



INITIATIVE

Charity Reg No: 1186141

ADULT & CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Last Updated: March 2024 v1.3

Definitions (for this document)

Vulnerable Adult:

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 or over who may require community care services due to mental health issues, physical or learning disabilities, age, illness, or any other condition. Such individuals may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

At T&B Initiative, we believe that vulnerable adults are entitled to:

- Privacy and respect.
- Dignity in their interactions and living conditions.
- The opportunity to lead an independent and empowered life.
- The ability to make informed choices about their own lives.
- Protection under the law from harm and exploitation.
- The upholding of their rights, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or cultural background.

Child:

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as any individual aged 0-17 years. We recognise that children are particularly vulnerable and require specific measures to ensure their safety and well-being.

Policy Statement

At T&B Initiative, we are dedicated to restoring dignity, fostering hope, and supporting individuals from all walks of life. As a community-focused organisation, we are deeply committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment throughout all our projects.

We aim to ensure that every team member, whether staff or volunteer, is fully aware of their responsibilities under the vulnerable adult and child safeguarding policy. Safeguarding is integral to our ethos, and we expect all team members to uphold and practice these principles at all times.

It is the responsibility of every individual at T&B Initiative to actively prevent physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and children. This includes being vigilant, reporting concerns promptly, and adhering to safeguarding protocols.

We are fully committed to cooperating with statutory services during investigations into suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults, children, or young people. This commitment extends to abuse perpetrated by adults, peers, or anyone else.

To reinforce our dedication, this safeguarding statement will be shared with all staff and volunteers as part of their induction program. Any updates or amendments to the policy will be communicated promptly to ensure everyone remains informed and aligned with our safeguarding standards.

Implementation

T&B Initiative shall:

Plan its work to minimise situations where the abuse of vulnerable adults and children might occur. While the number of individuals who actively seek to abuse vulnerable groups is minimal, T&B Initiative will take proactive measures to reduce the risk of abuse through the following actions:

- **Supervision and Oversight:** Ensure adequate supervision is provided for all vulnerable adults and children during activities or interactions involving T&B Initiative services.
- **Clear Reporting Pathways:** Clearly inform vulnerable adults and children who they can approach if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.
- **Emergency Readiness:** Ensure all staff and volunteers know the location of the nearest telephone and emergency contact numbers. Telephones will be labeled with directions for external calls to ensure prompt action in emergencies.
- **Safe Interaction Practices:** Arrange activities to minimise situations where an adult is left alone with a child. This practice not only protects the child but also safeguards adults from potential allegations.
- **Coverage for Vulnerable Beneficiaries:** Ensure all vulnerable beneficiaries are covered under this policy. Any areas of concern will be promptly reported to the designated safeguarding officer and escalated to appropriate referral agencies as required.
- **Training and Awareness:** Ensure that the designated safeguarding officer and all supervising staff and volunteers receive proper, up-to-date safeguarding training, including how to recognise signs of abuse and respond appropriately.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Provide training for staff and volunteers to understand the specific needs of diverse communities, particularly those from BAME backgrounds, to ensure culturally competent safeguarding practices.

Designated Safeguarding Officers and Their Roles

T&B Initiative has a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who is responsible for managing concerns related to the protection of vulnerable adults and children. Their primary responsibilities include handling disclosures, reporting to relevant authorities, and ensuring that safeguarding measures are implemented effectively.

- **Contacting the Designated Officer:** Details of the designated safeguarding officer can be obtained by contacting info@tb-initiative.org.
- **Secondary Safeguarding Officer:** A secondary safeguarding officer is in place to handle safeguarding concerns in the absence of the DSO or when concerns are related to the DSO. Contact information for the secondary officer can also be obtained via board@tb-initiative.org.
- **Availability:** The designated safeguarding officer will be accessible to vulnerable adults, children, staff, and volunteers who need to discuss any incidents of concern. This includes cases of suspected physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect.
- **Community Engagement:** The safeguarding officers will also be responsible for engaging with referral agencies and the local authority to ensure timely action and support for those affected.
- **Safeguarding Policy Accountability:** Both officers will ensure that the safeguarding policy is consistently reviewed, implemented, and communicated across all T&B Initiative projects, including food parcel distribution, clothing donations, and community outreach activities.

Recording

At T&B Initiative, safeguarding concerns must be handled with the utmost professionalism and confidentiality. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will document and securely maintain records of any disclosures or concerns reported by staff, volunteers, or beneficiaries. These records will include clear, factual accounts of incidents, assessments, referrals, and case discussions.

