, support and advice.

6. Types of Abuse

The Care Act 2014 defines the following ten areas of abuse. Local authorities involved in the development of Making Safeguarding Personal (2009) also include self-neglect as an additional category. These are not exhaustive but are a guide to behaviour that may lead to a safeguarding enquiry. This includes:

* **Physical abuse -** Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
* **Domestic violence/ Domestic abuse -** This could be any of the indicators of abuse relating to physical, psychological/emotional, sexual or financial but by a person with whom you have a close family or intimate relationship such as a partner, child, parent.
* **Sexual abuse -** Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography. Witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
* **Psychological or emotional abuse -** Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
* **Financial or material abuse -** Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse of misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
* **Modern slavery -** Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and those who coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
* **Discriminatory abuse -** Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because you are, or are perceived to be different due to race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
* **Organisational or institutional abuse -** Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to long-term ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes or practices within an organisation.
* **Neglect or acts of omission -** Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
* **Self-neglect -** This covers a wide range of behavior, neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. There is a difference between what constitutes a safeguarding incident that requires a statutory response and an incident that is rooted in concern for someone’s general wellbeing.

7. Radicalisation to Terrorism

The Government through its PREVENT programme has highlighted how some adults may be vulnerable to exploitation and radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. Signs and indicators of radicalisation may include:

* Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
* Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders.
* Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
* Possessing violent extremist literature.
* Using extremist narratives to explain personal disadvantage.
* Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
* Joining extremist organisations.
* Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.

8. Reporting Concerns

Any volunteer, trustee or employee who becomes aware that an adult is or is at risk of, being abused or radicalised must raise the matter immediately with the organisation’s designated safeguarding person.

Early sharing of information is the key to providing an effective response where there are emerging concerns. To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements no one should assume that someone else will do it.

8.1 Who to contact with a safeguarding concern

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Role | Name | Contact Information |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)  Out of hours Safeguarding Lead | Sarah-Jane Lowson  Operations Lead | Email: [sarah-janel@reach.org.uk](mailto:sarah-janel@reach.org.uk)  Mobile: 07932 747 652 |
| Deputy DSL | VACANT |  |
| Reach Board of Trustees Safeguarding Champion | Julie Detheridge | Email: [julied@reach.org.uk](mailto:julied@reach.org.uk)  Mobile: |
| Whistle Blowing (internal) | Gary Phillips | Email: [garyp@reach.org.uk](mailto:garyp@reach.org.uk)  Mobile: 07984 045 575 |
| If the person is in immediate danger | Police | Emergency – 999  Non-emergency – 101 |

8.2. What we will do

Reach will

* Inform the adult of the action we propose to take.
* Seek their agreement for any referral.
* Ensure that they are kept informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.
* Endeavour to ensure that they are safe and supported before proceeding with any other action.
* Inform the adult if Reach is planning to seek advice from or report concerns to an external agency.

In most situations there will not be an immediate threat and the decision about protecting the person with safeguarding needs will be taken in consultation with themselves and through referral to Adult Social Care. Every local authority has a Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board and referral pathway. The Reach DSL will follow the referral pathway of the local authority in which the person lives.

**If the adult requires immediate protection from harm, contact the emergency services.**

9. Safe Recruitment & Selection

Reach is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices for volunteers and staff, that reduce the risk of harm to adults with care and support needs from people unsuitable to work with them. We undertake a safer recruitment process for all volunteers and staff:

Reach has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all Volunteers, trustees and employees.

10. Social Media

All employees and volunteers should be aware of Reach social media policy and procedures and the code of conduct for behaviour towards the adults we support.

11. Is there a Person in a Position of Trust Involved?

In any instance of safeguarding, consideration must be given as to whether an allegation has been made against a person in a position of trust and who may be a risk to others. This can be anyone from a formal employee or volunteer to an informal carer.

12. Training and Awareness

Reach will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Volunteers, Trustees, Employees and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).

For all employees who are volunteering or working with adults at risk this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

* Understand what safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding Adults.
* Recognise an adult potential in need of safeguarding and take action.
* Understand how to report a safeguarding Alert.
* Understand dignity and respect when working with individuals.
* Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Adults Policy.

Similarly, volunteers and employees may encounter concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children/young people. For more information about children’s safeguarding, refer to [Reach Charity Children and Young People’s Safeguarding Policy](https://www.reach.org.uk/our-policies-procedures).

13. Mental Capacity

The Mental Capacity Act Mental is about whether an individual has the capacity to make a specific decision at a specific time and if they are unable because they lack capacity as a result a mental disorder of the mind . This includes not being able to

* Understand information given to them about a particular decision
* Retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
* Weigh up the information available to make the decision
* Communicate their decision. Refer to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>. Reach
* will need to involve an advocate if the person lacks capacity to make decisions about safeguarding concern.

Support and guidance will be sought from the relevant Local Authority Adult Social Care Team should anyone have concerns regarding an adult’s capacity.

14. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Reach expects all employees, volunteers and trustees to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if an adult is deemed to be at risk of harm or they pose a risk of harm to another. **You should** **contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed**.

15. Recording and Record Keeping

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding an adult with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

16. Whistleblowing

Reach is committed to ensuring that volunteers and employees who in good faith whistle-blow in the public interest, will be protected from reprisals and victimisation. If you have a concern about a Reach Volunteer or member of staff please contact our lead for Whistleblowing, Trustee Gary Phillips email: [garyp@reach.org.uk](mailto:garyp@reach.org.uk)*.* If you need independent Whistle Blowing advice please contact: [Protect Advice](https://protect-advice.org.uk/) T: 0800 055 7214. You can report a concern with the Charity Commission, more information provided here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

17. Important Contacts

**Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding**Name: Sarah-Jane Lowson  
Email address: [sarah-janel@reach.org.uk](mailto:sarah-janel@reach.org.uk)   
Telephone number: 07932 747 652

**Deputy Senior Lead for Safeguarding**Name:  
Email address  
Telephone number

**Designated Trustee for Safeguarding**Name: Julie Detheridge   
Email address: [julied@reach.org.uk](mailto:julied@reach.org.uk)   
Telephone number: 07847 010676

**Designated Trustee for Whistleblowing**

Name: Gary Phillips

Email address: [garyp@reach.org.uk](mailto:garyp@reach.org.uk)

Telephone number: 07984 045 575

**Police**  
Emergency – 999  
Non-emergency – 101