

Safeguarding Policy

Matthew Ryan Second Chance CIC

Effective date: 25 September 2026 **Review date:** 25 September 2027 **Version:** 1.0

Before adoption: Insert the named DSL, deputy, local authority children's safeguarding team, LADO and adult safeguarding contacts. The policy should be approved by the CIC's directors/board and communicated to all staff and volunteers.

1. Purpose and commitment

- Matthew Ryan Second Chance CIC is committed to protecting children, young people and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation and avoidable harm.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Concerns will be taken seriously, acted upon promptly and recorded appropriately.
- The welfare, safety, dignity and voice of the person will be central to safeguarding decisions. Confidentiality cannot be promised where information must be shared to protect someone from harm.

2. Scope

- This policy applies to directors, employees, sessional workers, contractors, consultants, volunteers and anyone acting on behalf of the CIC.
- It covers face-to-face and online work, programme delivery, referrals, partner premises, transport, events, telephone, email, messaging and social media.
- It applies to concerns involving participants, staff, volunteers, contractors, partners and other people who come into contact with the CIC.

3. Safeguarding responsibilities

- **Board/directors:** overall responsibility for appropriate safeguarding arrangements, resources, oversight and risk management.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** receives and coordinates concerns, advises staff, maintains records, liaises with agencies and oversees training.
- **Deputy DSL:** provides cover when the DSL is unavailable.
- **All staff and volunteers:** complete required training, maintain professional boundaries and report concerns immediately.
- **Programme leads:** ensure activities are risk assessed and safeguarding arrangements are understood.

4. Named safeguarding contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** [INSERT NAME AND ROLE]
- **DSL email:** [INSERT EMAIL]
- **DSL telephone:** [INSERT NUMBER]
- **Deputy DSL:** [INSERT NAME AND ROLE]
- **Local authority children's safeguarding team:** [INSERT CONTACT]
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** [INSERT CONTACT]
- **Adult safeguarding team:** [INSERT CONTACT]
- **Emergency services:** 999 where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm.

- **Police:** 101 for non-emergency matters.

5. Who is protected by this policy

- Anyone under 18 is a child for safeguarding purposes.
- The CIC works with young people aged 16–25. Participants aged 18–25 are adults and will generally be supported to make their own decisions.
- Where an adult meets the relevant definition of an adult at risk and there is a concern about abuse or neglect, the CIC will follow applicable law and local authority safeguarding procedures.

6. Types of abuse and harm

- **Physical abuse** – hitting, assault, inappropriate restraint or other physical harm.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse** – threats, humiliation, intimidation, coercion or controlling behaviour.
- **Sexual abuse or exploitation** – unwanted sexual contact, grooming, exploitation or sexualised communication involving a child.
- **Neglect** – persistent failure to meet basic needs or protect someone from foreseeable harm.
- **Financial or material abuse** – theft, fraud or coercion over money or property, particularly relevant to adults at risk.
- **Domestic abuse** – abuse or controlling/coercive behaviour in intimate or family relationships.
- **Criminal or sexual exploitation** – including grooming, trafficking, coercion, county lines or exploitation into criminal activity.
- **Online harm** – grooming, bullying, harassment, exploitation, threats or image-based abuse.
- **Discrimination, bullying or harassment** – harmful or targeted behaviour related to vulnerability or personal characteristics.
- **Radicalisation or extremist exploitation** – concerns that someone is being manipulated, groomed or drawn into harmful extremist activity.

7. Recognising concerns

- Concerns may arise from a disclosure, observed behaviour, injuries, changes in behaviour, online activity, information from a partner agency or another source.
- A person does not need to prove abuse. Staff should report reasonable concerns and allow safeguarding professionals to assess them.
- Staff must not investigate allegations themselves or ask leading questions.

8. Responding to a disclosure or concern

- **Listen calmly** and give the person time to speak.
- **Take the concern seriously** and do not blame or express disbelief.
- **Do not promise secrecy.** Explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe.
- **Ask only necessary open questions**, such as “Can you tell me what happened?”
- **Consider immediate safety.** Contact 999 if there is an immediate risk of serious harm.
- **Report promptly** to the DSL/deputy; urgent concerns must not wait until the next working day.
- **Record facts accurately**, including dates, times, observations and the person's own words where possible.
- **Refer appropriately** to children's social care, adult safeguarding, police or another relevant agency when required.

9. Confidentiality and information sharing

- Safeguarding information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with UK data protection law and relevant safeguarding information-sharing guidance.
- Consent should normally be considered where appropriate, but information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and this is necessary to protect someone or fulfil a safeguarding/legal duty.
- Safeguarding cases must not be discussed casually. Records must be secure and access restricted.

10. Young people aged 16–17

- Anyone under 18 is treated as a child for safeguarding purposes.
- The CIC will provide appropriate supervision, professional boundaries, safe contact arrangements and referral pathways.
- Parents, carers or referring professionals may be involved where appropriate and lawful, taking account of the young person's welfare, wishes and the circumstances.
- Where statutory intervention is required, the CIC will contact the appropriate local authority children's safeguarding service or police.

