Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

RDA UK is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, who engage with RDA UK activities. Their safety shall be regarded as a fundamental and overriding priority in all aspects of the organisation's operations, policies and decision-making processes.

Reporting a Safeguarding Incident

If a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger – DO NOT DELAY – call the Police on 999.

If you have a concern about the welfare of a child or adult at risk and they are not in immediate risk of harm, or you need some guidance, you should contact:

1. The Group Safeguarding Officer at the relevant RDA Group. Contact details for groups are available on the RDA Website.
2. If you cannot contact the Group Safeguarding Officer, contact The RDA UK Safeguarding Team via Email: safeguarding@rda.org.uk or phone: 01926 492915. The phone line will be available during office hours only: 09:00 – 17:00 Monday- Friday, 09:00 – 16:00 on Friday.

Policy Control Sheet

Document Management	
Document Name	RDA UK Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy
Version	V3
Author	Lee Heard
Approver (Group or Individual)	RDA UK Board of Trustees
Date Approved	September 2026
Circulation (Who is the document issued to?)	RDA UK Groups and Group Safeguarding Officers
Review Frequency	Annual
Review Date	September 2027

Group Management	
Adopted by Group (Date)	May 2026

Change Control		
Version Number	**Revision**	**Date**
2	Document reviewed by RDA UK Safeguarding Officer	April 2026
3	Document signed off by RDA UK Trustee Board	September 2026

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Section 1: Safeguarding and Our Duty of Care

This Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with the primary policies and procedures:

1. Safer Recruitment Practices (Section 2)
2. Managing Concerns (Section 3)
3. Whistleblowing Policy
4. Complaints Procedure
5. GDPR Policy
6. Equality & Diversity Policy and Statement

All documents are available on RDA's internal communication platform, MyRDA.

Terminology

- *Where 'children' is referenced within this document, this also applies to young people.*
- *'RDA UK Safeguarding Team' refers to the team appointed by RDA UK.*
- 'Personnel' includes Trustees, paid staff, RDA UK volunteers, coaches, contractors, agency staff, interns, and apprentices, and fundraisers.

1.1 Legal Context

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA UK) is the shared and collective name of the charities: Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporating Carriage Driving registered with, and regulated by, the Charity Commission for England and Wales (No 244108); the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, OSCR, (No SC039473); and, with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (RCN, Registered Charity Number 20204708). RDA UK is also a registered Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital use of 'Limited' exemption in England and Wales (No 05010395). RDA UK also owns Lowlands Equestrian Centre Limited. For the purpose of this policy, the safeguarding policy and procedures apply to all the above organisations. Additionally, as members of the equestrian sports' national governing body, British Equestrian (BEF), RDA UK's safeguarding policies and procedures are consistent with BEF's expectations.

RDA UK enriches lives by connecting disabled people with horses. As pioneers in the therapeutic use of horses, our activities improve strength and mobility, boost physical health and wellbeing, and build skills and confidence. The Charity is dedicated to improving the lives of disabled people, through the provision of activities including riding, carriage driving, and equine-assisted programmes delivered by 450 Member Groups and affiliated organisations (Approved Centres), many of which are registered charities or businesses and so are legally responsible for their own safeguarding arrangements. As a Federation, RDA UK supports and advises Member Groups with their activities, policies and procedures including governance, legal compliance, health and safety and safeguarding.

There are over 25,000 disabled child and adult participants, who are supported by a dedicated team of 13,700 volunteers across the UK. There are 17 local regions with committees formed by regional and county volunteers who support RDA UK's work at a local level. The RDA UK Trustee Board provides direction and guidance on the development of RDA UK's strategy and activities, working in partnership

with RDA UK and RDA UK volunteers, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the charity and providing direct support to RDA UK and its Member Groups. RDA UK provides Member Groups and affiliated organisations with RDA UK coaching qualifications, training, programmes and RDA UK awards. RDA UK also organises competitions and championships. In addition, RDA UK, through its subsidiary activity at Lowlands Equestrian Centre (LEC), works directly with at risk groups.

RDA UK expects all Member Groups and approved organisations to adopt their own robust safeguarding policies including procedures, codes of conduct, safer recruitment practices, and to conduct Health & Safety risk assessments for all their working practices. Group policies must be closely aligned with the principles set out in this policy and complement wider RDA UK policy, procedures and guidance.

This policy is written in line with the requirements of:

- current child and adult legislation and statutory guidance across the UK;
- the three charity regulators across the UK; Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland; and,
- Local Safeguarding Partnership's Board and/or Area Protection Committee's requirements.

1.2 Policy Statement

RDA UK is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, who engage with RDA UK activities. Their safety shall be regarded as a fundamental and overriding priority in all aspects of the organisation's operations, policies and decision-making processes. Additionally, no one should come to any harm through their contact with the charity and, as part of that commitment, RDA UK does everything it can to ensure everyone feels safe and protected from any form of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation, and can take part in all activities in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment.

Safeguarding Children - RDA UK adheres to the key principles prioritising a shared responsibility and emphasising the importance of a child-centred focus to safeguarding children (as supported by legislation across England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). The needs and rights of the child concerned must always be prioritised in all safeguarding efforts and it is important that a safeguarding multidisciplinary approach is adopted to ensure the right professionals from across relevant sectors are engaged.

Safeguarding Adults - RDA UK adheres to Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) which aims to develop a person-centred and outcome-focused approach to safeguarding work for adults. The adult concerned must always be at the centre of adult safeguarding enquiries, and their wishes and views sought at the earliest opportunity.

In pursuit of our vision to safeguarding children and adults, RDA UK is committed to ensuring that:

- A person-centred approach is taken in all interactions.

- Every individual, irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious affiliation, size or sexual orientation, is entitled to be protected against harm.
- All allegations, concerns and suspicions of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Comply with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, which provides a framework for the appropriate sharing of information, whereby the individual in possession of information believes that failure to share may result in somebody being at risk of harm.
- Collaboratively, everyone across the organisation will strive to promote the welfare, safety, health and development of children and adults taking part.

To implement this vision, RDA UK:

- Has a Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team committed to safeguarding.
- Is clear about all personnel having responsibilities and accountability for safeguarding, regardless of their roles.
- Has a culture of listening to children and adults at risk.
- Has policies and procedures for safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Has procedures for dealing with complaints and allegations against, or concerns about, any individual.
- Undertakes safer recruitment practices for all personnel who work, or have contact with, children and adults at risk.
- Ensures all personnel undergo mandatory induction and safeguarding training.
- Through the BEF ensures that adequate supervision is in place for professional support, reflection, oversight, and quality assurance.
- Has safeguarding agreements in place when working with Member Groups, affiliated organisations and partners.

RDA UK Safeguarding policies and procedures are aligned with those of British Equestrian (BEF). For more information about BEF Safeguarding, visit:
www.britishequestrian.org.uk/getInvolved/safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding

1.3 Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

a) Establish a safe and protective environment for children and adults at risk associated with the Charity.
b) Set clear expectations for personnel and anyone affiliated with the organisation regarding their responsibilities in safeguarding children and adults at risk.
c) Provide clear guidance on identifying, reporting and responding to any concerns, allegations or suspicions of harm.
d) Demonstrate and promote a culture of openness and accountability regarding safeguarding issues.

1.4 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved with RDA UK defined as personnel. In addition, the policy applies to RDA Groups, affiliated organisation and their trustees, staff, advisors, volunteers, coaches, participants and their parents/guardians.

Personnel receive a summary of this policy during their induction and are reminded of its content during safeguarding training.

Groups and affiliated organisations are expected to share and adhere to the same standards/procedures outlined in this policy and to conduct safeguarding risk assessments relevant to their roles and any activities they perform.

1.5 Principles

1.5.1 Principles for Safeguarding Children - *(Reference: Children Act 1989 and 2004)*

RDA UK adheres to the following principles for safeguarding children:

a) **Best Interest of the Child:** All decisions and actions taken will prioritise the child's best interests above all else.
b) **Right to Be Protected From Harm:** All children, regardless of their age, ability, gender, race, religion, ethnicity or disability, will be protected from harm.
c) **The Child's Voice:** We are committed to listening to children and taking their views seriously. They will be given opportunities to express their wishes and feelings, and these will be considered in all matters affecting them.
d) **Early Intervention and Prevention:** Early identification of concerns and timely intervention are crucial.
e) **Duty of Care:** Everyone has a collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and all individuals are expected to be aware of and act in line with this responsibility.
f) **Information Sharing/Confidentiality:** We recognise the importance of effective and timely sharing of information with professionals and agencies, whilst maintaining confidentiality.
g) **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Collaborative working enhances our ability to protect children and respond effectively to concerns.

1.5.2 Principles for Safeguarding Adults - *(Reference: Making Safeguarding Personal, Care Act 2014 Guidance)*

RDA UK adheres to the following principles for safeguarding adults:

a) **Empowerment:** Promoting person-led decisions and informed consent especially in relation to mental capacity.
b) **Protection:** Support and protection for those in greatest need.
c) **Prevention:** It is better to act before harm occurs.
d) **Proportionality:** Proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
e) **Partnership:** Providing local solutions through services working with communities.
f) **Communities:** Play a part in preventing, detecting and reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation.
g) **Accountability:** Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

1.6 Roles and Responsibilities

British Equestrian (BEF)

BEF provide strategic overview, direction and guidance on safeguarding children and adults at risk across the equestrian industry. All Member Bodies adhere to BEF Safeguarding Policies. BEF provide case management support, supervision and oversight.

RDA UK Trustees and Senior Leadership

The ultimate responsibility for safeguarding at RDA UK is at Board level and is equally shared between Trustees to oversee the strategic scrutiny, review, monitoring and effective implementation of the charity's safeguarding arrangements. The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for supporting the Board and ensuring the full implementation of this policy across the charity.

RDA UK Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team leads on development, review and implementation of Safeguarding and the Safeguarding Policy and associated resources, and are responsible for case management.

RDA UK Staff

All staff members are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk, including recognising the signs of abuse, reporting concerns, and providing support to participants, where appropriate.

RDA Groups and Approved Centres

Group Trustees and Approved Centre Proprietors are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk by implementing the robust safeguarding measures. A Group Safeguarding Officer should also be appointed to support with this.

Volunteers and Coaches

Volunteers and coaches must adhere to this Policy (and their groups policy) and complete the requirements of the Safer Recruitment Practices before engaging with children and adults at risk.

Participants and Parents/Guardians

Participants and parents/guardians are encouraged to report any concerns or incidents of abuse, neglect or exploitation they may experience or witness, and they will be supported in doing so.

Reporting Concerns

Anyone who has a concern or suspicion regarding the welfare of a child or adult at risk must report it immediately to the Group Safeguarding Officer (GSO), If the GSO is unavailable report directly to the RDA UK Safeguarding.

