



Policy title:	SAFEGUARDING POLICY
Purpose / scope:	This policy sets out the Ramblers' approach to safeguarding for volunteers, members, staff, supporters, and anyone who attends our events or activities.
Related policies:	Complaints policy Whistleblowing policy Disciplinary policy Grievance policy
Staff policy owner:	Chief People Officer
Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date approved:	December 2025
Next review due:	December 2026
Version:	3
Applies to:	Staff (permanent or temporary), volunteers, members, supporters consultants and all third-party contractors.

Version control

Version	Date	Activity
1	October 2023	Refreshed new policy
2	December 2024	Job titles updated
3	December 2025	Job titles and email links updated

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

Ramblers is committed to following good practice and this includes having clear, consistent policies, procedures, and processes for everyone to follow.

The Ramblers takes its responsibilities for safeguarding extremely seriously. We have a duty of care to our staff, members, volunteers, supporters, and members of the public. We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and accept our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of anyone who attends and participates in our events and activities, in accordance with current legislation.

Scope

This policy aims to provide everyone involved with the Ramblers with the fundamental values that guide our approach to safeguarding. It aims to be proportionate and appropriate to the level of risk involved.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in delivering our charitable aims and goals - volunteers, members, supporters, trustees, board members, staff, consultants and contractors in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Ramblers will only work with partner organisations who adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of safeguarding as set out in this policy.

Our Policy Commitments

The Ramblers have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of mistreatment or abuse.

The Ramblers recognises that within safeguarding guidance and legislation there are identified key principles to follow and embed throughout our working culture. These principles are identified below in this section and are fundamental to underpinning our safeguarding policy commitment.

The Ramblers operates across the three jurisdictions of England, Wales and Scotland and therefore operates under three different sets of legislation and guidance in respect of safeguarding. The working principle is that all Ramblers staff, volunteers, and participants must report the safeguarding concern in accordance with the safeguarding reporting process. It will be the responsibility of the Volunteering Experience Manager and Safeguarding Lead to decide if an additional statutory organisation must also be informed.

Anyone who works to deliver services, on behalf of the Ramblers, is expected to do this in a manner which respects the individuality of each person using the service and treat them and members of the Ramblers respectfully, regardless of protected characteristics. This is regardless of their relationship with the Ramblers.

We are committed to ensuring a continual improvement in safeguarding practice and to support this we have endorsed 6 policy commitments:

1. Promoting a safe and trusted environment and a culture that prioritises safeguarding

All Ramblers staff, volunteers, members, participants, trustees, independent advisors, and partner organisations will respect children and adults at risk and promote their well-being first.

We will promote a fair, open, and positive culture and ensure all involved feel able to, and have the knowledge to, report concerns and allegations, confident that they will be heard and responded to.

We will strive to create and maintain environments which are safe for everyone who encounters the Ramblers. This will be achieved by:

- appropriate staff and volunteer training,
- effective communication,
- review and learning,
- monitoring through effectively implemented quality assurance arrangements that ensure consistency and compliance throughout the organisation.

We will ensure staff, members and volunteers challenge poor practice and report all safeguarding concerns and abuse in accordance with our reporting procedures.

2. Responding promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation

- We will respond appropriately and ensure that the person at risk and/ or their representative is involved from the start of the process, empowering people to make their own decisions around safeguarding.
- Our processes will aim for the person at risk to achieve resolution and recovery.
- All adults, including adults at risk, have a right to make unwise decisions – including the choice not to take action to protect themselves.
- Anyone who reports any safeguarding concerns or allegations to the Ramblers will be treated with respect. All safeguarding concerns and allegations will be dealt with in accordance with statutory child and adult safeguarding guidance and Safeguarding Procedure.
- All staff, members and volunteers will cooperate fully with the statutory authorities in all cases.

3. Treating the victims of abuse and other safeguarding concerns with respect, care, and dignity:

- Whenever a safeguarding concern, including any poor practice issue or allegation of abuse is raised, the Ramblers will offer support to all those that have been affected as appropriate.
- People will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously.
- We will respond to any disclosure of a safeguarding concern, including poor practice or abuse in accordance with our policy and procedure. Where appropriate, this will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies.