- Documentation Standards: Staff and volunteers must ensure that all records are:
 - Sufficient and detailed enough to provide clarity.
 - Accurate and free from exaggeration.
 - Concise yet comprehensive, including all relevant facts.
 - Up-to-date, reflecting the most recent actions or decisions.
 - Legible, dated, and signed to ensure accountability.
 - Supported by factual evidence with minimal reliance on personal opinion.
- Evidence Preservation: Any supporting evidence, such as photographs or physical items, must be preserved securely and labeled clearly.
- Confidential Storage: All safeguarding records will be stored securely in individual files to protect the privacy and security of those involved. These records will only be accessible to authorised individuals. Third-party information will not be disclosed without legal authority or consent.
- Use of Records: These records may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings, civil cases, or criminal prosecutions if necessary. They are also available to the individual concerned upon request, adhering to data protection regulations.

Whistle-Blowing

T&B Initiative actively encourages staff and volunteers to take action if they suspect abuse, regardless of the setting, perpetrator, or victim. Everyone has a responsibility to stand up against abuse and ensure the safety of vulnerable adults and children.

- Protection for Whistle-Blowers: Staff and volunteers who report suspicions of abuse are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. T&B Initiative will respect and not penalise those who act in good faith to protect others.
- Responsibility to Act: All staff and volunteers are required to report occurrences or suspicions of abuse immediately to the DSO.

Remember

It is crucial that everyone at T&B Initiative understands their role in safeguarding. The person who first encounters a case of suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. This responsibility lies with professional safeguarding agencies following a referral.

Additional Points

Displaying Information:

- The names and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and the Secondary Safeguarding Officer (SSO) will be clearly displayed at all T&B Initiative locations.
- All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the safeguarding officers and how to contact them.

Applying Agreed Safeguarding Procedures:

- Safeguarding procedures apply equally to all staff and volunteers, regardless of their role or affiliation. While we work within a community-oriented framework, it is unsafe to assume that anyone is automatically safe to be with vulnerable individuals.
- Sensible measures will be taken to ensure that safeguarding policies are implemented consistently across all projects and interactions.

Addressing Concerns:

- If a member of staff or a volunteer has concerns, they must raise them with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- If concerns are not adequately addressed, they should escalate the matter to the management team or directly contact Social Services or the Police for further advice.

Disclosure of Information

At T&B Initiative, we differentiate between confidentiality and secrecy. While all personal and sensitive information disclosed to us is treated as confidential, it may not always remain secret. In specific circumstances, information may need to be shared to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals.

- Personal and Sensitive Information:
 - Confidential information is shared only on a 'need-to-know' basis with relevant staff and volunteers.
 - Information may be shared with another agency when:
 - Permission is granted by the individual concerned.
 - There is an overriding justification to share information without consent, such as safeguarding risks.
 - Legal requirements necessitate disclosure.

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

To prevent the abuse of vulnerable adults and children, T&B Initiative ensures that all staff and volunteers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

- Behavioural Expectations:
 - Job descriptions for employees and volunteers explicitly outline the behaviour and values expected when working with vulnerable adults and children.
 - As part of their induction, new staff and volunteers are briefed on expected conduct and safeguarding procedures.
- Regulated Activities:
 - Staff and volunteers at T&B Initiative are not involved in regulated activities, such as personal care tasks, ensuring their roles remain within safe boundaries.

Supervision and Feedback

Regular staff meetings and feedback sessions are integral to maintaining a culture of safeguarding. Team leaders will use these meetings to address issues, share updates, and monitor the welfare of vulnerable adults and children under their care. Any concerns, such as signs of favoritism or mistreatment, will be thoroughly investigated.

Recruitment and Vetting

To ensure the safety and well-being of those we serve, T&B Initiative maintains a robust recruitment process for all volunteers and staff:

- Application Forms: A detailed application form must be completed.
- References: Two references will be obtained to verify the applicant's suitability for the role.
- Informal Interviews: Applicants will undergo an informal interview to discuss their experience, motivation, and understanding of safeguarding principles.
- Criminal Convictions: Volunteers are required to disclose any criminal convictions (excluding those 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974). T&B Initiative reserves the right to dismiss or bar individuals if deemed necessary to ensure safety.

Training

T&B Initiative prioritises equipping staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills required to implement safeguarding policies effectively.

- Safeguarding Training: Training in abuse prevention and response is included in the training program and is often accessed free of charge through local authorities.
- Continuous Development: Staff and volunteers are encouraged to access resources and participate in regular refresher courses to stay updated on best practices and legislative changes.

General Safety Measures

- Transport: All workers driving vehicles transporting vulnerable adults or children must:
 - Hold a valid driver's license for the vehicle type.
 - Ensure the vehicle has valid road tax, insurance, and an MOT certificate.
 - Adhere to regulations, including wearing seat belts and avoiding seat sharing.

Policy Review

The safeguarding policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually or whenever new legislation or statutory guidance necessitates updates. This ensures that T&B Initiative remains compliant with current safeguarding standards and continues to prioritise the safety of its beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers.