

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.

Section 1: 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. All Boaz Trust staff, volunteers (including students on placement) and trustees have a duty to raise any safeguarding concern, including suspected abuse.

Section 2: 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 Support) and the **Lead Trustee for Safeguarding (Jean-Claude Kayumba)**. It is reviewed annually.

Section 3: Scope of this policy

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

Boaz Trust primarily works with adults who have sought asylum or been granted refugee status, as well as others facing homelessness because of their immigration status. We do not provide direct services to children (aged under 18). Our housing access outreach work with family groups means that children may be present in, or affected by, cases we support, even though they are not the direct recipients of our services. Staff should therefore be aware of the local children's safeguarding referral routes in order to act when a concern arises.

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.

Section 4: 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?

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.

¹ The Care Act, 2014

Where concerns relate to a family, staff carrying out housing access outreach work are often well placed to notice indicators affecting a child, even though the child is not the subject of the support being offered. These may include severe overcrowding, unsafe or unsuitable accommodation, a child not registered with a GP or in school, signs of exploitation by a landlord or "sponsor," or repeated moves disrupting a child's stability.

3. Adult at Risk

In safeguarding terms an 'adult at risk' is defined as a person aged 18 or over who:

1. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
2. Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
3. As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

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 adults at risk in the legal sense.¹

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 adults at risk or may become adults at risk due to a permanent or temporary change in their condition or wellbeing. We abide by the [Fundraising Code of Practice](#) (1 November 2025) and have a separate policy for how will work to ensure that we treat supporters at risk 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.² 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 tool³, no role in Boaz Trust

¹ The Care Act 2014

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216900/Regulated-Activity-Adults-Dec-2012.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

currently fits the eligibility criteria for enhanced DBS checks and therefore we cannot request enhanced DBS checks on staff or volunteers.

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

Section 5: 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 (via lead safeguarding trustee), 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).

Section 6: 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

- Treat a child safeguarding concern as a referral, not an aside, including where it arises incidentally during housing access outreach support given to a parent, and even though the child is not the subject of that support
- 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.

Section 7: Operating online

Boaz Trust's online presence creates safeguarding risks both to the people we support and to staff and volunteers who manage this activity. This section should be read alongside our Social Media Policy, which sets out conduct, content approval, and platform-use standards. This section focuses on the safeguarding dimensions of online work: distinguishing routine signposting from genuine safeguarding concerns, and the wellbeing of staff exposed to high volumes of hostile or distress-related contact.

1. Distinguishing signposting from safeguarding escalation

Staff managing online inboxes and social media may receive messages from individuals in distress or crisis, many of whom are outside Boaz's remit, location, or capacity to help directly. **The great majority of these should be handled through our standard signposting response** (including to police, local authority, or other services as appropriate) and do not require a safeguarding concern form or escalation under Section 8 of this policy.

A message should be treated as a safeguarding concern requiring escalation (rather than signposting) where it involves:

- An individual who is a current or former Boaz beneficiary, or otherwise known to Boaz;
- A credible indication of immediate risk to life or safety (e.g. a stated intention of suicide or self-harm with apparent means/plan, or an ongoing violent situation);
- A child, wherever they are located;
- Information suggesting abuse by, or risk from, someone connected to Boaz (staff, volunteer, trustee).

Where a message doesn't meet these criteria but a staff member is uncertain or uneasy, they should raise it with their line manager or the Safeguarding Lead informally, rather than defaulting to a full concern form for every ambiguous case.

2. Staff wellbeing and support

- Regular exposure to distress and crisis messages, even where the correct and only response is signposting, carries a cumulative emotional cost. Staff should not be expected

to absorb this without acknowledgement or support simply because no direct action is possible.

- This should be named explicitly in supervision for anyone managing these inboxes / platforms regularly, with space to talk about the volume and content of what they're seeing, separate from performance discussion.
- Staff managing inboxes and public-facing accounts may also be the target of hostile, abusive, or threatening contact given the nature of Boaz's work. This is a safeguarding matter affecting staff, not only a comms or HR issue, and should be reported to the line manager and Safeguarding Lead, with escalation to the platform or police where there is a credible threat.
- Boaz will review, at least annually, whether staff responsible for online comms have adequate training, workload, and support to sustain this role.

Section 8: 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 In-Form or Beacon (our databases)
- Explain to the individual what will happen next and when
- For any safeguarding concern – whether regarding an adult or a child – contact the appropriate safeguarding team or centre in the borough where the concern is raised. In Manchester, this is the Manchester Contact Centre (tel. 0161 234 5001- open 24/7 or email mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk) 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 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, Jean-Claude Kayumba (jean-claude.kayumba@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.

Section 9: 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 immediate risk of significant harm, the case is to be immediately referred to the police (999).

For general safeguarding concerns and referrals, contact the relevant safeguarding office or in the borough where the concern is raised, for example the Manchester Contact Centre (tel. 0161 234 5001 (open 24/7) or email mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk).

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 relevant local authority safeguarding team or 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.

Section 10: Useful resources and contacts

- Manchester City Council- Social Services Contact Centre: 0161 234 5001 (for any concerns about the wellbeing of an adult at risk or a child at risk)
- Homeless Link: Safeguarding Adults at Risk guidance <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/guidance-on-safeguarding>
- 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>

Section 11: Related documents and policies

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

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

Section 12: Important dates

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

Last review: CEO review June 2026

Next review due: Full Board Meeting December 2026

Previous updates

- Added Section 7- Operating Online (June 2026) and updated following section numbers
- Updated to include new Safeguarding Lead Trustee (June 2026)
- Updated sections 1,4(2d), 6, 8, 9 to reference new work with families through housing access outreach work (June 2026)
- Added reference to recruitment for a new Lead Trustee for Safeguarding (January 2026)
- Added Sections to document, for ease of reference (January 2026)
- Updated language from vulnerable adults to adults at risk (January 2026)
- Updated reference to latest Homeless Link guidance (January 2026)
- Updated reference to latest Fundraising Code of Practice (January 2026)
- Updated reference to Designated Safeguarding Officer (November 2024)
- Added reference to Chief Executive in absence of Head of Operations (August 2024)
- Updated introductory section to reflect current activity (August 2024)
- Updated DBS section re Basic checks as part of recruitment (August 2024)
- Updated scope to reflect current activity (August 2024)
- Removed reference to HR and Projects Manager (March 2023)
- Updated reference to Head of Operations as Safeguarding Lead (January 2022)