

Boaz Trust Safeguarding Policy

Boaz Trust policies and procedures are in place so things run as smoothly as possible and so that you are clear about how we are committed to treating you, and how we would like you to behave during your time with Boaz Trust.

If you have any questions or comments on any Boaz Policy please talk to the Chief Exec or Head of Operations.

Why this policy?

Boaz Trust's vision is that people seeking safety in the UK are welcomed here and are free to live life in all its fullness. We believe that everyone has the right to live life free from abuse and exploitation. We commit to upholding that right; and as an organisation we take 'zero-tolerance' of abuse wherever it occurs.

Boaz Trust is committed to (a) ensuring that people who use our services do not, as a result of our work, come to any harm and (b) ensuring that our working practices minimise the risk of abuse. Staff, volunteers (including students) and trustees of the Boaz Trust have a duty to identify abuse and report it.

Boaz Trust does not work with children (aged under 18). We work with adults who have sought asylum or been granted refugees as well as others who have facing homelessness because of their immigration status. The people Boaz works with may face challenging situations, but are not automatically defined as 'vulnerable adults' in the safeguarding context (see 'definitions' below). However, as an organisation working with people who may be exposed to a wide range of risks, we have a duty to ensure that those under our care are protected from abuse and exploitation, and that where abuse is suspected or has occurred, we have a clear framework of response.

Policy owner and review process

This policy is owned by the **Safeguarding Lead (Rob Clarke- Head of Operations)** with support from the **Designated Safeguarding Officer** (Katie Lifford- Head of Operations) and the **Lead Trustee for Safeguarding (Suzannah Sammons)**. It is reviewed annually.

Scope of this policy

This policy relates to all aspects of our work with people facing homelessness because of their immigration status who are accommodated and/or supported by Boaz Trust. The policy relates to all our staff and volunteers including students on placement with us and trustees. It is relevant to all areas of our work where we engage with people, including fundraising and supporter relations as well as frontline support services.

Useful definitions

1. Safeguarding

At its most simple, safeguarding means protecting from harm. Everyone has the right to 'live in safety, free from abuse and neglect'¹, and safeguarding covers the policies, processes and working practices we put in place to make sure that Boaz is a safe place to be.

2. Abuse

a. What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights.

Abuse can take many forms. It may be:

- physical
- financial
- material
- sexual
- psychological
- discriminatory
- emotional
- neglect

We recognise that the experiences and needs of all individuals, including those from refugee communities, can be complex and diverse. The people we support with may have experienced specific types of abuse such as torture, forced marriage, trafficking, forced labour, female genital mutilation (FGM) and honour based violence.

We recognise that an individual with unresolved immigration status may be at greater risk of experiencing severe and enduring abuse. In some cases, this may be due to higher levels of control by perpetrators (for example domestic violence, physical exploitation) and because of the impact of destitution, when people are not able to work or claim benefits to meet their basic needs.

b. Where can abuse occur?

Abuse may occur anywhere – in an individual's home, in someone else's home, in a project or organisation, or in a public place.

c. Who abuses?

Anyone may be an abuser, but evidence shows that an abuser is likely to be someone well known to the individual, such as a friend or family member, a professional worker or carer.

d. What are the possible signs of abuse?

¹ The Care Act, 2014

There is no one specific sign, but possible indicators are unexplained changes in behaviour or mood, including self-harming, unexplained bruising or injuries, signs of neglect, or unexplained changes in financial circumstances.

3. Vulnerable adults

In safeguarding terms a vulnerable adult is defined as a person over 18 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him- or herself, and or unable to protect him- or herself against significant harm or exploitation.'²

Boaz Trust works with adults facing homelessness because of their immigration status. The people we work with may have faced very difficult and traumatic situations in their home countries. They may have faced or be facing challenging situations here in the UK, for example homelessness and destitution, detention, risk of deportation, however this does not define them as "vulnerable" in the legal sense.

As an organisation, we are very grateful for income given by individuals who may choose to give regularly or on a one-off basis. We recognise that some individual donors or potential donors may be vulnerable or may become vulnerable due to a permanent or temporary change in their condition or wellbeing. We abide by the [Fundraising Code of Practice](#) and have a separate policy for how will work to ensure that we treat vulnerable supporters appropriately.

4. Regulated activity

There has been a move to identify adults who may be at risk of abuse particularly in regard to health and personal care services they receive ('regulated activities') rather than because of their particular circumstance or characteristics (see above). These tend to be in relation to health and personal care. The definitions are clearly set out in the Department of Health 2012 guidance on Regulated Activities.³ The Boaz Trust does not provide services as given under this guidance.

5. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and DBS checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service is the government body with responsibility for processing criminal records checks and managing the list of people who are barred from working with children or adults in the UK. It is possible to get different levels of DBS checks, from basic through to enhanced. The enhanced disclosure is a specific check that reports full criminal history including spent convictions.

It is only possible to request an enhanced DBS check if the specific role (voluntary or paid) requires this level of information. According to the government's online eligibility tool⁴, no role in Boaz Trust currently fits the eligibility criteria for enhanced DBS checks and therefore we are not able to request enhanced DBS checks on staff or volunteers.

All staff, trustees and volunteers are required to apply for a Basic DBS check upon recruitment.

² 'No Secrets' Department of Health and Home Office, 2000

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

Responsibilities of the organisation

Boaz Trust will ensure that:

- Adequate checks are made during recruitment of all staff or volunteers, to include but not limited to: full name, current address, phone and email contact information (via an application form) two independent references, face to face interviews
- All staff and volunteers receive a copy of this policy during the induction process, and are informed how to report any concerns
- Adequate support and training is given to each member of staff and volunteers beyond induction, including safeguarding training every two years (minimum).
- When we have been given information about, or identified a vulnerable donor we act upon this and ascertain what kind of communication, if any, is acceptable. Our database is then updated to reflect this information

A culture of safeguarding awareness and understanding is developed and runs through the whole organisation, including at trustee level (lead trustee on safeguarding- currently Suzannah Sammons), senior management (all live safeguarding cases are reviewed on a weekly basis by the Leadership Team, made up of the CEO, Head of Operations (Safeguarding Lead) and Head of Support Services (Designated Safeguarding Officer).

Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The following are guidelines for safe working practices. All staff and volunteers should:

- Recognise their own personal limits, and not undertake any task that is beyond their skills or role
- Avoid situations where they feel vulnerable or where their conduct may be misinterpreted
- Ensure the limits of confidentiality are explained carefully to the people we are supporting, with an interpreter present where appropriate
- Have 2 leaders with any group, and wherever possible, leaders of each gender are to be present in mixed gender groups
- Be conscious of how our words and actions can be misconstrued by others as harmful
- Where staff or volunteers need to interview or have 1:1 discussions with people supported by Boaz Trust, this should be done in a location that is visible to others and records of the interaction made (using case notes), and do all that is practicably possible to avoid 1:1 situations in isolation from others
- Be fully familiar with appropriate policies and working practices including those listed at the end of this policy

Trustees have a specific legal duty to ensure that they minimise the risk of any safeguarding incidents and that they react responsibly to any reports of safeguarding risks and incidents of abuse, ensuring that all action is in line with current safeguarding legislation. Trustees must report

any safeguarding incident to the Charity Commission, even if it has been reported to the police or other agency.

What to do if you suspect an individual is being abused?

