

# Safeguarding Policy – September 2025

*Everybody has the right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances.*

## 1. Introduction

Gloucestershire Community Foundation (GCF) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its beneficiaries, and to ensure that all those who come into contact with GCF do not, as a result, come to harm.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline the duty and responsibility of trustees, staff and volunteers representing GCF in relation to the protection of children and adults at risk of harm, even where work with children or adults at risk does not form part of the core business of GCF, all concerned must be alert to their responsibilities to protect those with whom GCF comes into contact.

This includes:

- children and young people under 18 years of age
- adults (aged 18 and over) at risk

Safeguarding and promoting well-being and welfare means:

- protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable them to have the best outcomes
- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect

The Charity Commission clearly states that it is essential that trustees:

- know their responsibilities
- have adequate measures in place to assess and address safeguarding risks
- have adequate safeguarding policies and procedures appropriate for their charity's particular circumstances and which reflect both the law and best practice
- ensure that these policies and procedures are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed – these steps are vital, given that charities are accountable to the public and must operate for the public benefit.

The key objectives of this policy and procedure are:

- to explain the responsibilities of GCF, its trustees, staff and volunteers in respect of children, young people and vulnerable adult protection, both as a funding organisation and when coming into contact with children and adults at risk through visits to grant recipients, attendance at events associated safeguarding activity.
- to provide trustees, staff and volunteers with an overview of children, young people and vulnerable adult protection
- to provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where children, young people and vulnerable adult protection issues arise

## 2. The role of GCF, its trustees, staff and volunteers

All trustees, staff, and volunteers representing GCF have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk.

As a charity that funds other organisations whose activities may involve contact with children, young people or adults at risk, GCF must carry out appropriate due diligence on the recipient body. GCF should be confident that the recipient organisation can deliver the proposed activities or services and has in place appropriate systems of control, including adequate safeguarding policies and procedures. Grant applicants must provide their safeguarding policy as a supporting document when

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submitting an application to GCF, and a GCF assessor will determine whether these contain the essential information...

Trustees, staff and volunteers may come into contact with children, young people and adults at risk who are at risk and/or receive disclosures of abuse. This policy and procedure document will enable trustees, staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific protection issues.

## 3. What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship, and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report identifies the following as the main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

## 4. Dealing with potential vulnerable donors

It may be difficult to know if older donors have the capacity to make decisions about donations in their lifetimes or gifts in Wills.

To ensure GCF safeguards the interests of potentially vulnerable donors, where there is a donation from a donor aged 18 or over and there are concerns about capacity it will be a matter of procedure to ask for a medical report or letter from the donor's GP. The letter will look to confirm that the donor has the mental capacity to make the donation.

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## 5. Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. Although most of GCF's work does not involve direct contact with children and adults at risk, there will be occasions when trustees, staff and volunteers will visit organisations that work with them.

This policy and procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a child or adult at risk has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

## 6. Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (\*Safeguarding Trustee) but if unavailable urgent action by contacting the emergency services / Local authority as appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (\*Safeguarding Trustee) shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate authority – (see below). A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made, and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant authority within 24 hours of the telephone report.

- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB) Tel: 01452 426868
- Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) Tel: 01452 426565 (select option 3)

## 7. Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

### DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure

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- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support

## **DON'T**

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Make assumptions
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional protection agencies.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Children, young people and adults at risk protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all. Trustees, staff and volunteers have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children, young people and adults at risk with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a child, young person or adult at risk will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Records will only record details required in the initial report.

If an adult confides in a trustee, member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the trustee, member of staff or volunteer tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

Staff should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adult's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

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## 9. Assessing Applicants

GCF will make sure that any grant recipient or partner body is suitable. They must have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place and clear lines of responsibility and reporting between all bodies involved

Charity Commission guidance states: *“Carry out proper due diligence when you work with, or make grants to, any other bodies, including: delivery partners, trading subsidiaries of the charity, including charity shops, organisations you fund, connected charities.”*

Charity Commission for England and Wales, Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees, 2019

## 10. Designated Safeguarding Lead at GCF

Tracy Clark, Vice Chair of the Trustees at Gloucestershire Community Foundation (CEO of Young Gloucestershire).

A contact email can be provided by calling 01242 682345 or emailing [hello@gloucestershirecf.org.uk](mailto:hello@gloucestershirecf.org.uk)

- The designated lead will have high level of experience in safeguarding matters in addition to the training required.
- They will be an approachable and communicative person.
- The designated lead will be made known to all staff and volunteers as part of their induction and on a regular basis, reminders given at staff meetings and on request.
- The name of the designated lead will be updated here as and when it changes.
- Keep abreast of new developments as above
- Ensure staff, volunteers and mentors are aware and of policies and are clear about the procedures as required for their role.

## 11. Review

This policy is reviewed, approved, and endorsed by the Board of trustees. It is updated when required by legislation, to ensure that it reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and best practice for GCF or every 12 months whichever is the soonest.

**Next review date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026**