

	Volunteer Safeguarding Policy FINAL Apr 2026				
	Date created:	23/12/2025	Author:	James Lennard	
	Version no.	Last review	Approved by	Approval Date	Next Review
	1	28/04/2026	CT Board	28/04/2026	27/04/2027

Safeguarding (Volunteers, Clients and other Non Staff)

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to volunteers, clients and other non-staff connected with Cranfield Trust. A separate, and related set of policies applies to the Trust's staff and workers.

Cranfield Trust (the Trust) is committed to:

- proactively protecting anyone we work with from harm or abuse
- fostering a supportive, respectful and protective culture
- providing safe physical and online environments for staff, associates, trustees, volunteers, clients, partners and anyone who comes into contact with the Trust

Safeguarding refers to the range of measures in place to achieve these commitments. The purpose is to protect the people who come into contact with the Trust through our work from harm, abuse, neglect and mistreatment of any kind. It includes a wide range of issues relating to an individual's welfare and their health and safety. There is a particular duty of care for organisations providing activities for those who may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. This includes:

- children and young people under 18 years of age. We will seek to protect children from maltreatment; prevent impairment of their health or development; ensure they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and take action to enable them to have the best outcomes.
- adults at risk. Anyone aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs, may be unable to protect themselves. We will protect the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of all those involved in its work and to preventing discrimination, harassment, abuse, or other inappropriate behaviour. 'Vulnerability' and 'risk' should be understood in a wide context and take into account demographic differences, protected characteristics, power imbalance and other socio-economic or health circumstances.

We understand that inequalities in society mean that not all groups are treated equally, fairly and with dignity or have the same protection from abuse or harm. We have particular responsibility to safeguard groups most at risk of harm, such as children and adults at risk, and to remove the barriers which exclude marginalised groups from equal protection.

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IMPLEMENTATION

RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

Safeguarding is a governance priority for the Trust. It is a fundamental part of operating as a charity for the public benefit and a foundation of how we can effectively promote and organise support. The Board of Trustees approve, oversee and receive regular updates on our Safeguarding Policy and procedure. Responsibility is delegated to the Chief Executive for ensuring that this Safeguarding Policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed at least annually. The Trust's Designated Safeguarding 'Lead' (DSL) is the Head of Finance, Administration and Control. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding 'Lead' (Deputy DSL) is Marie Langan.

It is the responsibility of ALL staff, associates, trustees and volunteers ('team members') to assess, mitigate and report risk of harm, specific incidents or suspected inappropriate conduct, especially in relation to children or adults at risk that the Trust comes into contact with. In many cases, such areas may come under a client charity's own safeguarding responsibility, so the Trust's clients also have a responsibility to respond appropriately through contact with the Trust's DSL.

INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality underpins all that we do. We will protect individuals' rights to privacy and confidentiality and only disclose information about those at risk of or experiencing harm on a 'need to know' basis. All our team members must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep any information confidential, they also have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to protect people from harm.

We will keep any information confidential whilst proactively sharing concerns and relevant information appropriately with agencies who need to know; especially concerning issues involving children, adults at risk, parents, families and carers.

We will ensure that images of children and adults at risk are used only after their or appropriate permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICE

If a volunteer is expected to engage with clients where contact with children and/or adults at risk of harm is unavoidable, or access to information about children and/or adults at risk of harm is an integral part of an assignment, the Trust's volunteer must be subject to a risk assessment and all relevant checks, including an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check if deemed necessary by either the Trust or the client charity (see Appendix). It may also be important for the Trust to carry out appropriate checks on its own trustees or

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senior staff to ensure that no-one has been disqualified from holding office for a safeguarding reason.

On registration, we will ask volunteers to provide details of active DBS certificates for other roles, eg as a trustee or volunteer of another organisation.

Volunteers will be required to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to carry out their role with the Trust.

The DSL will ensure that volunteers are aware of the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

PROVIDING A SAFE AND SECURE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

We expect our charity clients to provide safe and secure physical environments for our volunteers to work in by applying health, safety, security and welfare measures for their premises in accordance with the law, regulatory guidance and our own policies. We will work with charity clients, partner agencies and suppliers (eg when hiring venues) to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out so that our own volunteers feel safe when working on behalf of the Trust.

We will not accept any behaviour directed towards our volunteers that threatens or leads anyone to feel unsafe.