1.6.1 British Equestrian (BEF)

The BEF is the National Governing Body (NGB) for horse sport in the UK. It has Member Bodies representing different equestrian activities. The Member Bodies are required to be in substantial conformity with this policy and have a Memorandum of Understanding with the BEF about safeguarding to ensure a consistently high standard across the Federation.

As part of this partnership, the role of the BEF is to:

- Provide the strategic overview and guidance on safeguarding. Review the implementation of these policies on an annual basis.
- Provide access to approved safeguarding training for the Lead Safeguarding Officers of Member Bodies and BEF staff.
- Provide guidance on safeguarding best practice, including safe recruitment, training and supervision of staff, volunteers, parents and carers.
- Support Member Bodies in responding to safeguarding concerns, ensuring all incidents are recorded and referred appropriately.
- Co-ordinate the Safeguarding Action Team (SAT) and the Case Management Group (CMG).
- Co-ordinate a central database for the recording of all concerns shared by Member Bodies.
- Ensure BEF procedures for safely recruiting staff and volunteers within the BEF are followed, with criminal record checks where appropriate.
- Ensure that all data collected by the BEF is kept securely in accordance with data protection requirements.

SAT provides a forum to develop and share best practice for the benefit of safeguarding in equestrian activities. It is made up of representatives from Member Bodies and the BEF Safeguarding Team.

The CMG provides case management support across the Federation. It provides support, advice on best practice and consultation where needed.

The BEF employs a dedicated Safeguarding Officer to lead on our policies and procedures, and to provide support to the Member Bodies.

The BEF Board has appointed a Board Safeguarding Champion to provide leadership in promoting safeguarding best practice in equestrianism, and to champion the BEF's safeguarding role. They ensure that safeguarding is discussed at every Board meeting.

1.6.2 RDA UK Trustee & Safeguarding Representative

The role of the Trustee and Safeguarding Representative is to:

- Be known to all personnel with contact details.
- Ensure the Board follows all three UK charity regulators' safeguarding guidance.
- Ensure safeguarding is a shared responsibility and safeguarding is a standing agenda item for Board meetings.

- Ensure any needs for resources are funded to maintain robust standards of safeguarding across RDA UK.
- Liaise with and support the RDA UK Safeguarding Team with regards to any issues arising around personnel or RDA UK's operations.
- Ensure the Chief Operating Officer (COO), on behalf of the Trustees, reports any serious incidents - affecting beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, personnel, services, assets, reputation, to the appropriate UK Charity Regulator.

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
Trustee Representatives	Helena Vega-Lozano Rachel Vaughan-Johns	safeguarding@rda.org.uk	01926 492915
Safeguarding Advisory Board Member representing safeguarding	Lynda Whittaker		
Senior Leadership Team Representative & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lee Heard		
Safeguarding Officer	Stef Brazier		
Head of Membership Services	Kyle Palmer		

1.6.3 RDA UK Safeguarding Team

The RDA UK Safeguarding Team's role is to:

a) Lead on the development, review, evaluation and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
b) Support and advise Member Groups with their safeguarding arrangements.
c) Manage all safeguarding concerns within RDA UK, including serious incidents, complaints and allegations about individuals, in line with this policy.
d) Maintain the comprehensive safeguarding resource library on the My-RDA website, including helpful documents, forms, process flows, and guidance tailored to specific topics.
e) Ensure compliance with safer recruitment practices, ensuring paid staff and personnel have appropriate disclosure checks and safeguarding training for their role.

Additionally, the RDA UK Safeguarding Team, in partnership with line managers and RDA UK HR, are also responsible for ensuring:

a) All new job roles are risk-assessed by HR and correctly checked for criminal records checks' eligibility in line with the Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders Act 1974 as amended across the UK.
b) Safeguarding training is delivered and certificated for all paid staff as relevant to their roles.
c) That, for lone or one-to-one work and other activities which carry a higher safeguarding risk, line managers carry out safeguarding risk assessments and address any risks identified for their staff.

d) The preparation of a quarterly safeguarding report for the RDA UK Trustees as a standing item on the Trustees' meeting agenda which will include:
   - Scrutinising RDA UK's risk register regarding safeguarding
   - Updating the Board, on any changes in safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and regulatory requirements
   - Collating and reviewing statistics of concerns raised, personnel allegations and complaints made, any incidents of bullying and sexual harassment, referrals to the statutory agencies and any outcomes and emerging themes or learning relevant to RDA UK.

1.6.4 RDA UK Member Groups

Member Groups are considered separate legal entities and therefore must comply with the relevant UK Charity Regulator requirements.

As a member of RDA UK, Member Groups as a minimum are expected to:

a) Appoint a named Group Safeguarding Officer/s (see role responsibilities below).
b) Appoint a named Trustee for safeguarding who ensures and promotes safeguarding as a shared trustee's responsibility and a standing agenda item at group meetings.
c) Have a clear and effective safeguarding policy, procedures, codes of conduct, and escalation process (clear lines of accountability).
d) Create a culture of safety, equality and protection within the services offered.
e) Promote a person-centred approach ensuring participants are listened to.
f) Establish effective safer recruitment procedures and ongoing safe working practices for all trustees, volunteers and coaches, including adequate criminal record checks (DBS, PVG or Access NI) and to ensure safeguarding training is current, relevant and up to date.
g) Ensure all safeguarding concerns are managed in line with this policy and reported to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team.
h) Ensure appropriate supervision and support.

The role of the Group Safeguarding Officer is to:

a) Create a person-focused culture.
b) Raise awareness of and assist with the implementation of safeguarding practices at the Group.
c) Be the first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns at a local level.
d) Ensure all safeguarding concerns are reported to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team.
e) Seek professional safeguarding advice and support from the RDA UK Safeguarding Team and local statutory agencies at any time.
f) Ensure all safer recruitment checks and expected training are completed and kept up to date for trustees, volunteers and coaches. All checks and training must be updated every three years.
g) Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is shared on a need-to-know basis only.

In cases of complaints or allegations against Member Groups' registered personnel, Member Groups must inform the RDA UK Safeguarding Team. In such cases, Member Groups must give the RDA UK Safeguarding Team the full details and account of the issues so that records can be maintained and any action any can be swiftly and appropriately implemented. When advised to do so by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO, for child abuse cases, England & Wales only), social services and/or the police should be contacted by the group for advice and referral.

Similarly, if any serious safeguarding incidents occur within a Member Group that might impact upon the reputation of RDA UK, they are expected to inform the RDA UK Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Subject to the permission of the relevant investigating agencies, full details and account of the issues should also be shared so the incident can be managed appropriately. Where Member Groups are registered charities, they are also legally obliged to report such serious incidents to the relevant charity regulator.

In all other cases, including concerns about the safeguarding of individual children, young people and adults at risk, a general overview of the issues can be given but Member Groups should ensure no individual identifying information is shared in line with UK GDPR.

1.7 Safer Recruitment Practices

RDA UK is committed to robust safer recruitment processes which are fair, transparent, and free from discrimination, promote diversity and inclusion and align with the relevant legislation and statutory guidance. Member Groups are expected to share this commitment.

RDA UK undertakes certain activities that meet the definition of regulated activity, which means roles are subject to criminal records checks. Member Groups will have many such roles working directly with at risk groups, and so each Member Group must ensure that appropriate criminal record checks are completed for all individuals carrying out these roles.

To establish clear guidelines and procedures for the recruitment of staff, volunteers and other individuals involved in RDA activity, we will factor in:

a) **Legal Compliance:** We will comply with all relevant laws, regulations and statutory guidance related to safer recruitment and child protection. This includes strictly adhering to the DBS Code of Practice (England and Wales), the Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice and the Access NI Code of Practice.
b) **Proactive Approach:** We will adopt a proactive approach to safer recruitment by implementing robust procedures from the initial recruitment stage to ongoing monitoring and supervision, including advertising all vacancies with a clear commitment to safeguarding.
c) **Equality and Diversity:** We will ensure that our recruitment processes are fair, transparent, and free from discrimination, promoting diversity and inclusion.

d) **Training and Awareness:** All individuals associated with RDA UK who work directly with children and adults at risk will receive appropriate training in safeguarding, including recognising signs of abuse, responding to concerns, understanding their responsibilities and keeping themselves safe.
e) **Vetting and Checks:** All applicants for roles involving contact with children and adults at risk will undergo necessary background checks and vetting procedures, including criminal record checks, references and identity verification.
f) **Supervision and Monitoring:** Individuals in roles involving children will be supervised, and their performance will be monitored regularly. Any concerns will be addressed promptly, utilising the relevant code of conduct.
g) **Whistleblowing:** We will have mechanisms in place for staff, volunteers and coaches to report concerns related to safeguarding matters and recruitment practices without fear of retaliation.
h) **Record Keeping:** We will maintain detailed records of recruitment processes for staff to ensure that we are satisfied and can evidence that applicants are suitable. This includes reference checks and vetting results, stored securely for 7 years after the individual member of staff has left RDA.
i) **Review and Evaluation:** Safer recruitment practices will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and compliant.

Refer to the Safer Recruitment Practices (Section 2) for more detail to support safer recruitment.

1.8 Safeguarding Code of Conduct

The RDA Safeguarding Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviours to create a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone involved in RDA. Regardless of role, all personnel will work to the highest standards of safeguarding practice, taking into account any specific issues listed below, which are included in their work.

- Treat everyone equally, with respect and dignity and never engage in deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- Bullying will not be tolerated in any form.
- Everyone associated with RDA has a duty of care towards each other. Never abuse any position of trust you may hold and always act within appropriate boundaries, even in difficult circumstances.
- Set an example you wish others to follow and remember everybody is a role model at all times, inside and outside of RDA. Physical contact should only be made with a child, young person or adult at risk in response to their needs at the time, and this should be appropriate to their age, gender, ethnicity and ability. Always explain your actions first and ensure you have consent.
- Never allow or engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, and refrain from making sexually suggestive remarks, even in fun.
- Inappropriate language should always be challenged.
- Parents/carers are responsible for an individual's personal care, such as using the toilet. Never do things of a personal nature that someone can do for themselves.

- Other than parents or guardians, never be alone with a child, young person or adult at risk when not in sight and hearing of others.
- Other than parents or guardians, never take a child, young person or vulnerable adult to your house where they will be alone with you, or transport them from one location to another by yourself. *Please refer to the RDA Transportation Policy on guidance for transportation.*
- Always ensure an appropriate level of supervision. Children, young people and adults at risk should always have a responsible adult supervising their activity. Dress in a safe and appropriate manner for your time within RDA.
- No one should be under the influence of alcohol/illegal substances whilst active within an RDA environment or acting in a capacity for RDA.