4. Treating people who are the subject of concerns or allegations with respect, care, and dignity:

- In responding to safeguarding concerns, or allegations of abuse, we will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal and civil law of an accused person. A presumption of innocence will be maintained during any Rambler's process.

- We will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect people when any person is considered a risk to others through a mitigation process.
- In some circumstances we may have to suspend an individual who is subject to a safeguarding concern. Where this is done it is a neutral act. This will only last as long as it takes for any process to run its course. It is never done as an alternative to expulsion or removing of a member of staff, volunteer, or member.
- In addition, we recognise people who are subject to safeguarding concerns are vulnerable during any internal or statutory agency process. We will take all reasonable steps to support people through this process.

5. We will encourage a culture of learning throughout the organisation

We commit to doing the right thing every time for all the people involved in a safeguarding concern. However, we recognise that processes and outcomes, on occasions, can and must be improved. We commit to being transparent about learning from these situations through a robust and effective quality assurance system and compliance process which is checked through independent scrutiny.

This policy will ensure we put participants first, who all have a right to be safe from inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, or harmful behaviour when using our services or sites.

Good practice, poor practice, and abuse

In this policy and subsequent procedures there are two types of terms used to describe safeguarding issues (these 4 definitions apply to both adult and child safeguarding in England, Wales, and Scotland).

A safeguarding concern:

- is a **concern** about the safety or well-being of a child or adult because of something that has been seen or heard, or information that has been received and it **involves a safeguarding concern with other people not in a position of responsibility with the Ramblers** e.g., if an individual on a walk reports, to the leader, that they are having problems at home with their partner and are afraid to return home or a volunteer/member of staff for the Ramblers reports the same issue.

A safeguarding allegation is:

- an **allegation made about a safeguarding concern against someone who works for or is a member of or volunteer with the Ramblers** or staff/participant from a Ramblers partner organisation. An example of an allegation might include a Ramblers staff member, volunteer or member verbally abusing a participant during their work or belittles a participant due to the participants own disability.
- Poor Practice is where a member of staff or member or volunteer breaks a code of conduct or rule which does not in itself amount to a criminal offence but if not stopped or prevented will allow the person of concern to go onto commit harm.

A person subject of the concern is:

- the person who is the **victim** of the safeguarding concern or allegation.

A person of concern is:

- the person **alleged to have committed** the safeguarding concern or allegation.

Training

Everyone at the Ramblers will have access to the Safeguarding policy and Safeguarding procedure and is expected to follow the policy and procedure across the charity.

All staff and volunteers will undertake mandatory safeguarding awareness training as part of their induction. Staff, volunteers and Trustees who require more in-depth knowledge of their safeguarding responsibilities will receive appropriate and role focussed training.

Roles and Responsibilities

For full details of roles and responsibilities see **Appendix 1**

1. Trustees
2. Safeguarding Trustee
3. Chief People Officer
4. People and Culture Committee
5. Volunteer Experience Manager, Resolutions Manager, Safeguarding Lead
6. Staff and Volunteers

Legislation

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within the GB legislation and Government guidance, taking the following into consideration:

England

- Care Act, 2014
- Care and Support statutory guidance, 2016
- Children's Act 1989
- Children's Act 2004
- Children and Families Act, 2014
- Children and Social Work Act, 2017
- Education Act 2002
- Education Act 2011
- Equalities Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018
- Mental Capacity Act, 2005
- Safeguarding disabled children practice guidance, 2009
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006
- SEND code of practice, 2014
- Working Together to safeguard children, 2018

Scotland

UNCRC

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation)(Scotland) Bill (passed 16 March 2021 and due to come into force six months after Royal Assent)

Legislation defining certain offences against children

- Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, section 12
- Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005

- Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Act 2020
- Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015
- Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Legislation on managing adults who may pose a risk to children**
- Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001
- Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016

Legislation on criminal proceedings and witness supports

- Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995
- Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014
- Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019
- Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Act 2021

Additional legislation

- Children (Scotland) Act 2020
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Anti-social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
- Equality Act 2010
- The Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/Data

Wales

- Children's Act, 1989
- Children's Act, 2004
- Children and Social Work Act, 2017
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act, 2014
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act -Working together to safeguard people, volume 1, 2016
- All Wales Child Protection procedures, 2008
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006
- Mental Capacity Act, 2005

Definitions

Safeguarding Adults

'Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.' (Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018 s.14.7).

