



CIO No: 1205090

Cockermouth Emergency Response Group (CERG)

Safeguarding Policy

September 2024

Purpose

Our Charitable activities include working with vulnerable people. The purpose of this policy is to protect them and all our volunteers and stakeholders. To provide public and stakeholders with the overarching principles that guide our approach in doing so.

Lead Trustee

A lead trustee will be appointed to provide oversight of safeguarding and lead on any incident investigation and reporting.

The lead trustee shall be Mr. Brian Mitchelhill,

Applicability

This policy applies to anyone working on our behalf, including our trustees, Operations team and other volunteers. This policy shall also apply to any beneficiaries (e.g. householders and business partners).

Partner organisations will be required to have their own safeguarding procedures that must, as a minimum, meet the standards outlined below, and include any additional legal or regulatory requirements specific to their work. These include, but are not limited, to other UK regulators if applicable.

Safeguarding should be appropriately reflected in other relevant policies and procedures.

Principles

We believe that:

- No individuals involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
- We all have responsibility to promote the welfare of all our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.

- We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe but also to speak up if they have any concerns.

Types of abuse:

Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, psychological or emotional, financial, sexual or institutional abuse, including neglect and exploitation. Signs that may indicate the different types of abuse are in Appendix 1.

Reporting concerns

If a crime is in progress, or an individual is in immediate danger, call the police as you would in any other circumstances.

If you are a beneficiary, or member of the public, make your concerns known to the team leader or administrator.

For members of the charity, make your concerns known to the team leader or administrator. If you feel unable to do so, speak to a trustee.

The trustees are mindful of their reporting obligations to the Charity Commission in respect of Serious Incident Reporting, and, if applicable, other regulators. They are aware of the Government guidance on handling safeguarding allegations.

Responsibilities

Trustees. This safeguarding shall be reviewed and approved by the board annually.

Trustees are aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on safeguarding and protecting people and also the 10 actions trustee boards need to take to ensure good safeguarding governance.

(see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756636/10_safeguarding_actions_for_charity_trustees_infographic.pdf)

A lead trustee/committee will be given responsibility for the oversight of all aspects of safety, including whistleblowing and H&SW. This will include:

- Leading the organisation in creating a culture of respect, in which everyone feels safe and able to speak
- An annual review of our safeguarding policy by the board of trustees.
- Receiving regular reports to ensure this and related policies are being applied consistently, providing oversight of any lapses in safeguarding matters.

- Ensuring that any issues are properly recorded contemporaneously and any reporting to the police/statutory authorities is carried out.
- Ensuring safeguarding risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks as part of our risk management processes. A Safeguarding risk assessment will be created and reviewed on an annual basis.
- All Trustees are to have DBS checks.
- Ensuring that all relevant checks are carried out in recruiting staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring programmes and activities such as events and training exercises take into account potential safeguarding training that are identified, including the level of DBS and any training required.
- Ensuring that a register is maintained by the Safeguarding Lead Trustee at their home address. This should be subject to regular monitoring to ensure that DBS clearances and training are kept up to date.
- Ensuring that safeguarding requirements (e.g. DBS) and responsibilities are reflected in job descriptions, appraisal objectives and personal development plans as appropriate.

(Trustee discussion – who needs a job description – who gets appraised – what our personal development protocols?)

- Listening and engaging beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and others and involving them as appropriate
- Responding to any concerns sensitively and acting quickly to address these.
- Ensuring that personal data is stored and managed in a safe way that is compliant with the Data Protection Act (DPA), including valid consent to use an imager or video.
- Ensure that in person volunteer training covers all aspects of safeguarding. This shall be offered at least every two years. This will be incorporated into the volunteer induction documents that everyone receives upon registering as a volunteer with CERG.
- Making staff, volunteers and others aware of:
 - Our safeguarding procedures and their specific safeguarding responsibilities on induction, with regular updates/reminders as necessary
 - The signs of potential abuse and how to report these.
 - Making sure all volunteers, staff and others working on our behalf are aware of our confidentiality policy

- Ensuring volunteers operate paired working and maintain line of sight
- Our procedures, undertake any necessary training and be aware of the risks and signs of potential abuse and how to report these immediately.
- Be respectful of an individual's personal space and avoid unnecessary physical contact such as hugging or touching

Training

Consists of specific training meetings or at team briefings. Trustees and Ops Team staff will complete Safeguarding training annually. Each volunteer will be encouraged to have Safeguarding training at least once every year and always prior to each emergency event. Emergency event training would consist of a synopsis of this document with key points highlighted. This is an A4 sheet (Appendix 2) of the key points. During and emergency event volunteers will be required to sign to state they have read and understood Appendix 2.