Always inform the RDA UK Safeguarding Team immediately if you:

- have any allegations or complaints made about you or have any concerns yourself.
- feel someone else has misinterpreted what you have said or done.
- have had to restrain or accidentally hurt a child, young person or adult at risk.
- think you may have breached the Code of Conduct.

You should never plan to be in a situation where you are alone with one child, young person or adult at risk. Should an emergency occur, you must consider what action you are able to take, to ensure the situation is as safe as possible for everyone involved.

1.9 Managing Concerns

At RDA UK, we firmly believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every individual within the RDA community, regardless of role or position, plays a vital role in creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment. RDA UK encourages an inclusive culture where all individuals understand their duty of care in safeguarding and are empowered to act responsibly.

If a child is in immediate danger, you should contact the police or medical services.

If an adult at risk is in immediate danger, it is good practice - and at the group's discretion - to consider the adult's wants and needs, where possible, when deciding what actions to take.

a) **Recognising Concerns:** All individuals involved with RDA UK should be vigilant in recognising the signs and behaviours which might indicate potential safeguarding concerns.
b) **Reporting Concerns:** Any concerns or suspicions of abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child or adult at risk must be reported immediately to the Group Safeguarding Officer, RDA UK Safeguarding Team and/or relevant statutory agency.
c) **Responding to Concerns:** RDA UK will respond promptly and appropriately to all safeguarding concerns, in accordance with the legal and statutory framework.

d) **Assessing Concerns:** An adult at risks capacity to consent will be considered when referring a concern to statutory agencies. Consent should be obtained, where possible, before making a referral. For children, consent does not need to be obtained to make a referral.
e) **Support:** Individuals affected by safeguarding concerns will be provided with appropriate support, including signposting to support organisations, counselling support and medical services as needed.
f) **Record Keeping:** Detailed records of safeguarding concerns, investigations and actions taken will be maintained in our case management system, whilst ensuring confidentiality.

Refer to the Managing Concerns (Section 3) for further guidance when dealing with a concern.

1.10 Whistleblowing

RDA UK are committed to creating a culture of openness and accountability in which staff, volunteers, coaches and others feel empowered to raise concerns about the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk. Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or safeguarding failures within the organisation. All individuals are encouraged to report any concerns they may have, even if they are unsure whether a safeguarding breach has occurred. Reports can be made without fear of reprisal, and all disclosures will be treated seriously, confidentially, and investigated promptly and fairly. We will ensure that whistleblowers are protected in line with legal obligations and that their concerns are addressed appropriately.

It is essential that all personnel are aware of the RDA Whistleblowing Policy to enable them to voice their concerns about any aspect of the Charity's work.

1.11 Review and Monitoring

This document will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary, in line with the legal and statutory framework, to ensure it remains current and effective. Feedback from personnel, participants and stakeholders will be considered in the review process.

1.12 Associated Resources

The My-RDA website hosts a safeguarding resource library including helpful documents, forms, process flows, and guidance tailored to specific topics. Additional resources are listed in Appendix 4. *Please note group representatives need to be logged into MyRDA to access additional resources.*

1.13 Contact Information

If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or adult at risk, or need further information about this Policy, please contact the RDA UK Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@rda.org.uk.

Section 2: Safer Recruitment Practices

2.1 Safer Recruitment Statement

RDA UK recognises the critical importance of robust safer recruitment practices and its duty of care to ensure that all individuals who have contact with participants and the organisation, are suitable, trained and are committed to safeguarding and promoting their welfare.

2.2 Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and principles to ensure the safer recruitment of staff, volunteers and coaches working with children and adults at risk within RDA UK. The aim is to create a safe and positive environment and protect vulnerable individuals from harm.

2.3 Safer Recruitment Practices

This section should be read in conjunction with the information available on the Volunteers section of MyRDA.

Glossary of Terms

- **Pre-Recruitment Checks** - A series of verifications performed by an organisation on an individual's previous employment, qualifications and in the form of a character reference.
- **Background Checks** - The process used by an organisation to verify that an individual is who they claim to be, and provides an opportunity to check and confirm the validity of someone's criminal record, education, employment history and other activities from their past.
- **"Content**" refers to any information contained on the disclosure certificate regarding spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer about the individual. The certificate may also include non-conviction information that is deemed relevant to the role by the relevant police forces.

2.3.1 Pre-Recruitment Checks

- **Role Descriptions:** Ensure that role descriptions clearly outline the specific activities involved and the responsibilities around contact with children and adults at risk.

- **Role Adverts:** Adverts should include a clear safeguarding message and include a statement about RDA UK's commitment to keeping children and adults at risk safe.

  Statement Example: "(RDA Group Name) RDA Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of participants and expects all coaches and volunteers to share this commitment."

- **Application Process:** All applicants are required to complete RDA UK's "Volunteer Application Form", providing details of previous experience, relevant professional qualifications, skills and

details of referees. This should include applicants stating their experience, skills and qualifications regarding working with children, and/or adults at risk if this is appropriate for the role.

The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and adults at risk, and, if relevant, will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, The Exceptions Order 1975. For RDA purposes this is any role that is in regulated activity or a regulated role.

- **Volunteer Application Pack:** The RDA UK Safeguarding Policies should be provided in the application pack given to each new volunteer, e.g. a weblink to MyRDA or directly to a group's safeguarding policy.

- **Informal Discussion:** Groups should conduct informal discussions to assess the applicant's suitability and motivations for working with children and adults at risk. During the informal discussion, the applicant is expected to share any information that may affect their suitability, e.g. medical conditions or convictions. This will enable the group to make informed decisions about support or adaptations required and whether the group can cater for these adjustments.

  The following should be explored:
  - The candidate's attitude toward children and adults at risk.
  - Their motivation and reason for working with children and adults at risk, ensuring motivations are appropriate and safe.
  - Their attitudes and behaviour about control and consequences.
  - Their perceptions about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour towards children and adults at risk, including physical contact, personal disclosures, digital communications, and safeguarding expectations.
  - Their ability to form and maintain professional relationships, including working appropriately with participants.
  - Their general understanding of safeguarding of children and adults at risk, including recognising abuse, responding to concerns, and knowing how to report a concern.
  - Their attitudes toward equality, diversity, and respecting individual rights.

2.3.2 Background Checks

Background checks are a crucial step to test someone's suitability to work or volunteer, they help identify any concerns and confirm professional and character standards.

It is the responsibility of the 'employer' to assess the level at which volunteers or staff should be checked.

- **Disclosure Checks:** (also referred to as Criminal Record Checks) All individuals engaged in regulated activity (England, Wales & Northern Ireland) or in a regulated role (Scotland) must undergo an enhanced disclosure check, with the child barred list where applicable. Refer to Section 2.4 for more information on disclosure checks.

- **Collection of References:** Groups must obtain and verify two references for all new staff and volunteers, if possible, from a role that has involved children, young people or adults at risk.

Please note that if a volunteer or member of staff is required to undergo a check at any level, they should not start their role before a valid disclosure check has been returned.

2.3.3 Training and Support

- **Training:** Comprehensive safeguarding training is available for all staff and volunteers working directly or indirectly with children and adults at risk. Refer to Section 2.5 for more information on safeguarding training requirements.

- **Induction:** As part of the volunteer induction process, new staff, volunteers and coaches should be provided with:
  - a safeguarding briefing around child protection and working with adults at risk
  - a copy of the safeguarding policies
  - summary outlining procedures and good practice
  - access to complete the Safeguarding E-learning Module, as part of the Green Card requirements, or, directed to the RDA Safeguarding for Equestrians tutor-led course, as part of the coaching requirements.

- **Supervision:** Ensure appropriate supervision and support structures are in place for staff, volunteers and coaches dealing with vulnerable individuals.

- **Whistleblowing:** All staff and volunteers must be aware of the RDA Whistleblowing Policy to enable them to voice their concerns about any aspect of the Charity's work.

2.3.4 Behavioural Practice

- **Codes of Conduct:** RDA UK outlines the expected standards of behaviour and conduct for everyone involved in RDA activity, in the Safeguarding Code of Conduct and RDA UK Code of Conduct. Everyone is expected to act honestly, reasonably, conscientiously and in good faith at all times. Individuals should be familiar with the codes of conduct that apply to them.

  We strongly recommend that Codes of Conduct are included as part of the induction process for all new staff, volunteers, participants and their parents/guardians.

2.4 Disclosure Checks

Requirements

To ensure the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk, all individuals, paid or voluntary, must undergo appropriate disclosure checks. The group would be considered as the employer, for both paid and voluntary roles. The responsibility for managing disclosure checks may be held by a Group Safeguarding Officer or delegated by trustees to a Volunteer Coordinator or similar.

Disclosure checks are required for anyone undertaking a regulated role or are involved in a regulated activity with children or adults at risk. Individuals in a position of trust, such as an individual entrusted with decision-making about participation, wellbeing or access, must undergo a disclosure check. For RDA this includes trustees.

A disclosure check must be obtained by the group as part of the safer recruitment process before an individual begins their role. A written record should be kept of the disclosure check results, including the date, type of check, and outcome.

Individuals must inform the Chair or Group Safeguarding Officer immediately if they are subject to any criminal investigation, caution, conviction, or relevant safeguarding concern. RDA UK reserves the right to conduct rechecks at any time if concerns arise.

Regulated Activity (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

The definition of regulated activity with children changed from 1st September 2026. Now paid staff and volunteers who regularly teach, train, instruct/coach, care for or supervise children may be considered to be undertaking regulated activity even when they are supervised by another person who is already in regulated activity.

For activity to meet the relevant frequency threshold, it must take place more than three days in a thirty day period, or involve an overnight activity between 2am and 6am.

The change does not apply to the definition for regulated activity with adults.

Further information on these changes is available ***here***.

Regulated Role (Scotland)

Regulated role means a paid or unpaid position involves specified activities and contact with children or protected adults, where the role meets the **legal criteria** set out in the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020.

2.4.1 Types of Disclosure Checks

Disclosure checks are referred to differently in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The type of check required is based on the country you work or volunteer in.

• England – DBS check • Wales – DBS check • Scotland – PVG Scheme • Northern Ireland – AccessNI check	**DBS** = Disclosure & Barring Services **PVG** = Protection of Vulnerable Groups **Access NI** = Access Northern Ireland

2.4.1.1 DBS Checks (England & Wales)

Regulatory Body: Disclosure & Barring Services

Renewal Period

DBS Checks must be renewed every three years.

Transferring DBS Checks from Other Groups

RDA UK recognises that individuals might have a DBS check through another Member Group. These can be accepted by RDA providing they meet the following criteria:

- the check is enhanced,
- the check includes the child barred list where applicable to the role,
- the check was issued in the last three years,
- the original certificate is shown to the group confirming the individual is clear to work with children; and,
- the individual is subscribed to the DBS Update Service.