PROVIDING A SAFE AND SECURE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

We will provide a safe and secure online environment for our volunteers. As far as possible, we will also seek to protect our charity clients and partner agencies when interacting with others through online platforms managed by the Trust, eg through our webinars. This will include managing the risks around:

- 🕒 **Content:** access to inappropriate, illegal or harmful material
- 🕒 **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interactions such as hateful or offensive social media comments or 'trolling'
- 🕒 **Conduct:** inappropriate conduct, eg when expressing personal views that may cause offense
- 🕒 **Contract:** being exposed to inappropriate or unsuitable commercial risks, but this can also be extended to any reputational risks for the Trust by association, eg LinkedIn profiles for clients or volunteers who may be linked to controversy, news or perceptions that could be damaging for the Trust's brand

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RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS

Our team members will always respond to safeguarding disclosures, concerns or allegations promptly and appropriately.

We **Recognise** concerns, **Respond** in the moment, **Report** immediately, **Record** clearly and support the DSL in their work to **Resolve** the issue and participate in **Review**.

Recognise: This means being alert to the different signs and symptoms of all safeguarding matters and what abuse, harm and neglect might be and look like. We don't ignore it or assume everything is fine. If something doesn't feel right, there's a chance it's not. If you are unsure whether something is a safeguarding concern, you should always seek advice.

Respond:

Team members should always:

- 🕒 Listen without judgement asking open questions.
- 🕒 Take matters seriously and remain calm.
- 🕒 Reassure that sharing concerns was the right thing to do.
- 🕒 Reassure them that the matter will be handled sensitively.

Team members should never attempt to:

- 🕒 Ignore, dismiss, minimise, unduly influence, or disbelieve the person reporting
- 🕒 investigate an incident or allegation themselves
- 🕒 offer comment, judgment or opinion on the nature of the allegations
- 🕒 promise confidentiality or agree to keep allegations secret
- 🕒 inform the person (or persons) who is the subject of an allegation

Report:

Team members must record and report all concerns directly to the DSL if they:

- 🕒 observe or become aware of any signs of abuse, neglect or harm or any conduct that causes them concern
- 🕒 have allegations made to them directly

If you witness or strongly suspect a situation that requires the attention of authorities or emergency services, do not hesitate to call 999 before reporting the matter to the DSL. You must act quickly, ensuring we stop or minimise any further harm or damage and follow the approach to confidentiality set out in this policy.

Record: Record the who, what, where and when and ensure you capture as much detail as possible. Confidentiality is paramount and you should store information securely and only

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share information with those involved in the safeguarding process following the procedures set out in this policy.

Resolve: Once reported the DSL or Deputy DSL will determine appropriate steps, in line with this and other policies to resolve the safeguarding concern. Where a formal process is required, the DSL or Deputy DSL will work with the relevant team members.

The DSL is responsible for collating a detailed record of the allegation and will do so by liaising with the relevant staff, associates, trustees or volunteers of the Trust. If an allegation has been made by a third party, the DSL will contact them directly to record the allegation in an incident report.

Details of any allegation may be noted down by the DSL using the person's own words and recording dates, times and any names that are mentioned.

If the allegation relates to an active assignment with a charity client, the associated assignment may be suspended pending the outcome of a safeguarding investigation. Care must be taken around confidentiality and non-disclosure of identifying details for individuals, especially if the allegation has been brought against the Trust's staff member, associate, trustee or volunteer. Any communications related to the investigation will be conducted on a 'need to know' basis.

The DSL will liaise directly with concerned parties to establish an agreed process, undertake a full risk assessment and set a clear action plan. If criminal behaviour is alleged, the plan is likely to include referral to police and/or a local authority adult or children team, and/or may include guidance to the complainant to report to appropriate external agencies. The action plan will set out lines of responsibility in reporting to appropriate bodies. The Trust also has a legal duty to inform the Charity Commission (England & Wales) or Office of Scottish Charity Regulator if a situation involves the risk of serious harm to an individual or an allegation of criminal behaviour

If a beneficiary, volunteer or staff member of a client charity contacts the Trust because they are uncertain of how to tackle an incident that has occurred within their own charity (ie not involving the Trust's own staff or volunteers), they will be signposted and assisted in contacting an appropriate support agency in accordance with their own safeguarding policy.

Review: The DSL, Deputy DSL and CEO will regularly review safeguarding reports and resolutions, enabling best practice and identifying lessons learnt to improve safeguarding practice.

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GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The trust will review its policy and good practice at regular intervals and at least once per year.

We will report to the Board or relevant committee of the Board on implementation, incidents and learning.

SAFE SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK WITHIN CHARITY CLIENTS

Responsibility for ensuring the safety of charity beneficiaries, i.e. children and adults at risk rests with the charities themselves. However, as part of its assessment and decision-making process, the Trust will take reasonable steps to ensure that the charities that require on-site contact with the Trust's staff, associates or volunteers have suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in place before our engagement with them commences. The Trust's volunteers must appraise themselves of the safeguarding policies of the organisations they work with, and adhere to their policies and practices.