Fundraising

We will ensure that:

- We will comply with the code of Fundraising practise including fundraising that involves children.
- Staff and volunteers are made aware of the Institute of Fundraising guidance on keeping fundraising safe, and the NVCO guidance on vulnerable people and fundraising.
- Our Fundraising material is accessible, clear and ethical, including no placing any undue pressure on individuals to donate.
- We do not either solicit or accept donations from anyone whom we know or suspect may not be competent to make their own decisions.
- We are sensitive to any particular needs that a donor may have.

Online safety

We will identify and manage on line risks by ensuring:

- Volunteers, staff and volunteers understand how to keep themselves safe online. We use high privacy settings and password access to meetings to support this.
- The online services we provide are suitable for all our users. For example, we may use age restrictions and offer password protection to help keep people safe.
- The services we use and/or provide are safe and in line with our code of conduct

- We protect people's personal data and follow DPA legislation
- We have permission to display any images on our website and social media accounts, including consent from an individual/parent etc.
- We clearly explain how users can report on line concerns. Concerns may reported using this policy, or direct to a social media provider using their reporting processes.
- Photography

Working with other organisations

In working with other organisations, including any grant making, we will comply with the Charity Commission Guidance by carrying out relevant due diligence and having a written agreement that set out our relationship with them, the role of each organisation and their monitoring and reporting arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed as part of any safeguarding incident investigation to test that it has been complied with and to see if any improvements might realistically be made to it.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	Feb 23	Initial draft approved	Annually
2.0	Board	Sept 24	Purpose, Training, DBS clarification, 1:1 working	Annually

Statutory Guidance

[Gov.UK – The role of other agencies in safeguarding](#)

[CC: Infographic; 10 actions trustees need to take.](#)

[CC: Safeguarding duties of charity trustees](#)

[CC: Safeguarding - policies and procedures](#)

[CC: How to protect vulnerable groups](#)

[CC: Managing online risk.](#)

Useful Links

[NCVO: Online safeguarding resources.](#)

[NSPCC: Writing a safeguarding policy](#)

Appendix 1 – Signs of Abuse

Physical Abuse.

- bruises, black eyes, welts, lacerations, and rope marks.
- broken bones.
- open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing.
- broken eyeglasses/frames, or any physical signs of being punished or restrained.
- laboratory findings of either an overdose or under dose medications.
- individual's report being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated.
- vulnerable adult's sudden change in behaviour.
- the caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to see a vulnerable adult alone.

Sexual Abuse.

- bruises around the breasts or genital area.
- unexplained venereal disease or genital infections.
- unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding.
- torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- an individual's report of being sexually assaulted or raped.

Mental Mistreatment/Emotional Abuse.

- being emotionally upset or agitated.
- being extremely withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive.
- nervousness around certain people.
- an individual's report of being verbally or mentally mistreated.

Neglect.

- dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores and poor personal hygiene.
- unattended or untreated health problems.
- hazardous or unsafe living condition (e.g., improper wiring, no heat or running water).
- unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g., dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, faecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing).
- an individual's report of being mistreated.

Self-Neglect.

- dehydration, malnutrition, untreated or improperly attended medical conditions, and poor personal hygiene.
- hazardous or unsafe living conditions.

- unsanitary or unclean living quarters (e.g., animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet, faecal or urine smell).
- inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of the necessary medical aids.
- grossly inadequate housing or homelessness.
- inadequate medical care, not taking prescribed medications properly.

Exploitation.

- sudden changes in bank account or banking practice, including an unexplained withdrawal of large sums of money.
- adding additional names on bank signature cards.
- unauthorized withdrawal of funds using an ATM card.
- abrupt changes in a will or other financial documents.
- unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions.
- bills unpaid despite the money being available to pay them.
- forging a signature on financial transactions or for the titles of possessions.
- sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming rights to a vulnerable adult's possessions.
- unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family.
- providing services that are not necessary.
- individual's report of exploitation.

Appendix 2

Cockermouth Emergency Response Group (CERG) **Safeguarding Synopsis**

Purpose

Our Charitable activities include working with vulnerable people. The purpose of the Safeguarding policy is to protect them and all our volunteers and stakeholders. To provide public and stakeholders with the overarching principles that guide our approach in doing so.

Lead Trustee

The lead trustee provides oversight of safeguarding and lead on any incident investigation and reporting.

Lead Safeguarding Trustee is Mr Brian Mitchelhill, 07800 6133122

Principles

- No individual involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
- We all have responsibility to promote the welfare of all our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe but also to speak up if they have any concerns.

Key Points

- If a crime is taking place or someone is in immediate danger, call the police
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Lead Safeguarding Trustee or their deputy.
- Ensure you adhere to risk assessments and take action to minimise risk to yourself and others
- Photographs and videos of individuals should not be taken
- Maintain professionalism and confidentiality with colleagues and when assisting members of the public
- Be respectful of an individual's personal space and avoid unnecessary physical contact
- Paired working is essential for volunteers and you should maintain line of sight with colleague

Please sign and date to state you have read and understood Appendix 2.

Printed _____ Signed _____ Date _____