It is at the discretion of the group Trustees whether DBS checks from other organisations are accepted or if an individual is asked to complete a new check for the group.

DBS Update Service

Individuals may subscribe to the DBS update service when issued with their certificate. You can conduct a status check for an individual via the DBS Update Service portal when the renewal is due (three years after the certificate was issued).

When checking the update service, the group will need to:

- check the DBS certificate is for the right workforce (child barred list where appropriate) and is the same type/level (enhanced check) as needed at their own group
- check the person's identity using three forms of ID
- check the name on the DBS certificate matches the identity documents viewed
- get the person's permission to carry out a status check
- take note of the DBS certificate number and the person's name and date of birth.

The group can then perform a status check on the DBS Update Service Portal. Ensure you read the instructions carefully. The result from the status check will be presented instantly and will indicate if

the individual's criminal record remains clear (or with content as shown on the DBS certificate) or whether new information has come to light since the DBS certificate was issued. If there is new information, the group will need to ask the individual to apply for a new DBS check to uncover new information.

2.4.1.2 PVG Scheme (Scotland)

Regulatory Body: Disclosure Scotland

Renewal Period

From 01 April 2026, lifetime PVG scheme membership will end. Instead replaced by a time-limited membership. PVG scheme membership will last 5 years before individuals need to review with Disclosure Scotland.

Transferring PVG Scheme Checks from Other Groups

PVG Scheme checks must be specific to the organisation employing the individual and therefore groups cannot accept certificates issued for other organisations.

2.4.1.3 Access NI Checks (Northern Ireland)

Regulatory Body: NI Direct

Lead Signatory: Deirdre Gallagher (d.1gallagher@btinternet.com)

Note: Access NI checks are managed effectively through the region with the Lead Signatory as the main contact for Groups.

Renewal Period

Access NI Checks must be renewed every three years.

Transferring Access NI Checks from Other Groups

a) Individual volunteers at multiple Groups in the same role

If someone, who volunteers with another Member Group, joins your group (and continues to volunteer with the original group), **in the same role**, you do not need to perform another Access NI check as long as the following procedure is adhered to:

1. Each group must see proof of the individual's valid Access NI certificate.
2. The certificate is updated every three years by one group (usually the group which conducted the initial check) and each group sees proof of the renewed certificate.
3. If there is information disclosed on the certificate, each group must independently satisfy themselves that the individual is suitable for the role they are taking on (refer to Section 2.4 Disclosure with Content).
4. Inform the Lead Signatory of anyone who volunteers for more than one group.
5. Each group must check the person's identity using photographic ID documents.
6. If the individual has a break in volunteering with RDA of more than 3 months, a new Access NI check must be performed.

7. If the role is different in a subsequent group (e.g. side walker in one and coach in another), a separate Access NI check will be required.

b) Individual volunteers at your groups and ceases volunteering at a previous group

If someone who volunteers with another group transfers to your group (and ceases to volunteer with the original group), **in the same role**, you do not need to perform another Access NI check as long as the following procedure is adhered to:

1. Your group sees proof of the volunteer's valid Access NI certificate.
2. The certificate is updated by your group every three years. Note: this should be updated from the date of issue stated on the certificate.
3. If there is information disclosed on the certificate, your group must independently satisfy itself that the individual is suitable for the role they are taking on (refer to Section 2.4 Disclosure with Content).
4. Inform the Lead Signatory of anyone who has transferred groups.
5. The group must check the person's identity using photographic ID documents.
6. If the individual has a break in volunteering with RDA of more than 3 months, a new Access NI check must be performed.
7. If the role is different in a subsequent group (e.g. side walker in one and coach in another), a separate Access NI check will be required.

c) Individual volunteers in different roles at different groups

The individual must be asked to complete an Access NI check for each group they volunteer for.

2.4.2 Disclosures with Content

If a disclosure check contains content, it must be considered by the Group Trustees, with the support of the RDA UK Safeguarding Team, to determine the suitability of the individual to work or volunteer with participants. The following table outlines the type of consideration required.

Level of Consideration	**Type of Offence / Conviction**
Group Discussion	Criminal motoring offences such as drink driving
Group and RDA UK Safeguarding Team Discussion	More severe offences, e.g. theft Historic offences Failure to declare prior conviction(s) Spent convictions
Consideration for dismissal/rejection in group and RDA UK Safeguarding Team Discussion	Violent offences Drug abuse Child/adult at risk abuse Sex offenders Child pornography offences

Discussions will consider the circumstances around the offence/conviction, when it happened, whether it was declared, the role requirements, and any adjustments the group would need to make, etc.

2.5 Safeguarding Training

RDA UK offers a training package with the following levels of safeguarding training:

a) Safeguarding Briefing (Pocket Guide)
b) Safeguarding Awareness for Everyone (E-Learning)
c) Safeguarding for Equestrians training (Tutor-led)
d) Safeguarding for Equestrians Renewal Module (E-Learning)
e) Group Safeguarding Officer training (Tutor-led)

Safeguarding Briefing (Pocket Guide)

The group should provide all new staff, volunteers and coaches with a briefing highlighting key safeguarding points, including duty of care, what to look out for, who to report concerns to and how to keep themselves safe.

Safeguarding Awareness for Everyone (E-Learning)

This is self-guided learning aimed at providing a basic awareness of safeguarding to participants, parents/guardians and volunteers (from age 16 years). This course is available on the RDA Learning Platform.

As part of the Green Card Training, volunteers (who are 16+) are required to complete the Safeguarding E-learning Module. A certificate will be issued and should be shown to the group before being signed off.

Safeguarding for Equestrians Course (Tutor-Led)

This is a tutor-led course delivered virtually (Zoom) and takes approximately 3 hours. The training is designed to support coaches, activity leaders, trustees and Group Safeguarding Officers with their safeguarding duties, providing an interactive way of learning.

It is mandatory for all coaches, activity leaders, trustees and Group Safeguarding Officers to attend the RDA Safeguarding for Equestrians tutor-led course. For other roles, it is strongly recommended to attend this course.

The first approved safeguarding course attended must be the 'RDA Safeguarding for Equestrians' tutor-led, delivered virtually (on Microsoft Teams or Zoom). This may be refreshed two years later by the Safeguarding E-learning Module. As a minimum, individuals should attend a tutor-led course every four years.

Safeguarding for Equestrians Renewal Module (E-Learning) **-** This is self-guided learning designed to update volunteers with a key understanding of safeguarding practices, their safeguarding

responsibilities, promoting safe practices to prevent abuse, responding to a concern and applying these learnings to real-life situations.

This course can be used as a renewal option for Coaches, Activity Leaders, Trustees and Group Safeguarding Officers to update their training 2 years after attending the Safeguarding for Equestrians (tutor-led) course. Please note that following completion of this course as a renewal you are required to complete a tutor led course for the next renewal.

Group Safeguarding Officer (GSO) Course (Tutor-Led)

This is a tutor-led course delivered virtually (on Microsoft Teams or Zoom) and takes approximately 3 hours. This course builds on the Safeguarding for Equestrians content and is designed to provide advanced training for the safeguarding role expanding on responsibilities, embedding safeguarding principles, creating a safer culture, responding to concerns and case management practices.

All GSOs are required to attend the BEF Group Safeguarding Officer tutor-led course. This course must be updated every four years.

Additional Requirements for Scotland

Those working in Scotland are required to complete pre-online training, called SportScotland Module 1, before attending the 'RDA Safeguarding for Equestrians' course. This is coordinated by RDA UK and should be completed by learners within 7 days of the course date.

Alternative Safeguarding Courses and Equivalent Training

RDA UK recognises the following tutor-led courses as suitable alternatives to the RDA Safeguarding for Equestrians course.

- Any BEF accredited course delivered by Member Bodies, e.g. BHS or The Pony Club
- SportScotland Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport (CWPS)
- UK Coaching Safeguarding and Protecting Children
- Sport NI Safeguarding Children & Young People

For **trustees** specifically, charity regulators across the UK are clear that safeguarding is a core trustee responsibility. Trustees are ultimately accountable for ensuring that safeguarding risks are appropriately identified, monitored and managed, and that robust arrangements are in place. To fulfil those obligations, trustees must possess sufficient safeguarding knowledge to provide oversight, challenge and assurance, regardless of whether they are directly involved in delivering activities. This includes an understanding of RDA procedures.

The following training may be considered as a suitable alternative as long as a certificate is provided, training is refreshed in line with the period(s) outlined in the RDA UK Safeguarding Policy, training is relevant for the role, and covers the specific audience who the group supports (children and young people, adults at risk, or both).

- Charity Trustee Training
- Governor Safeguarding Training
- Professional safeguarding training undertaken as part of a regulated profession
- Safeguarding leadership or designated safeguarding lead training

Please note that if an equivalent course is agreed as suitable, group trustees will still need to complete the '*Safeguarding Awareness for Everyone (E-Learning)' course for an understanding of RDA procedures.*

For other safeguarding courses to be considered as equivalent, please email details of the course attended, including topics covered and learning outcomes, to RDA UK Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@rda.org.uk.

2.6 Group Responsibilities

- Familiarise and adhere to this policy and related procedures during the recruitment process.
- Ensure all necessary checks are completed before an individual starts in a role involving children or adults at risk.
- Provide guidance and support to those responsible for volunteer recruitment within the group.
- Maintain records of all pre-recruitment checks and relevant documentation, ensuring these are stored safely and securely, in line with GDPR regulations.
- Understand how to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and adults at risk.
- Understand how to respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process.

2.7 Breach of Policy

Any breaches of this policy will be thoroughly investigated. Where concerns are supported by evidence, appropriate action will be taken, which may include temporary suspension from duties or activities while the investigation is ongoing. Outcomes of an investigation may result in the suspension or termination of volunteer service.

2.8 Review and Monitoring

This document will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary, in line with the legal and statutory framework, to ensure it remains current and effective. Feedback from staff, volunteers and stakeholders will be considered in the review process.

Section 3: Managing Concerns

Terminology

- *"Abuse" includes all types of abuse to children and adults at risk.*
- *"Prohibited Conduct" refers to behaviour deemed unacceptable based on its nature or appearance.*
- *"Concern" refers to disclosures, concerns or allegations.*
- *RDA UK Safeguarding Team refers to the team based at National Office.*

3.1 Managing Concerns and Allegations Statement

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every individual within the RDA community, regardless of role or position, plays a vital role in creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment. RDA UK encourages an inclusive culture where all individuals understand their duty of care in safeguarding and are empowered to act responsibly.

If a child is in immediate danger, you should contact the police or medical services.

