



Tel: 0141 954 7554

Web: www.linkes.org.uk

Email: contact@linkes.org.uk

Registered Charity Number SC037175

Community Rooms, 200 Lincoln Avenue, Glasgow, G13 3PP

Safeguarding and welfare for adults policy

Reviewed September 2024

A: Introduction

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. At Linkes we understand this to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that may arise from coming into contact with our staff or our services.

This policy applies to all Linkes staff and the Board of Trustees, volunteers, partners or anyone else working on behalf of Linkes.

This policy is concerned with our commitment and approaches to safeguarding adults at risk of harm. For information on our approach to safeguarding for Children and Young People please see our Child Protection Policy.

An adult at risk is defined in the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 as anyone over 16 who:

- Are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests
- Are at risk from harm
- Because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected

An adult is at risk for the purposes above if:

- Another person's conduct is causing or is likely to cause the adult to be harmed,
- or

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- The adult is engaging in (or is likely to engage in) conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm

This policy recognises that young people aged between 16 and 18 years can be considered both adults and children.

Linkes is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of everyone the charity interacts with and as such our approach can be summarised under three headings:

- 1) Safeguarding people engaging with our services
- 2) Ensuring the welfare of people employed by us, including staff and volunteers
- 3) Safeguarding in partnership – how we ensure best safeguarding practice with organisations whom we either co-deliver programmes and opportunities with or fund to deliver events and activities as part of Linkes services.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Setting policy

Linkes's Board of Trustees and the Senior Community Development Worker are responsible for ensuring an appropriate adult safeguarding policy is in place and staff are briefed in the use of the policy. The policy is regularly reviewed annually by the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer to ensure it is up to date and compliant with current legislation and best practice.

2. Accountability and responsibility for this policy

Accountability for this policy rests with the Senior Community Development Worker; however all employees, partners and volunteers have a duty to know what action to take if they are concerned that an adult is at risk.

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Safeguarding will be a standing item on management and board meetings to ensure that new projects are discussed and any arising measures/project parameters are agreed before the activity is carried out.

3. Lead Officers

Linkes has a Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer to whom staff can refer any concerns or issues regarding adult safeguarding or discuss and seek guidance on adult safeguarding more generally. The contact details are as follows:

Rachel Ferguson, Senior Community Development Worker (Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer)

Elaine Connelly, Senior Community Development Worker (Deputy Adult Safeguarding Officer)

C. Context

The activities carried out by Linkes means that a range of employees, volunteers and supported partners may come into contact with adults who are at risk.

1. Safeguarding people engaging with our services

Linkes services should ensure:

- Safety is promoted at all times
- Ensure that adults at risk have as much choice and control over their participation in our services as possible
- Focus on improving outcomes for the person concerned
- Balance the promotion of safety and informed decision making with respecting the views and wishes of the individual
- Signpost accessible information and support about how to stay safe and how to raise a concern

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- Consider that adults come from a diverse range of backgrounds and some may be sensitive to certain issues and situations

2. Ensuring the welfare of people employed by us – staff and volunteers

Linkes has a responsibility to ensure that employees and volunteers are:

- Supported (through Linkes guide materials and/or training) to establish professional boundaries for themselves and participants
- Able to access support immediately following any activity to discuss any concerns around disclosure
- Aware of safeguarding policy and their responsibilities and clear about procedures, appropriate channels and available support for raising any safeguarding concern
- Provided with appropriate time to plan and debrief sessions – particularly with staff from Linkes and any partner organisations
- Aware of procedures and support for lone working

3. Partnership working

Linkes sometimes works with partners in active joint delivery of services, where the partner organisation brings the expertise to support those using Linkes services. This work will take the form of co-planned and delivered programmes of work. Linkes will agree with partners how safeguarding policy will be incorporated into the service as part of the planning process.

D. Policy Statement

Linkes's adult safeguarding and welfare policy document is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of all people engaging in our services is paramount and the best interests of adults at risk must always be the primary consideration.