It is the responsibility of client charities to undertake an appropriate risk assessment and notify the Trust when it is necessary for the Trust's volunteers to undergo a basic or enhanced DBS disclosure related to the specific assignment(s) or if the work is to be undertaken within a specific setting, eg premises attended by children or adults at risk. Charities are notified of this in our Project Charter, and if applicable, they may be asked to confirm in writing whether or not a DBS check will be necessary in accordance with the guidance in Appendix 1.

PERSONAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Protecting anyone we work with from harm or abuse may include calling out unwanted behaviours we witness as part of our work, for example between colleagues in a client charity, or between the Trust's volunteers or other third parties such as suppliers.

Unwanted behaviours may include:

-  **Harassment, bullying or victimisation** – unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person
-  **Sexual harassment** – unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person

Harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, victimisation or less favourable treatment may come about as a result of power imbalances, age or cultural differences or perceptions

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between individuals but it is important to be aware of the potential for witnessing unwanted behaviours in all points of contact across the Trust's work.

If you have any questions or are unsure of anything, you can contact your primary contact at the Trust (Regional Manager or Mentoring & Learning Manager) or the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Lead, James Lennard.

TRAINING

The Trust will hold its own training materials including a practical example-based webinar, FAQs and signposting to best practice or other resources as necessary. Training materials will be reviewed at least annually.

Volunteers will be expected to view the Trust's webinar as a minimum, and will receive regular updates and reminders.

When a volunteer is working with children and adults at risk of harm, their primary contact at the Trust, in consultation with the DSL, will review the nature of the work and decide if specialist training is required and the frequency or refresher training.

RELATED POLICIES

Please make sure you familiarise yourself with the following related policies:

-  Volunteer Charter (incorporating Volunteer Code of Conduct)
-  Data Protection (Volunteers)

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APPENDIX 1 – NOTIFICATION BY CLIENT CHARITY

Anyone who works in a "specified setting" on a "frequent" or "intensive" basis must be subjected to a basic or enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. "Frequent" means once a week or more (except in health or personal care services where frequent means once a month or more); "intensive" means on four days or more in a single month. Cranfield Trust staff, associates and volunteers will normally meet with their charity clients either at your premises or at another mutually convenient venue, typically for no more than a few days over a period of several months.

A specified setting is one of the following:

- a school exclusively or mainly for the full-time education of children
- an establishment providing nursery education
- childcare premises
- a children's residential home for children in care
- a children's hospital mainly or exclusively for treatment of children
- a children's detention centre
- a children's centre
- a pupil referral unit
- an adult care home
- a further education institution that is wholly or mainly for the provision of full-time education for under-18s

Furthermore, if our volunteer could potentially be involved in "training, teaching, instructing, assisting, advising or guiding" adults at risk (eg if the volunteer would be working with adults at risk on your board of trustees) you must tell us so that we can undertake an appropriate risk assessment and carry out necessary checks.

Please contact the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Lead to indicate whether your organisation is involved in any of the above specified settings. If you are not sure if you are covered, please get in touch to discuss the nature of your work or any concerns you may have.

James Lennard (Designated Safeguarding Lead):

Email: james.lennard@cranfieldtrust.org

Telephone: 07508 418258

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APPENDIX 2: SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR 'VIRTUAL' MEETINGS

Consideration should be given to confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding when volunteers connect with a charity via 'remote' (online) means, eg through a videoconference.

Responsibility for ensuring that the 'virtual meeting' takes place in a secure environment rests with all parties involved in the online contact. The following points should be considered:

-  Do the meeting attendees also include charity beneficiaries or service users, for example if service users are represented on the organisation's board or management committee?
-  Are a charity's beneficiaries observable through a 'webcam', including any background photos? Attendees may wish to consider blurring their webcam background or substituting a safe image if the technology allows
-  Is it possible to verify the identity of 'remote' meeting attendees? It may not be enough to use voice-only communications if there are concerns about the sensitivity of a conversation
-  Is confidential information viewable through a webcam, eg folders in the background displaying the names of staff or beneficiaries? Attendees may wish to consider blurring their webcam background or substituting a safe image if the technology allows
-  Use a headset / microphone wherever possible, especially if confidential matters are to be discussed. Many online meetings may take place in at least one attendee's home and often family members or other occupants could be in the background

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APPENDIX 3 – FLOW CHART FOR REPORTING