If an adult at risk is in immediate danger, it is good practice - and at the group's discretion – to consider, where possible, when deciding what actions to take.

Prohibited conduct by any individual in RDA is unacceptable. It is determined based on how the behaviour presents, rather on the individual's intention or on whether any actual harm occurred.

Corporate Criminal Liability: The Crime and Policing Act 2026 increases the importance of strong safeguarding and governance arrangements for incorporated groups. Where criminal offences are committed by a 'senior manager' (e.g. trustees, GSO, etc) acting within authority of the group and/or in connection with a group's activities, the group may be exposed to criminal liability. Groups should therefore ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies, oversight, training and controls are in place to prevent and respond to criminal and safeguarding risks.

3.2 Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and guidance for identifying, reporting and managing safeguarding concerns to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals within RDA UK.

3.3 Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved with RDA UK, including RDA Groups, Regional Teams, trustees, staff, volunteers, coaches, participants and their parents/guardians. It will be shared on MyRDA and communicated to the RDA network. RDA Groups are responsible for sharing this policy with their volunteers, coaches, participants and their parents/guardians.

3.4 Policy Statements

3.4.1 Identification of Safeguarding Concerns:

- All individuals involved with RDA UK should be vigilant in recognising the signs and behaviours which might indicate potential safeguarding concerns.

3.4.2 Reporting Procedures:

- Any person who becomes aware of, suspects, or has concerns about safeguarding issues must report it immediately to the Group Safeguarding Officer.
- The Group's Safeguarding Officer is responsible for notifying RDA UK.
- Reports can be made verbally or in writing, ensuring that all relevant details are provided.

3.4.3 Confidentiality and Handling of Reports by RDA UK:

- All reports of safeguarding concerns will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, and the identity of the reporter will be protected whenever possible, unless required by law or for investigative purposes.
- All reports will be recorded on a central Case Management System, called Globocol.
- British Equestrian (BEF) will have oversight of all safeguarding concerns and will provide advice and supervision where required.

3.4.4 Investigation and Response:

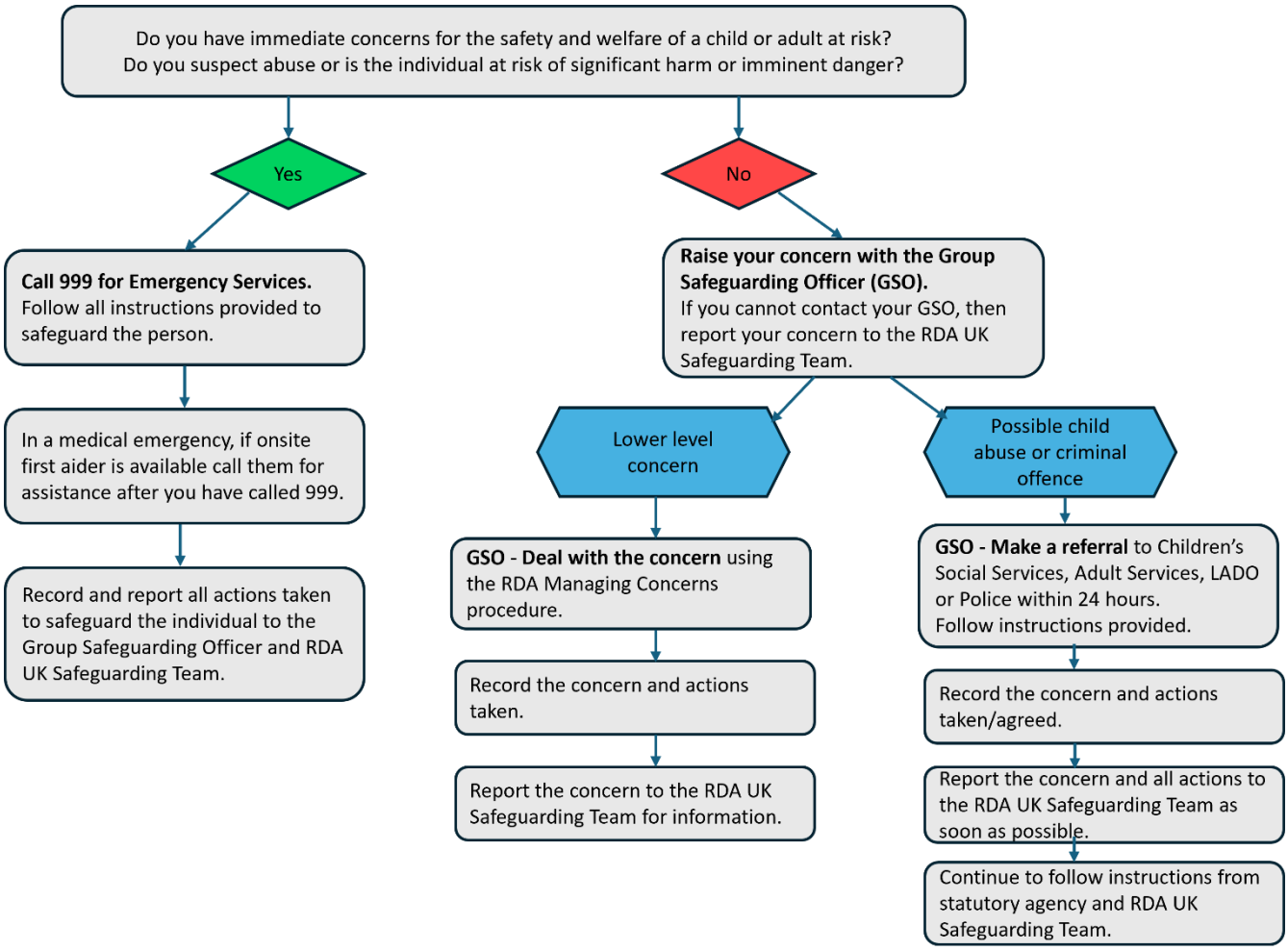
- The Group Safeguarding Officer and RDA UK Safeguarding Team will conduct a thorough investigation into reported concerns, involving relevant Statutory Agencies as necessary.
- If other agencies are involved, regular contact will be maintained with appropriate individuals as necessary. Where possible, timescales and follow-ups will be agreed.
- Immediate action will be taken to ensure the safety and protection of the individuals involved while the matter is ongoing.
- Support and guidance will be provided to those affected by safeguarding concerns, including direction to support organisations, counselling support and medical services as needed.

3.4.5 Training and Awareness:

- Regular training sessions and awareness programmes will be conducted to educate staff, volunteers and relevant stakeholders on recognising, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns.

  Refer to the Safer Recruitment Practices (Section 2) for more information.

3.5 Concern Reporting Flow



3.6 Recognising Abuse

3.6.1 Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct includes all forms of abuse, harassment, discrimination, bullying and exploitation. The categories include:

- Physical abuse, including contact and non-contact
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Grooming
- Tech-enabled sexual content, including AI / deepfakes and intimate imagery
- Image-based abuse
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Discrimination
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Hazing
- Exploitation of the workforce
- Professional poor practice
- Aiding and abetting
- Intentional false allegations
- Manipulating or otherwise interfering with process
- Retaliation
- Radicalisation

New recognised concerns under the Crime and Policing Act 2026 added to the policy in September 2026:
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): A form of child abuse where a child or young person is manipulated, coerced, threatened or deceived into taking part in criminal activity for the benefit of others. Exploitation can occur online or in person and may involved grooming, violence, intimidation, drugs, theft or other criminal offences. Children may be targeted because of vulnerabilities. Such as age, circumstances, social environment or unmet needs. A child may not recognise that they are being exploited or may appear to participate willingly.
Tech-Enabled Sexual Content: Sexual or intimate content created, altered, shared or distributed using digital technologies, including online platforms and AI tools. The Act includes protections against non-consensual intimate images, requirements for platforms to remove such content within 48 hours, and offences involving AI-generated child sexual abuse images and AI "nudification" tools.

Refer to the BEF Safeguarding Policy for an expansion on the categories of Prohibited Conduct.

3.6.2 Common Indicators of Abuse

Abuse is not always obvious or readily visible. Indicators might include, but are not limited to:

- Disclosures about abuse or questions/comments which lead to that reasoning
- Withdrawal from friends or usual activities
- Changes in an individual's normal behaviour and appetite
- Depression, anxiety or unusual fears
- Sudden loss of self-confidence or becoming withdrawn
- Reluctance to go home or attempts to run away
- Frequent absences from activities or no longer enjoying sessions
- Unexplained or suspicious injuries or injuries with inconsistent explanations
- Attempts at suicide, suicidal tendencies or self-harm
- Rebellious or defiant behaviour
- Someone losing or gaining weight, an unkempt appearance or a deterioration in hygiene
- Person has belongings or money going missing

This is not an exhaustive list, and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place. Indicators must also be considerate of individual circumstances.

3.6.3 Reasons to Suspect Abuse

A person may become aware of abuse through:

- A disclosure made by a child or adult at risk
- An observation
- Signs or suspicions of abuse

- An allegation made against a member of staff, trustee, coach or volunteer
- An allegation made about a parent/guardian
- In response to allegations regarding poor practice or code of conduct breach
- A report from the local statutory agency, etc.

3.7 Responding to Concerns

Responding is the actions taken when you become aware of a concern or have a disclosure made to you. It is crucial that you gain as much factual information and context as possible whilst not influencing any future investigation.

When responding to a concern, you should:

- Stay calm – do not show disgust or disbelief.
- Ensure the person is and feels safe, if responding to a disclosure.
- Listen carefully.
- Keep an open mind – do not speculate, make assumptions or make judgements.
- Find a quiet place to have the conversation.
- Keep questions to a minimum whilst the person is talking. Use open-ended questions to find out more information or to clarify points, where possible and necessary: Tell me, explain to me, describe.
- Record a written account of the information shared with you, and read it back to the individual to ensure that it accurately reflects their statements. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to complete these notes immediately after the conversation. Please note: It is essential that this account is written as soon as possible following the discussion to minimise the risk of omitting important details.
- Develop and agree upon an immediate plan outlining the next course of action.

You have a duty of care to report <u>all</u> concerns to the Group Safeguarding Officer who has a duty to report all concerns to RDA UK.

It is good practice to seek the adult at risk's views on what they would like to happen next and to inform them of the actions you intend to take, always considering their wants and needs.

Consent: You should look to gain consent from an adult at risk where possible. However, you do not need consent to discuss a concern with the Group Safeguarding Officer and RDA UK Safeguarding Team. Do not let the issue of consent get in the way of seeking advice if the person is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

Disclosures: Children and adults at risk may not feel prepared or know how to communicate that they are experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect, or they might not even realise that what they are going through is harmful. Additionally, they may have been influenced to believe that the abusive behaviour is an expression of care and love from the person causing the harm. It is crucial to allow

the person to open up at their own pace, regardless of whether evidence is immediately apparent. This does not mean disregarding the concerns or delaying action, but rather it may involve contacting the local Statutory Agencies promptly. You should explain your concerns to the person making the disclosure that you have a responsibility to seek assistance and guidance. Keeping detailed records is imperative in these circumstances.