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- All adults at risk should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect
- All people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- All adults at risk have a right to express their views on matters that affect them
- Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and to exercise informed consent. 'I am asked what I want as the outcomes of the safeguarding process.'
- Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- Proportionality – making the response appropriate to the risk
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need
- Partnership – finding solutions through partnership with organisations supporting an individual and working in their communities
- Accountability and transparency

Linkes will:

- Value, respect and listen to people participating in our services
- Appoint a Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer, to uphold this policy and to give staff and volunteers the appropriate support to be able to put it into practice
- Maintain an open and supportive organisational culture where staff can discuss any concerns or issues around adult safeguarding with their colleagues, manager or the Adult Safeguarding Officer
- Take seriously any concerns over an adult at risk's safety or welfare and take appropriate action as soon as possible
- Adopt adult safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Provide effective management and support of staff and volunteers through appropriate training, support and quality assurance measures
- Ensure safeguarding is a core part of all service planning meetings and ongoing staff meetings

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- Ensure that all partners working with Linkes are issued with this policy in advance of work beginning
- Assess each service to determine whether basic or enhanced PVG is required for those delivering and obtain the requisite PVG accordingly
- Recruit staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are carried out
- Record and store personal information securely – according to GDPR standards
- Use our adult safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with any agencies who need to know, and involving adults at risk, and, as they wish and with their consent, those in their support network which could be family, carers or friends.
- Use our adult safeguarding procedures to appropriately manage any allegations against staff or volunteers
- Create and maintain an anti-bullying environment
- Ensure we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensure we provide a safe physical environment for participants, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures and risk assessments in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Provide a Linkes contact whenever activities are taking place, including out of office hours, to provide advice and support on safeguarding issues.
- Use risk assessments to ensure that where potential risk to an individual is identified, appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate such a risk
- Agree with partners how to manage safeguarding jointly during the project. This may include:
 - Provide a copy of our safeguarding policy and request a copy of the partner's safeguarding policies
 - Agreeing reporting procedures, including named points of contact in each organisation (as per safeguarding policies)
 - Setting regular safeguarding meetings to review process
 - Signpost to safeguarding legislation and expertise/training
 - Require partners to have a safeguarding policy in place with PVG certificates received for all relevant personnel

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E. Disclosures of harm

Recognising abuse and harm

The following summary outlines the key areas of abuse and harm that adults at risk may be subject to.

- **Physical abuse** is deliberately hurting a person causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.
- **Neglect** is the ongoing failure to provide the amount and type of care that a reasonable person may be expected to provide. It can be the intentional or unintentional failure to provide medical, social or educational needs. It is withholding necessities such as food, drink, warmth and a lack of protection from hazards.
- **Sexual abuse** is when a person is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact and it can happen online.
- **Psychological or emotional harm** is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a person. It can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a person or isolating, controlling, harassing, intimidating, coercing or ignoring them. It can happen online and includes cyber bullying.
- **Financial harm** is when someone prevents a person from having control over their own finances in order to exert control over that person. Financial harm can involve the theft of money or material belongings, the fraudulent use of money or belongings, coercion and undue influence to relinquish money or property; it can also involve the improper use of a legal authority, such as a Power of Attorney.
- **Self harm** is when a person is neglecting to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings. It might include hoarding.

Who can be abusers?

Anyone

Where can abuse happen?

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Anywhere, including online.

You can find more detail on the [types and indicators of abuse](#).

F. Noting and sharing a concern

It can be very hard for an adult at risk to speak out about abuse. Often they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what's happening or has happened to them. It is vital therefore that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they've been told.

Even if an adult at risk doesn't tell someone verbally about what's happened to them, there may be other indicators that something is wrong. These could include subdued or changed behavior, uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction, unkempt appearance, frequent injuries, bruising, signs of malnutrition.

General

In the course of our work, it is important to maintain an open and supportive culture around safeguarding adults at risk with Linkes staff, our partners and the communities we work with. Therefore, we should communicate any concerns about an adult at risk as soon as we become aware of it.

Staff members and volunteers should never be alone with adults at risk or in sole charge; other partners, volunteers and staff should always be present when interacting with adults using Linkes services.

Standard practice for all our services is that work carried out is always done alongside another staff member, volunteer or partner organisation. If this is not possible for any reason, it must be discussed and agreed in advance with either the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Adult Safeguarding Officer or your line manager. Our lone working policy should be followed and safety protocols should be followed.