DO:

- Ensure the individual's immediate safety – if there has been a crime committed, e.g. physical assault, consider whether emergency services are needed immediately and if so, dial 999
- Take seriously all allegations of abuse, listening carefully and reassuring the individual that you are taking them seriously
- Document any conversations relating to a safeguarding issue, including allegations of abuse in a non-judgmental way using a safeguarding concern form (see appendix) and where appropriate the critical incident reporting form (see appendix). These should be saved on the Shared Drive and also on LIAIF (our database)
- Explain to the individual what will happen next and when
- Where concern regards an adult in need of protection, contact Adult Social Services (0161 234 5001)
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer (katielifford@boaztrust.org.uk) or the Safeguarding Lead (Rob Clarke - Head of Operations – robclarke@boaztrust.org.uk) as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. The Safeguarding Lead is nominated by the Trustees of the Boaz Trust to deal with any allegation or suspicion of abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities where appropriate.
- In the absence of the above, any safeguarding concern should be reported to the Chief Exec (Ros Holland- rosholland@boaztrust.org.uk).
- Any reports in relation to safeguarding will be shared with the lead trustee for safeguarding, Suzannah Sammons (suzannah.sammons@boaztrust.org.uk) who should also be contacted directly should Safeguarding Lead not be available.
- In the absence of the above individuals, concerns should be reported to the Chair of Trustees (Phil Rawlings phil.rawlings@boaztrust.org.uk)
- Any suspicions should not be discussed with any other individual except for the above mentioned

DO NOT:

- Minimise or ignore any concerns you have
- Confront a suspected abuser; you may put yourself and others at further risk
- Destroy any evidence of abuse
- Initiate an investigation. Your duty is to report, not to investigate
- Make any promises you cannot keep (e.g. to keep information secret)
- Delay acting

Important point to note:

Where there are concerns that any individual is facing or has faced abuse or exploitation, you are entitled to breach confidentiality.

What will Boaz do, once a safeguarding concern has been raised?

When a safeguarding concern has been reported or identified, the next steps depend on the specific circumstances and who is involved.

If any individual is considered to be at risk of significant harm, the case is to be immediately referred to the police (999) and / or adult social services (0161 234 5001).

If the safeguarding concern is in relation to a third party or in relation to a historical incident, the way forwards will be agreed with the individual concerned, the main staff contact, and where appropriate, their line manager. The next steps may include contacting adult social services for advice or contacting a third party organisation directly to raise a concern. Boaz staff must ensure the wellbeing of any people we support who are involved in this process, supporting them to seek specialist advice and support as necessary.

If the safeguarding concern is in relation to a Boaz staff member or volunteer, the concern will be initially discussed with their line manager and the Safeguarding Lead. Specific actions will be agreed and documented. If there is no immediate risk of harm, but further investigation is needed, the Safeguarding Lead will then liaise with the lead trustee for Safeguarding and the Social Services Contact Centre.

As appropriate, the matter would be dealt with through our disciplinary process which is set out in the staff handbook.

The Safeguarding Lead must report any safeguarding issues that arise to Trustees.

Trustees have a duty to report any serious incident to the Charity Commission, including in relation to safeguarding.

Useful resources and contacts

- Manchester City Council- Social Services Contact Centre: 0161 234 5001 (for any concerns about the wellbeing of a vulnerable adult or child)
- Homeless Link: Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Briefing <https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/guidance-on-safeguarding-vulnerable-adults>
- Boaz office: 0161 202 1056
- Boaz Safeguarding Lead email address: robclarke@boaztrust.org.uk / 07708 801512
- Charity Commission: Guidance for Trustees on reporting serious incidents; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

Important dates

New policy created: March 2018 / Signed off by trustees: July 2018

Last review: LT review November 2024

Next review due: Full Board Meeting May 2025

Latest updates

- Updated with Head of Operations as Safeguarding Lead January 2021
- Removed reference to HR and Projects Manager March 2023

- Added reference to Chief Exec in absence of Head of Ops Aug 2024
- Updated scope to reflect current activity Aug 24
- Updated DBS section re Basic checks as part of recruitment Aug 24
- Updated intro section to reflect current activity Aug 24
- Updated with reference to Designated Safeguarding Officer Nov 24

Related documents and policies

- Boaz staff handbook
- Boaz volunteer handbook
- Confidentiality policy
- Lone working policy
- Vulnerable supporters policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Risk assessment template (individual)
- Risk assessment template (off site)

These are all available from the Boaz Trust office. Please speak to your line manager for further information.