You should not:

- Panic.
- Make promises or agree to confidentiality (the individual should be aware the matter will be kept confidential, but the relevant safeguarding bodies will be informed).
- Allow expressions of shock or distaste.
- Make negative comments about the alleged incident.
- Ask leading questions. Keep closed questions (which require a 'yes' or 'no' answer) to a minimum.

You should never:

- Approach any person of concern to discuss the concern.
- Make promises to the person that cannot be kept.
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Take forward concerns if you have a conflict of interest. Instead pass this to an appropriate person, e.g. Group Chair (if you are the Group Safeguarding Officer) or RDA UK Safeguarding Team.

3.8 Reporting Concerns

Primary Reporting Structure

1. Concerned Party – the person initially reporting the concern or allegation
2. Group Safeguarding Officer
3. RDA UK Safeguarding Team
4. RDA UK Board of Trustees
5. BEF Safeguarding Team and Case Management Group (CMG)

In every case a referral to Statutory Agencies (i.e. Police, Social Care, LADO, or Local Children/Adults Board) should be considered. The point at which contact could be made depends on severity of the concern and level of risk.

The following section outlines the reporting policies and procedures for each level.

3.8.1 Initial Concern Raised / Concerned Party

Inaction is not an option.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse: The Crime and Policing Act 2026 has introduced a legal duty for people in England, who work in regulated activity with children, to report known or suspected child sexual abuse. A report should be made if a child tells someone they have been abused, if someone witnesses an offence or if they come across explicit recordings involving children. If a required report is not passed on to the appropriate statutory agency, this may lead to a professional referral or other action, rather than criminal prosecution. It is a criminal offence to deliberately prevent or obstruct someone from making a report.

If you have a concern about the welfare of a child or adult at risk and they are not in immediate risk of harm, or you need some guidance, you should contact:

1. Your Group Safeguarding Officer – please find out from your group who these people are.

2. If you cannot contact your GSO contact The RDA UK Safeguarding Team at Email: safeguarding@rda.org.uk or Tel: 01926 492915. The phone line will be available during office hours only.

If a person is at immediate risk or it is an emergency, then contact the Police, Emergency Services, Children Social Care Team or nearest Safeguarding Adults Board (Statutory Agencies) in your area, as appropriate. ***Note:*** *Contacting Statutory Agencies is priority if risk of harm is immediate. You must also inform the Group Safeguarding Officer and/or the RDA UK Safeguarding Team at your earliest convenience.*

You can find your nearest Safeguarding Adults Board here: www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/find-your-nearest-safeguarding-adults-board/).

If you require guidance your Group Safeguarding Officer and the RDA UK Safeguarding Team are available to help.

Additional support is available from the BEF Safeguarding Team at Email: safeguarding@bef.co.uk or Tel: 02475 313443.

If you are in any doubt, report your concern.

Timeframe: Concerns should be reported on the day they are raised, in person, by phone or email to the Group Safeguarding Officer.

3.8.2 Group Safeguarding Officer

All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team by the Group Safeguarding Officer, including both those that have been addressed at a local level and those that need an onward referral due to the severity of the concern.

A case file should be created for every concern raised and contain detailed records for each individual concern. Refer to Section 3.9 for more guidance on what information the case files should contain. The case file should be held locally, and a copy must be shared with the RDA UK Safeguarding Team as soon as is practical via email to safeguarding@rda.org.uk. Ensure the file is marked 'private and confidential' and password protected, and on a password protected device, where possible.

Note: *This email is not manned 24/7 and a phone call should be made if an immediate response is needed following the options outlined in Section 8.*

If the concerns were reported directly to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team, the Group Safeguarding Officer will then be informed of the concerns and any proposed action. The exceptions to this are:

- where it may put a child/adult at risk in danger of significant harm, or,
- where the concern involves the Group Safeguarding Officer. In this event, the Group Chair will be informed.

If you require any guidance on how to deal with a concern, RDA UK Safeguarding Team (Tel: 01926 492915 or Email: safeguarding@rda.org.uk) are available to help and can advise you in accordance with these safeguarding policies and procedures.

3.8.3 RDA UK Safeguarding Team

RDA UK has a legal duty to record all safeguarding concerns. Case files will be recorded and stored on the Case Management System (CMS), Globocol.

RDA UK reserves the right to share case files with the BEF and its Member Bodies in its approach to safeguarding and, where appropriate, cases must be referred to Statutory Agencies. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only and confidentiality must always be maintained.

Any case files shared with the BEF will be confidential, password protected documents (where possible) submitted through the Globocol portal. Correspondence with the BEF, the sharing of case files and any decisions made will be recorded in the chronology of the online record and will form part of the case file.

When referring to Statutory Agencies, the RDA UK Safeguarding Team will discuss the concern with the relevant agency to determine whether they wish to take the case forward. If so, the case files marked 'private and confidential' will be forwarded to the relevant agency. All correspondence with Statutory Agencies will be recorded as part of the case file.

If a concern becomes public knowledge, liaison with the RDA UK Communications Team will take place to determine how best to respond.

The BEF or Member Body may wait until the outcome of any related criminal or civil investigations and/or proceedings is known, before making a decision on how to proceed with a case.

3.8.4 RDA UK Board of Trustees

The RDA UK Board of Trustees are informed of all cases, and where necessary, are involved in the oversight of Level 2 cases in conjunction with the RDA UK Safeguarding Team.

3.8.5 BEF Safeguarding Team and Case Management Group

RDA UK reports all safeguarding concerns to the BEF Case Management Group through Globocol. The BEF Case Management Group provides guidance and supervision on cases as required.

3.9 Recording Concerns

A detailed record of each concern should be made when raised which will form part of the case file. The record should:

- Be accurate and thorough to assist any investigation
- Contain facts
- Not include personal opinion or assumptions
- Identify hearsay where applicable
- Contain relevant information to the specific concern, including conversations that have taken place, persons involved and date/times.
- Include action taken so far.
- Any evidence, e.g. screenshots of online messages.

3.9.1 Recording on Devices: Do not make any recordings on a mobile phone or other devices. If the police decide to investigate the matter, any devices with recordings relating to a case are at risk of seizure as part of the investigation.

3.9.2 Photographic Evidence: Do not take photos of bruises or injuries as this may hinder any Police investigation or legal process. Instead, using the Body Map Form, a diagram should be drawn showing the location and appearance of bruises/injuries, using as much description as possible.

3.9.3 Monitoring: Concerns may be monitored at the group or national level. If the situation changes or if new information comes to light, it may be necessary to take additional action.

The completed documentation should be emailed to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team on safeguarding@rda.org.uk.

As a minimum, cases files will consist of:

- An incident report form
- Any conversation report forms
- Any supporting evidence or documentation

3.9.4 Incident Report Form

An incident report form should be completed for all concerns and should include, where possible, the following information:

- Full details of the person reporting the concern (and the person who expressed the original concern if different).
- Full details of the child/adult at risk, and parent/guardian information where appropriate.
- The nature of the concern, including dates and times of incidents, persons involved and any other relevant information.
- A description of any indicators you have noted.
- The person's account, if it can be given.
- Details of the person of concern and any relevant information, including accreditation, qualifications or certifications.
- Details of witnesses to the incident, including contact details.
- Details of external agencies, if applicable, including details for the person you have spoken to (name, position and crime reference number).
- Whether the parents/guardians have been contacted, including details of what information has been communicated.
- Whether anyone else has been consulted, including details.
- Safeguarding Incident Report Form (Child) and Safeguarding Incident Report Form (Adult)

3.9.5 Conversation Report Form

A conversation report form should be completed when advice is sought from or when concerns are referred to Statutory Agencies. This will predominantly apply when the RDA UK Safeguarding Team cannot be contacted, and the concern needs to be reported immediately.

As a minimum, the conversation report form should include the following information:

- Date and time of conversation
- Details of the people involved in the conversation
- Method of communication
- Details of the child/adult at risk and group
- Details of person you are making the referral to, including full name, contact details and role
- Crime reference number, where applicable
- Summary of the conversation
- Planned and proposed actions

All forms are available on MyRDA. Please email safeguarding@rda.org.uk for a direct copy.

3.9.6 Supporting Evidence / Body Map Form

There may be supporting evidence relevant to the concern, e.g. screenshots of messages, weblinks or a body map of bruises or injuries. These should also be included in the case file, where relevant.

A body map form can be used to accurately record visible injuries, marks, or signs of harm on a child or adult at risk. A body map form should be completed when the location or explanation for an injury is unexplained or of concern.

The body map should not be used as a substitute for a medical assessment; ensure the individual receives the appropriate medical attention where required.

When completing a body map form, do not remove clothing and never photograph any of the marks or injuries under any circumstances. Record the exact location, size, shape, colour and condition of the injury; and state whether the skin is broken, swollen or painful for the individual. Document the date and time the injury was first observed and when the form was completed, including the actions taken with time stamps.

While completing a body map form, always ensure the individual's dignity and privacy are respected. This includes conducting the process in a safe environment, where the individual feels safe and supported.

3.9.7 Case Summary

A case summary should be developed once a case is concluded, outlining the key points of each concern. This should include:

- A clear and concise overview of the concern (not including personal details).
- Details of the actions implemented.
- Key learning points and recommendations for policy changes, working practice improvements, guidance development or training.

3.9.8 Who completes which documentation?

The person raising the concern does not necessarily need to complete documentation. However, notes should be recorded regarding specific details of the concern, especially where a disclosure is received from a child/adult at risk to ensure the details are as accurate as possible. The concern will likely be recorded in full by the Group Safeguarding Officer or the RDA UK Safeguarding Team, depending on who the concern is reported to.

3.10 Concern Threshold

Concerns are categorised into threshold levels:

- Level 1 (low threshold) – low level concerns dealt with by the group (e.g. poor practice). Please note that RDA UK Safeguarding should be informed of a concern, even if it is to be dealt with by a group.

- Level 2 (high threshold) – referrals made to Statutory Agency and/or concerns that have reputational risk to the organisation.

The threshold level is based on how and where the matter is to be handled, i.e. at group level, escalated to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team or referred to a Statutory Agency. If you require any guidance on how to deal with a concern, RDA UK Safeguarding Team are able to provide help.

3.11 Initial Steps

The initial steps to follow when deciding on an appropriate course of action are:

1. Receive concern in writing or verbally – ideally verbal concerns should be followed up in writing to ensure the details are noted down correctly.