Adult In England and Wales this is anyone aged 18 or over. This is normally the case in Scotland but in some cases an adult may be someone aged 16 or 17.

Adult at risk is a person aged 18 (except where identified above) or over who has care and support needs, is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk of abuse or neglect.

Adult at risk

In England, and Wales an adult at risk is defined as a person over the age of 18 who:

- 'Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- 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.' (Care Act 2004, section 42).

In Scotland, an adult at risk is defined as a person over the age of 16 whom:

- 'Are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights and or other interest,
- Are at risk of harm, and
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.' (Adult Support and Protection (Act) 2007, S.3(1)).

Child

In England, and Wales a child is defined as 'any person under the age of 18, whether living with their families, in state care or living independently'. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, p.7).

In Scotland, 'a child is generally defined as any person under the age of 18'. However, there may be circumstances where people aged 16 and 17 years are classed as adults and advice should be taken on a case-by-case basis on which laws apply in Scotland. (National guidance for child protection in Scotland, 2014).

Safeguarding Children

- 'Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment;'
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- 'Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes' (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

Further information

Related policies, procedures and supporting information are available. These policies are:

- Complaints policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Grievance policy
- Volunteering policy

These can be found on the intranet. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding procedure this can be found in the [safeguarding document library](https://ramblers.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000.fl5msdGor8/Safeguarding) (<https://ramblers.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000.fl5msdGor8/Safeguarding>) in the volunteer document library.

Review cycle

This policy is due for review by the People and Culture Committee every 12 months or following any legislative changes, whichever comes first.

Appendix 1

Responsibilities

Trustees

- There is a clear line of responsibility for and reporting to those safeguarding matters.
- That safeguarding practice complies with statutory and national guidance, and local best practice.
- The safeguarding policy and practice guidance is accessible to people both internally and externally to the Ramblers.
- The reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations are implemented consistently, efficiently, and effectively.
- Clear roles and responsibilities are explicitly outlined and clear for staff, volunteers, trustees, and participants.
- Any failures by any person connected with the Ramblers to follow the safeguarding policy and procedures will be dealt with as a serious matter.
- There is a culture of learning from poor practice.
- Safeguarding people from harm is central to our culture.
- Adequate resources are available, including trained staff and volunteers for safeguarding and protecting people.
- Clear arrangements for support and/or supervision for staff, volunteers, trustees, and participants.
- Effective and ongoing appropriate safeguarding training for all the Ramblers staff, volunteers, trustees, and participants is provided.
- Ongoing and effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners
- Complaints and whistleblowing procedures are well publicised.
- Effective information sharing with all statutory and voluntary partners.
- Effective and accurate record keeping in accordance with GDPR 2018, and serious incidents are reported to the Charity Commission in accordance with their statutory obligations periodic review of safeguarding policy, procedures, and practice.

People and Culture Committee (PCC)

- Assurance that safeguarding of all the adults and children the Ramblers support in our activities is a priority.
- Assurance and scrutiny of safeguarding performance and risk for the Ramblers activities.
- Compliance with all Charity and safeguarding legislation.
- Development and implementation of action plans to address charity and safeguarding changes.
- Support to all areas of activities provided by the Ramblers.
- All activities shall, always, be delivered within the law, including such relevant government regulations as may be issued from time to time and while, the Ramblers Board of trustees have ultimate responsibility for such compliance

and will require the Chair of the PCC to ensure this, the Committee members shall use their best endeavours to monitor that this is so.

- The PCC will be accountable to the Board through minutes, recommendations, and specific reports, as necessary.
- The PCC shall take decisions and provide recommendations and assurances to the Board on matters covered by its role and responsibilities.