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If a staff member or volunteer has a concern that a vulnerable person is at risk of harm or experiencing abuse, they should follow Linkes procedure, which requires that they should speak to the named safeguarding contact within any partner organisation that we may be working with, as well as Linkes Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer. All concerns reported by Linkes will be recorded; including who was informed at a partner organisation, what steps were agreed, and if the decision was made that no further action was needed or that it should be escalated to relevant agencies. If staff or volunteers need adult safeguarding advice, they should contact their line manager, or the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer by phone.

Risk

Safeguarding considerations should inform all risk assessments for all activities delivered in whole or in part by Linkes.

Dealing with disclosure

Staff or volunteers may have information shared with them about instances where people using our services have experienced a range of harm or abuse. If an adult at risk makes a disclosure of abuse or harm to you:

- Listen carefully to what the person tells you, stay calm, get as clear a picture as you can, but avoid too many questions at this stage
- Assure them that the matter will be taken seriously
- Do not give promises of confidentiality, but do reassure them that the matter will only be discussed with those who need to know about it
- Ask the person what they would like to happen
- Explain that you have a duty to tell your manager or other designated person in any partner organisation and that information may need to be shared with others who could have a part to play in protecting them
- If they have specific communication needs, provide support and information in an appropriate way

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- Don't judge or jump to conclusions
- Report concerns to your manager or Safeguarding lead in line with agreed safeguarding procedures
- Make a record of the concern and the action taken

Recording incidents

Any adult safeguarding concern should be recorded by the staff member or volunteer as soon as possible following the awareness or disclosure. In the first instance, this can be in the form of a confidential written note which can then be used to write up a fuller formal report where necessary.

The following key information should be noted:

- The date and time of the incident or concern arising
- The setting and/or circumstances
- Who else was present
- The nature of the concern or disclosure
- A note of the actual words spoken by the vulnerable adult about the incident or issue
- Who the information was shared with
- What action was taken

The Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer will review this, confirm any further action required and make a note of it. If the situation merits, this information can also be passed on to the lead safeguarding contact for any partner organisation or any other agency which becomes involved.

However, if the situation is urgent and the adult's safety is in immediate danger, the staff member should call the local authority Social Services duty officer, the police or the

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emergency services, whichever is appropriate to the nature of the risk. The Social Work contacts are as follows:

Address

Social Care Direct,

Glasgow City Council,

PO Box 26845,

GLASGOW

Telephone

0141 287 0555

Out of hours telephone

0300 343 1505

Email

socialcaredirect@glasgow.gov.uk

The information should be stored securely, in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, and signed off by the staff member as an accurate record.

If merited, the incident will also be reported to the Board under the Significant Incident Reporting system.

Confidentiality

Notwithstanding the need to report concerns as soon as possible to the relevant named/responsible adult and/or the staff member's line manager/Designated Adult

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Safeguarding Officer, it is important that in the course of reporting such concerns, confidentiality is managed internally and we should not involve other staff unnecessarily. Any decision to share information related to these concerns beyond the responsible adult/named person should be taken in consultation with the line manager or Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer, unless the situation is urgent, is an emergency or a person is at risk of serious harm, in which case other agencies should be alerted as appropriate.

Concerns about staff or volunteers

If staff have concerns about the behaviour of/need to pass on allegations about another member of staff, volunteer or partner working on our behalf, they should speak to the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer.

If staff have concerns about the behaviour of the Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer, they should speak to the Senior Manager

E. Further support

[Helpful organisations recommended by Act Against Harm](#)
(this link will open in a new window)

[Samaritans](#)
(this link will open in a new window)

[Citizens Advice](#)
(this link will open in a new window)

F. Risk assessment and general good practice

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When planning and delivering services involving adults, and particularly adults at risk, the following general rules should help to provide a supportive and safe environment for staff and participating adults:

- Before services begin, or following regular review, complete a risk assessment and have it signed off by the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- When working in partnership, hold at least one meeting prior to services commencing that includes Linkes staff, partner organisation staff and any volunteers involved, focussed on safeguarding. In that meeting you should:
 - Share safeguarding policies and identify any situations where those policies may differ – agree the importance of monitoring safeguarding to our standards
 - Establish which organisation is the safeguarding lead (if you are working with an organisation that works with the participant's regularly and therefore has built a higher level of trust and expertise it is most appropriate that they should be the safeguarding lead)
 - Agree who has what safeguarding responsibilities
 - Agree any required protocols around safeguarding for shared working – including regular safeguarding meetings, how to progress any report of disclosure, delivery parameters in terms of number of staff/volunteers in place for each service, how to set a safe space for each service, and how to debrief, if necessary, following each engagement.
- While planning any project, risk assess your activities and the environment from a participant's perspective, as well as your own. Every risk assessment must be signed off by the Safeguarding Officer
- Model good behaviour, maintain appropriate boundaries. This includes not making contact with an adult at risk outside organised sessions, unless for the specific purpose of making practical arrangements for their participation.
- Respect the agency and expressions of all participants whilst also establishing, together with participants, the boundaries and expected behaviours necessary to ensure that all participants feel safe and respected .

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G. Recruitment and Disclosure Scotland

An important element of Safeguarding and welfare for adults policy is to recruit appropriately trained and experienced staff into post. Please see our Safer Recruitment Policy for more information. All staff who, through their work with Linkes, have access to adults at risk in any form (e.g. face to face, telephone or online) must have basic clearance from Disclosure Scotland.

Linkes annual appraisal process checks whether there is any change to the nature of a staff member's role which requires a new disclosure or a higher level of disclosure i.e. membership of the PVG scheme.

The Senior Manager is responsible for ensuring the appropriate disclosure checks/memberships are made prior to appointment and reviewed at the three year anniversary.

Line managers are responsible for checking annually during the appraisal process that the Disclosure level is appropriate and in place before signing off the appraisal.

H. Allegations of abuse made against Linkes employees and volunteers

Where a Linkes employee or volunteer is alleged to have abused someone, the following procedures **must** be followed.

The employee or volunteer's supervisor must discuss the allegation with the Safeguarding officer and, where relevant, the appropriate partner organisation and on the safeguarding team's recommendation agree:

- Whether the allegation needs to be reported to the police
- Whether the employee or volunteer is able to continue in their normal duties or whether adjustments should be made to their work to protect them and/or others

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Adjustments may include:

- Changing their role to temporarily remove them from having direct contact with members of the public
- Temporarily suspending them from work, either on full pay, or with payment of any agreed fee for sessions missed

Making an adjustment to a role does not in any way imply guilt. It is purely an action designed to allow an investigation to be carried out as quickly as possible while minimising risk.

All employees and volunteers who are alleged to have abused someone will be offered appropriate support until any investigation, internal and/or external is concluded.

All allegations will be looked into and as a minimum will involve an initial process to establish the facts and whether a formal investigation is warranted. The statutory authorities have thresholds which must be met before an alleged offence will be investigated by them and therefore not all allegations will be forwarded to the relevant authority for investigation. In all cases however, the safeguarding officer will be involved from the outset.

Following on from any external involvement, a formal internal process will be carried out under the disciplinary policy for employees and the code of conduct for volunteers.

The Senior Manager will advise on this process and on an appropriate person to carry it out

I. Training

Line managers must ensure that all staff who work with or come into contact with Adults at risk of harm as part of their role at Linkes have attended adult safeguarding training.

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Linkes nominates a Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Adult Safeguarding Officer who is required to complete safeguarding training or a refresher course. Refresher training should be undertaken where changes to legislation occur but at least every three years.

The Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer will hold workshops or one-to-one sessions as required to ensure new staff, or staff new to a post, where working with adults at risk is a significant part of their role are confident they understand the Safeguarding and Welfare for Adults Policy and know how to implement it.

The Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Designated Adult Safeguarding Officer will monitor through newsletters and other networking channels any changes to legislation and best practice and ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare for Adults Policy is kept up-to-date. Changes to the Safeguarding and Welfare for Adults Policy will be flagged to staff and relevant training given if the changes are significant.

Appendix 1

Legal framework and link to other Linkes policies

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect adults as risk of harm in Scotland:

- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- Data Protection Act 2019

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Other Linkes policies and procedures connected to adult safeguarding are:

- Child Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy (including Disclosure Scotland processes)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy (including Data Sharing)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Email, Internet and Social Networking Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Significant Incident Reporting

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