2. Establish the facts, whether there were any witnesses, etc.

3. Determine the threshold level of the concern.

4. Define an appropriate course of action.
   a) If the matter can be handled by the group, the proposed actions can be found in Section 3.12.
   b) If the matter needs to be escalated to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team, contact the team by phone on 01926 492915 (in the first instance) or by email on safeguarding@rda.org.uk.
   c) If the matter needs to be referred to a Statutory Agency, you will need to follow the reporting procedure for your Local Authority which can be found on the local council website.

5. Implement proposed action.

6. Inform RDA UK Safeguarding Team of any concerns you are dealing with, by emailing safeguarding@rda.org.uk. Guidance can also be sought from the team at any point in the process.

3.12 Proposed Action For Level 1 Concerns

The following actions may be used by groups when responding to Level 1 concerns.

- No further action
- Reissuing of codes of conduct and further training
- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Disengagement of volunteering
- Disengagement of participation

This section should be considered in conjunction with RDA UK Codes of Conduct and Complaints Procedure.

There is no requirement for groups to follow these actions in the order they appear. Groups are able to choose which actions will be implemented depending on the circumstances. However, these concerns should be reported to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team for information and will inform whether there is a need to source guidance or training on a common emerging theme.

3.12.1 No Further Action

After the group has looked into a concern/allegation, it may be deemed that there are no additional steps to take. The decision to take no further action should be noted in the case summary and include the reasons for this decision.

3.12.2 Training and issuing of Codes of Conduct

RDA UK has Codes of Conduct which outline the expected standards of behaviour by all at RDA activities. In some circumstances, it might be appropriate to share the Codes of Conduct with participants, volunteers, coaches or parents/guardians to reinforce or remind people of the expectations. This can be done in person or by email, ensuring the recipient has read and understood the relevant code of conduct, and has had the opportunity to ask for clarification on points they do not understand.

3.12.3 Verbal Warning

A verbal warning can be given for persistent and/or severe instances of inappropriate behaviour. Ideally this should be given as soon as is practicable and issued alongside the code of conduct to reinforce the behavioural expectations of the individual. The Group Chair, Group Safeguarding Officer or other appropriate Group Representative is best placed to give a verbal warning, ensuring there is an independent witness present to act as a neutral party.

If the warning is given to a person under 18 years, then you must ensure their parent/guardian/carer, or another responsible adult is present. For those over the age of 18, then the opportunity to have another person present with them as support should be offered.

The person receiving the warning should have the opportunity to respond to the concerns if they wish. Depending on the outcome of the conversation, the group has the discretion to withdraw the verbal warning if appropriate. Verbal warnings should be recorded, and confidentiality maintained throughout.

3.12.4 Written Warning

Repeat complaints or concerns with escalating behaviour may result in a written warning. Seriously poor behaviour may warrant a written warning without first issuing a verbal warning. The Group

Chair, Group Safeguarding Officer or other appropriate Group Representative is best placed to give a written warning, ensuring there is an independent witness present to act as a neutral party.

If the warning is given to a person under 18 years, then you must ensure their parent/guardian/carer or another responsible adult is present. For those over the age of 18, then the opportunity to have another person present with them as support should be offered.

A written warning can be issued by email, ensuring you are sending this to the intended recipient, or printed on headed paper.

The person receiving the warning should have the opportunity to respond to the concerns if they wish. This discussion should remain factual, and arguments should be avoided. After these discussions, the group has the discretion to withdraw the written warning if appropriate. Written warnings should be recorded, and confidentiality maintained throughout.

3.12.5 Disengagement of Volunteering

Challenging or escalating behaviour or poor practice can have a negative impact on the safety and well-being of the individual, demonstrating the behaviour, or others. As a result, the group may decide to cease any volunteering work with a person with immediate effect. The Group Chair, Group Safeguarding Officer or other appropriate Group Representative should implement this action.

The steps to follow are:

1. Explain the concerns with the person's behaviour, giving examples where possible.
2. Outline the ramifications of the behaviour, e.g. the impact on the well-being of others or the safety risks involved.
3. Conclude with the desired outcome, either:
    a. Explaining the required changes to behaviour and timeframe for this to take place, or,
    b. Stating that the person will no longer be allowed to volunteer with the group.

If the group decides to disengage with a volunteer, this decision and reasoning should be recorded as part of the case actions. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

3.12.6 Adjustments to or Withdrawal of Participation

Similarly to poor volunteer conduct, it might be that the behaviour of a participant is negatively impacting on the safety and wellbeing of themselves and/or others. As a result, the group may feel it appropriate to consider adjustments to the activity plan of a participant or withdraw the opportunity to be involved with activities at the group.

The steps to follow are:

1. Carry out a risk assessment to evaluate the risks of the participant's behaviour.

2. Identify any mitigating measures the group can take to enable the participant to continue taking part.
3. Determine if the group can manage these measures, e.g. can the right support be offered, can the schedule be changed to accommodate individual participation, are the measures feasible, and do the group feel comfortable doing this.
4. Have a conversation with the participant, and their parent/guardian if appropriate, and explain the decision.

The Group Chair, Group Safeguarding Officer or somebody with the authority from the Trustee Board should implement this action, ensuring there is an independent witness present to act as a neutral party.

Any agreed action should be recorded as part of the case actions and confidentiality maintained.

3.13 Proposed Action for Level 2 Concerns

The following actions might be employed by the RDA UK Safeguarding Team when responding to Level 2 concerns. These are classified as 'Disciplinary Action'. The chosen action will depend on the severity of the concern, guidance given from Statutory Agencies (if involved) and specific details of the case.

- Temporary Suspension
- Referral to Statutory Agencies, as appropriate
- Internal safeguarding investigation
- Referral to criminal record organisations for harmful behaviour
- Restriction or Prohibition from attending RDA events
- Disengagement of volunteering at RDA in any capacity

3.13.1 Temporary Suspension

It may be deemed necessary to temporarily suspend an individual for a defined period of time whilst an investigation into the allegation is underway.

The RDA UK Safeguarding Team will conduct a safeguarding risk assessment to consider the need to temporarily suspend a person based on the concern details, the risk to vulnerable people, any measures which can be accommodated for (e.g. change of roles/responsibilities) and/or advice from Statutory Agencies, when involved.

The suspension of an individual is a neutral act to protect all those involved, including the accused individual, in the case of a referral.

The decision will be communicated to the individual by formal letter. This letter may be posted to a known address or emailed to the individual, after confirming the correct recipient email address.

3.13.2 Referral to Statutory Agencies

Where a child or adult at risk has been harmed or is at significant risk of harm, the concern will be reported to the relevant Statutory Agency, following the reporting procedures of the Local Authority.

Where an adult at risk is involved, the adult should be included in this discussion and their views on what they would like to happen sought, before making a referral. However, if you feel a referral should still be made and you do not have consent from the adult at risk, then you need to make this clear to Adult Social Care.

Any action taken after this referral has been made will be based on advice and direction given by the relevant Statutory Agency.

If a concern is raised it may be the right course of action to discuss the case with statutory services who may have other concerns logged or a case open against an individual that they are monitoring, Your information could be critical to build an ongoing case.

3.13.3 Internal Safeguarding Investigation

It may be necessary to carry out a full safeguarding investigation and disciplinary hearing when a concern has been raised in respect of safeguarding children or adults at risk. This could be in relation to abusive behaviour, abuse or position of trust matters. The Complaints Procedure (available on MyRDA, under Policies) should be followed and the BEF Case Management Team consulted, where necessary.

The outcome of an internal safeguarding investigation will include determining the appropriate course of action to take.

3.13.4 Referral to Criminal Record Organisations

Following the conclusion of an investigation, RDA UK has a duty to refer any harmful behaviour of a person of concern to the relevant criminal record body. Criminal record bodies include:

- Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS) for England and Wales
- Disclosure Scotland (PVG) for Scotland
- NI Direct (Access NI) for Northern Ireland.

The relevant body's referral process will be followed.

3.13.5 Restriction or Prohibition from attending RDA events

RDA UK reserves the right to restrict and/or prohibit attendance by a person considered to be unsuitable at any of its activities and operations. Reasons could include, but are not limited to:

- Someone who is convicted of offences against children, e.g. required to sign the Sex Offenders Register.

- Someone who continually demonstrates poor behaviour which may be detrimental to others.
- Someone whose behaviour is deemed to impact negatively on the efficient and safe running of an event, including:
  - Physical or verbal violence
  - Inappropriate language
  - Bullying
  - Disruptive behaviour
  - Drunkenness
  - Stealing
  - Sexually inappropriate behaviour or actions
  - Discrimination
  - Taking or selling illegal substances
  - Criminal behaviour

Where it is felt necessary to restrict or prohibit an individual's attendance at events, the individual will be politely asked to leave the event and to refrain from attending future events. This will then be followed up in writing within 7 days. The restriction applies to the person in question and does not extend to other participants, family members or relatives.

3.14 Appeals

Anyone who is subject to disciplinary action may appeal against the decision(s) made in line with the RDA Complaints Procedure.

3.15 Child Death Reviews (Applicable to England and Wales)

If a child dies while taking part in an RDA activity, the Local Safeguarding Board may initiate a child death review. RDA UK may be asked to contribute to and support with this review. The protocol to follow in these circumstances is detailed in the statutory guidance document "Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)". RDA UK has sought training for appropriate personnel in case of need.

3.16 Sharing Information

Information should be shared on a strict need to know basis and should remain confidential as far as is practicable. While complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the duty of care in safeguarding against abuse, any concerns of harm must be promptly reported and measures taken to safeguard the person from further harm.

RDA UK reserves the right to investigate any safeguarding concern and/or to make a referral to the appropriate Statutory Agency, as required. The priority is always the welfare of the person at risk.

Information may be shared with the following people, where appropriate:

- Group Safeguarding Officer
- The parent/guardian of the child/adult at risk (where appropriate and only if it will not harm the child/adult at risk to do so)
- The person making the allegation (where appropriate and only with information they need to know)

- RDA UK Safeguarding Team
- The BEF and its Member Bodies (where the person of concern is involved in other organisations)
- Statutory Agencies, including: Police, Children or Adult's Social Care or Social Work Services, LADO, MASH Team, etc.
- BEF Case Management Group and designated officers within RDA UK.
- Legal advisors of RDA UK, the BEF or its Member Bodies.

Parents, guardians or carers are entitled to be informed of any concerns raised about their child or adult at risk, regardless of the situation. This information should be communicated by the Group Safeguarding Officer or another designated person. However, if disclosing this information to the parents / guardians poses a potential risk of further harm to the child or adult at risk, it must first be referred to the Group Safeguarding Officer and/or the RDA UK Safeguarding Team for assessment before being shared. In cases where there is an immediate risk of harm, it is crucial to inform the Police or Social Care immediately, who will determine the appropriateness of notifying parents, guardians or carers.