Lead Safeguarding Trustee

- To ensure the Ramblers policy and procedures are effective and in line with all national legislation and guidance.
- To ensure that the Ramblers has created the right culture which ensures that safeguarding is at the forefront of activities and that participants feel confident and safe when with the Ramblers staff and volunteers.
- To ensure the Ramblers is an organisation which is open and willing to learn and improve its safeguarding responses, management, and governance.

Chief People Officer

- Ensuring the Ramblers is a safe organisation for everyone.
- Ensures they have an oversight of all the Ramblers operational and strategic plans meet its safeguarding responsibilities.
- They and the executive teamwork with and support all the Ramblers safeguarding leads including the Safeguarding Lead Trustee.
- Ensures that all safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with national legislation, guidance and the Ramblers policies and procedures.
- Ensures the reputational safeguarding risks are managed in an open and transparent manner to ensure full accountability is held at all levels of the Ramblers.
- Support the People and Culture committee.

Safeguarding Lead

- To develop, implement, deliver, and evaluate a clear strategy for safeguarding throughout the Ramblers, ensuring safeguarding sits at the heart of all the Ramblers does and that all volunteers, and staff have a voice.
- To assist the People and Culture Committee in developing strong safeguarding governance mechanisms based on best practice in the sector and to provide assurance to the Boards on the quality and delivery of safeguarding practice in the Ramblers.
- To identify, report and action any serious adverse incidents which relate to safeguarding to the Chief People Officer.
- To play a pivotal role in creating a culture across the organisation which ensures that safeguarding is at the heart of all practice.
- To develop, review and manage the Ramblers safeguarding risk register.
- To oversee and develop the system to ensure that participants and staff feel empowered to raise any safeguarding concerns that they might have with the confidence that they will be listened to and handled appropriately and proportionately.
- To be responsible for the review, development and implementation of safeguarding policies and practices across the organisation.

- To ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and supported to effectively implement and manage safeguarding practice across the organisation.
- To ensure the necessary processes are established and embedded so that participants are aware of safeguarding policies and protocols, and the process for raising any concerns.
- To act as the principal point of contact for the Ramblers with statutory agencies including the Police and Social Services in all matters relating to safeguarding allegations and concerns.
- To liaise with other professionals to ensure that the Ramblers contributes to inter-agency procedures and to ensure the Ramblers are aware of and adhere to all agreed inter-agency procedures.
- To advise and agree with the Nations Safeguarding Managers on next steps for all safeguarding concerns and allegations.
- To produce regular safeguarding reports for consideration by the People and Culture Committee, Executive Leadership Team, or Board.
- To ensure detailed, accurate and secure written records of concerns and allegations are kept by the Nations Safeguarding Managers.
- To encourage and develop a culture of listening to children and adults who are vulnerable.
- To create, review, develop and implement an effective safeguarding training programme to ensure competent and confident staff teams to deliver our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- To work closely with managers of the activities to develop educational sessions for participants to promote an awareness of safeguarding and a confidence in the processes available.
- To ensure that the Ramblers keeps and maintains accurate records of staff and volunteer training on safeguarding.
- To make sure that responsibility for safeguarding is clearly defined in all job descriptions.
- To agree any safeguarding investigation terms of reference with Chief People Officer.
- To agree an investigator of any safeguarding with the Chief People Officer.
- To receive and ensure all safeguarding concerns or allegations are dealt with in accordance with this policy and procedures and their Nations legislation and guidance.
- To support staff or volunteers in reviewing safeguarding concerns and allegations and agree next steps.
- After consultation with the Chief People Officer if so directed to ensure notification of any safeguarding concerns or allegations are sent to the relevant statutory agencies.
- To act on all reported safeguarding concerns and allegations of children and adults at risk.
- To ensure all concerns or allegations are recorded on the Ramblers systems.
- To ensure confirmation of receipt is received from any statutory agency of any safeguarding concerns or allegations. .
- When statutory agencies are not investigating a safeguarding allegation, to agree any safeguarding investigation terms of reference with the Chief People Officer.

- When statutory agencies are not investigating a safeguarding allegation to agree an investigator of any safeguarding investigation with the Chief People Officer.
- To oversee any safeguarding investigation and regularly report to the Head of People
- To provide governance data to the Chief People Officer.