11. Adults aged 18–25 and adults at risk

- Adults will generally be supported to make their own decisions and choices.
- Where an adult meets the relevant definition of an adult at risk and there is a concern about abuse or neglect, the CIC will follow applicable adult safeguarding law and local procedures.
- The CIC will respect the adult's wishes and autonomy while taking proportionate action where there is serious risk, lack of capacity, a legal duty or another lawful basis for intervention.

12. Allegations about staff or volunteers

- Any allegation that a staff member, volunteer, contractor or other person acting for the CIC may have harmed a child or adult at risk must be reported immediately to the DSL and handled under the appropriate allegations procedure.
- If the allegation concerns the DSL, report it to the director/board safeguarding lead and, where appropriate, the LADO or relevant safeguarding authority.
- The CIC will not conduct an internal investigation that could interfere with a statutory investigation.
- Temporary removal from duties or alternative arrangements may be considered where necessary to protect people or preserve an investigation, subject to applicable employment and legal requirements.

13. Safer recruitment and DBS

- The CIC will use safer recruitment practices appropriate to each role, including suitable applications, interviews, references and identity checks.
- Where eligible, the appropriate DBS check will be obtained and assessed in accordance with applicable law and DBS guidance.
- The CIC will assess whether roles involve regulated activity and will not knowingly allow a barred person to undertake regulated activity.
- Where the legal conditions for a DBS barring referral are met, the CIC will make the required referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

14. Professional boundaries

- Staff and volunteers must maintain clear professional boundaries.

- Personal relationships, favouritism, inappropriate gifts, secret communications, sexualised communication and inappropriate physical contact are prohibited.
- One-to-one contact should, where practicable, take place in a visible or accountable setting.
- Approved organisational communication channels should be used wherever available.

15. Online safeguarding

- The CIC will assess risks associated with video calls, messaging, social media, online groups and digital forms.
- Staff must use approved systems where available, protect passwords/devices and report online safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Potentially illegal or abusive material involving a child must not be copied, forwarded or stored unnecessarily. Relevant evidence should be preserved only where appropriate and in line with DSL/police advice.

16. Risk assessment and programme delivery

- Activities will be risk assessed before delivery and reviewed when circumstances change.
- Risk assessments will consider age, needs, location, staffing, supervision, transport, lone working, online contact, accessibility, emergency arrangements and foreseeable safeguarding risks.
- Partner organisations and venues will be expected to have appropriate safeguarding arrangements where they are responsible for activities.

17. Transport and off-site activities

- Transport and off-site activities will be assessed for supervision, consent, emergency contacts and travel risks.
- Drivers and vehicles used for organisational activities must meet applicable legal, insurance and safeguarding requirements.

18. Whistleblowing

- Anyone may raise a safeguarding concern without fear of retaliation.
- If someone cannot report to the DSL, they should report to another director/board member or the appropriate external safeguarding authority.
- The CIC will not tolerate victimisation of a person who raises a genuine safeguarding concern.

19. Record keeping

- Safeguarding records will be factual, timely, dated and securely stored.
- Records should distinguish facts, direct observations, the person's own words and professional opinion.
- Access will be restricted to people who need the information for safeguarding or lawful organisational purposes.
- Records will be retained in line with the CIC's privacy policy, safeguarding requirements and applicable law.

20. Training and supervision

- All staff and volunteers working with participants will receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role.
- Relevant staff will receive refresher and role-specific training at appropriate intervals.
- The DSL will maintain sufficient knowledge to advise staff and coordinate safeguarding referrals.
- Staff should have access to supervision or management support for complex safeguarding work.

21. Equality, inclusion and voice

- Safeguarding arrangements will be accessible to people with disabilities, communication needs, language barriers or other additional needs.
- The views and wishes of children and adults will be listened to and considered, while recognising that professionals may need to act to protect someone.
- The CIC will not tolerate bullying, harassment or discriminatory treatment.

22. Complaints and safeguarding

- Safeguarding concerns take priority over ordinary complaints procedures where someone may be at risk of harm.
- A complaint containing an allegation of abuse, neglect, exploitation or serious misconduct will be referred to the DSL or appropriate external safeguarding authority.

23. Policy review

- This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, activities or identified risks.
- The CIC will monitor incidents, concerns, training, recruitment checks and lessons learned to improve safeguarding.
- Where required, the CIC will consider notification to relevant regulators, commissioners, funders, insurers or other bodies.

24. Key guidance

- Department for Education: [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (current statutory guidance for England).
- Department for Education: [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), where relevant to work with education settings.
- DBS: [The legal duty to refer to DBS](#).
- Charity Commission: [Safeguarding and protecting people](#).
- The CIC must also follow the safeguarding procedures of each local authority in which it operates.

Emergency: If someone is in immediate danger or there is an immediate risk of serious harm, call 999.