3.17 Confidentiality and Data Protection

RDA UK must comply with data protection legislation with regards to the use and storage of personal information. Therefore, all personal data should be treated in accordance with the seven principles specified in the legislation. These principles relate to:

1. Lawfulness, fairness and transparency
2. Purpose limitation
3. Data minimisation
4. Accuracy
5. Storage limitation
6. Integrity and confidentiality
7. Accountability

Refer to the RDA Group Data Protection Policy for further information.

3.18 Review and Monitoring

This document will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary, in line with the legal and statutory framework, to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Feedback from incidents, investigations and stakeholders will be considered in the review process to continually improve safeguarding procedures.

Section 4: Appendices

Appendix 1: Definitions

Here are key definitions referenced throughout this document.

Child/Young Person: There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the UK. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, states that a child "means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (Article1, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. In Scotland, whilst child protection procedures may be considered for a person up to the age of 18, the legal boundaries of childhood and adulthood are variously defined. Most of the provisions which deal with parental rights and responsibilities apply only to children under the age of 16.

Adult at Risk: There are different definitions of an adult at risk dependent on the country.

In England and Wales - An adult at risk is a person over the age of 18 years and:

- having needs for care and support, and
- experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect and
- as a result of those care needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

In Scotland - (referred to as protected adults) - Adults (16 and over) are considered to be at risk of harm if they are:

- unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests,
- who are at risk of harm
- more vulnerable to being harmed because of a disability, mental health condition, illness or physical or mental infirmity

In Northern Ireland - An adult at risk is:

- a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics or life circumstances.

Health and Welfare: A broad concept that applies to all individuals and is shaped by various factors, such as: personal dignity, physical and mental health, protection from abuse and neglect, autonomy in daily life, participation in work, education or recreation, social and economic conditions, domestic, family and personal life, suitable accommodation and making a meaningful contribution to society.

This encompasses all the efforts of RDA UK in supporting those who engage with the Charity, ultimately promoting their overall health and well-being.

Safeguarding: The overarching term to describe everything that is in place to keep at risk groups safe from harm. This includes everything RDA UK does which contributes to helping keep everyone safe.

Child Wellbeing *(Scotland)*: The procedures and practices in place to promote the wellbeing of children and young people experiencing wellbeing concerns. These concerns do not always meet the threshold for a child protection referral, but do have an impact on the wellbeing of a child or young person.

Protection: The actions taken to protect specific children, young people or adults at risk who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All personnel should refer any concerns immediately to the RDA UK Safeguarding Team if they feel a child, young person or an adult at risk is suffering, or likely to, suffer harm.

Child Abuse: Any action that could or does cause significant harm to a child.

Categories of Child Abuse: There are 4 categories of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.

Abuse (Adult): A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person.

Categories of Adult Abuse: The Care Act 2014 identifies 10 categories of adult abuse. However, this is not considered an exhaustive list. These categories include self-neglect, modern slavery, domestic abuse and coercive control, discriminatory abuse, organisation abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial or material abuse, neglect, or emotion or psychological abuse.

Prohibited Conduct: Behaviour deemed unacceptable based on its nature or appearance, not on whether the person [demonstrating the behaviour] meant to cause harm or if harm actually happened.

Categories of Prohibited Conduct: Includes all forms of abuse, harassment, discrimination, bullying and exploitation. The categories include physical abuse, including contact and non-contact, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation (CSE), grooming, discrimination, bullying, including cyber, hazing, exploitation of the workforce, professional poor practice, aiding and abetting, intentional false allegations, manipulating or otherwise interfering with process, or, retaliation.

Mental Capacity: Mental capacity legislation across the UK is designed to support and protect decision-making within a legal framework. It operates on the principle of presumed capacity – every adult has the right to make their own decisions and is assumed to have the capacity to do so unless proven otherwise. This means that an adult's ability to make decisions cannot be automatically questioned

based solely on a medical condition or disability. It is also a criminal offence for anyone to intentionally mistreat or neglect someone who lacks capacity, as outlined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Safer Recruitment: A set of practices aimed at ensuring that individuals who are selected for positions are safe and suitable for the role.

Disclosure Checks: (Also known as Criminal Record Checks) A process of verifying whether an individual has a criminal history or not that may affect their suitability for the role applied for.

Safeguarding Concern: When there is information that a child, young person or adult at risk has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, by their own or someone else's behaviour.

Safeguarding Allegation: Where personnel working on behalf of RDA UK or an affiliated organisation has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or adult at risk.
- Behaved towards children, young people and adults at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a further risk of harm to children, young people and adults at risk.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, young people and adults at risk.

Low Level Concerns: Concerns that a person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the code of conduct, including conduct outside of RDA, and doesn't meet the threshold of harm or considered serious enough to refer to the statutory agencies. E.g. being overly friendly with children or shouting/intimidating another person.

High Threshold Concerns: Concerns that are referred to statutory agencies and/or hold a degree of organisation reputational risk. E.g. any concern of sexual abuse.

Poor Practice: Takes place whenever a member of staff, volunteer or coach fail to provide a good standard of care and support, i.e. a breach in the code of conduct.

Abuse of Trust: The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, Section 3, introduced the offence of abuse of trust. It is a criminal offence for anyone aged 18 or over to have sexual intercourse or to engage in any other sexual activity with someone under 18 if the adult is in a position of trust towards the minor. This applies even if the relationship is consensual. Similar provisions are outlined in the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

Disclosure: The process by which a person starts to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can take place over a longer period of time *(NSPCC)*.

Statutory Agencies: Include Police, Social Care, LADO and Local Children/Adults Board.

Social Services: This policy refers to social services as, across the UK, there are various terms used to define social services including Health & Social Care, adults' services and children's services.

Appendix 2: Legal and Procedural Framework

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children, RDA UK will act in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance. This list is not exhaustive.

A2.1 England & Wales

- Care Act 2014
- Child and Social Work Act 2017
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Crime & Policing Act 2026
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Information Sharing Advice (HM Government) 2018
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Police Act 1997
- Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2012
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2003
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 (Wales)
- The European Convention on Human Rights 1950
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE) 2018

A2.2 Scotland

- Adult Support and Protection Act 2007
- Adults with Incapacity Act 2000
- Children (Equal Protection From Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Young People (Scotland) 2014
- Data Protection Act 1998
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Scottish Government) 2021
- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001

- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (Scotland) Act 2007
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989

A2.3 Northern Ireland

- Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015
- Article 17 and 18 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- How to identify and manage harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people (DfE) 2022
- Mental Capacity 2016
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools – a guide for schools (DfE) 2020
- Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2001
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Appendix 3: Concern Incident Forms

Below you will find the four main safeguarding concern incident forms along with screenshots. All forms are available on MyRDA. Please email safeguarding@rda.org.uk for a direct copy.

Incident Report Form (Child)

Safeguarding Incident Report Form (Child) RDA

This form should be completed to record the details of any concerns raised at an RDA Group. A copy **must** be sent to RDA UK Safeguarding Team. This form should be completed for all levels of concern, even where no immediate action may be necessary. This document should be kept **confidential** when completed.

Your Information	
Name	
Address	
Contact Number	
Email	
Name of Group	
Region	
Your Role	

Personal Information – Child / Young Person	
Name	
Date of Birth	
Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Unknown

Incident Report Form (Adult)

Safeguarding Incident Report Form (Adult) RDA

This form should be completed to record the details of any concerns raised at an RDA Group. A copy **must** be sent to RDA UK Safeguarding Team. This form should be completed for all levels of concern, even where no immediate action may be necessary. This document should be kept **confidential** when completed.

Your Information	
Name	
Address	
Contact Number	
Email	
Name of Group	
Region	
Your Role	

Personal Information – Adult	
Name	
Date of Birth	
Approximate Age, if DOB unknown	

Conversation Report Form

Conversation Report Form

This form should be completed to record the details of any conversation regarding concerns raised at an RDA Group. A copy **must** be sent to RDA UK Safeguarding Team, along with the incident report form. This form can be completed for disclosures raised by a child/adult at risk or when the concern is reported to statutory agencies. This document should be kept **confidential** when completed.

Call Information	
Date and time of conversation	
Name of Group	
Region	

Body Map Form

Body Map Form

A Body Map should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries.

You MUST:

- NOT remove any clothing or ask the individual to undress or adjust clothing to enable observation.
- Record only what is visible or what the child describes.
- NOT photograph injuries.
- Record only factual, objective observations.
- Describe the injury.

Record the following information for each mark identified:

- Exact site of injury on the body
- Size of injury
- Shape of injury
- Colour of injury
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean?
-

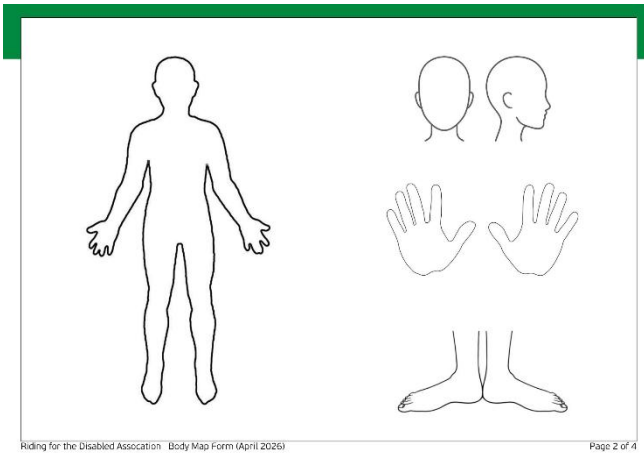
Also record:

- How the injury came to your attention
- What actions were taken afterward (e.g. first aid administered)

Confidentiality
A body map form is a confidential safeguarding document that must be stored securely, following data retention guidelines. It should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999!
Please attach this document to the completed incident form and submit it to: RDA UK Safeguarding Team safeguarding@rda.org.uk

Riding for the Disabled Assocation Body Map Form (April 2026) Page 1 of 4



Riding for the Disabled Assocation Body Map Form (April 2026) Page 2 of 4

Body Map Form

Date and Time Recorded: Name of child/adult at risk: Approximate Age:	Details of individual completing the form Name: Role: Signature:

Notes

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Appendix 4: Helpful Resources and Guidance

RDA UK has a variety of helpful resources and best practices which will provide help and guidance on important areas you may need to consider.

Supervision Requirements Guidance
Transportation Guidance

There is also a Resource Hub on MyRDA where you can find a compiled list of resources provided by other organisations. This hub is added to as new guidance and helpful resources become available.