Coventry Canal Society
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Scope of the policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure both:

- The safety of vulnerable adults and children by having clear procedures for handling safeguarding issues
- That all Coventry Canal Society members, volunteers and visitors are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities.

Introduction

We have contact with children and vulnerable adults during the course of the activities of the Coventry Canal Society.

It is our policy that all children are accompanied by their parents or carers. However, we are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and consider their safety of paramount importance. As such, we expect everyone in our organisation to:

- Be aware and attentive to the needs of children and vulnerable adults, doing whatever is needed to maintain their safety and well-being.
- Treat children and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity
- Treat everyone in a way where they are valued and respected individuals regardless of their gender, background, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs
- Be aware of the potential risks to children and vulnerable adults and do what we can to minimise these risks
- Listen to children and vulnerable adults, taking their concerns seriously
- Ensure that the responsible executive committee member attends appropriate training to ensure they are aware of safeguarding practice
- Follow the procedures laid down by the Coventry Canal Society to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults whilst on our premises or involved in any off-site activities.

Whilst we accept that it is possible that any of the range of issues may occur, we believe the following are the most likely examples:

- Witnessing harsh treatment of children and vulnerable adults by those who are responsible for their care on the premises or taking part in activities
- Disclosures being made about alleged abuse being made to committee members
- Allegations about alleged abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a Coventry Canal Society member or visitor
- The provision of lost children

This document is to enable society members, visitors and volunteers to know what course of action is appropriate for them to take in the event of any of these circumstances arise.

Definitions

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 or over who is or maybe in need of community care services by reason of mental or another disability, age or illness, and is maybe unable to take care of themselves against significant harm or exploitation

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person. It can take a variety of forms including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying

For adults it might also include:

- Financial abuse

Implementation

- Ensure we have a designated person with safeguarding responsibility on the committee.
- Ensure members and volunteers know who to report their concerns to.
- Ensure all the above understand their responsibilities in being alert to safeguarding issues.
- Ensure all records are kept in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulations.

Photography and Social Media

Society members, volunteers and visitors should be aware that photographs or video footage taken in a public place or event might be used in Coventry Canal Society publications or on the society website. For wider use we would ask for the permission from the person responsible for the child or vulnerable adult.

Lost children or vulnerable adults

If a child or vulnerable adult becomes separated from their responsible adult during an event and is found by a society member, volunteer or visitor this should be brought to the attention of a committee member and the procedure below should be followed:

- Alert another nearby member or volunteer.
- More than one person should be with the child or vulnerable adult at all times and in a public place whilst the parent or responsible adult is located, and the child or vulnerable adult is reunited with their parent/ carer
- A record should be kept of the incident.

If you witness abuse or harsh treatment

- Try to diffuse the situation by intervening.
- Get other people involved if necessary.
- Call 999 if the child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or 101, ChildLine or NSPCC helpline for advice.

If a child or vulnerable adults reports abuse to you:

If someone makes a disclosure to you, then on receiving the information you should:

- React calmly.
- Reassure them they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take whatever they say seriously.
- Keep any questions to an absolute minimum, only those needed to clarify what they have said to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Do not ask for explicit details.
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality.
- Inform the child/ vulnerable adult what you will do next.
- Make a full factual written record of what has been said/ heard/ seen as soon as possible and do not delay in passing on the information.
- Talk to the designated safeguarding person as soon as possible.

Minimising the Risk of Allegations

It is important that all society members, volunteers and visitors take appropriate steps to minimise the risk of allegations being made against them by following the guidance below:

- Ensure steps are taken so that you are not left alone with children/vulnerable adults. If you do find yourself alone with a child/ vulnerable adult take steps to ensure that you can easily be observed, for example by keeping the door open or moving to another area where others are present.
- Do not touch a child/vulnerable adult unless necessary (e.g., to prevent accident or injury or provide first aid assistance).

Record Keeping

Good record keeping is essential in safeguarding practice. It is vital that you make a written factual record as soon as possible after the person has disclosed / you have witnessed abuse, their immediate needs have been met and the appropriate referrals have been made. As a minimum this should include:

- A factual account of what you observed or were told.
- The date and time
- Details of who was involved (the person/s whose safety and welfare you have concerns about, alleged perpetrator of the abuse or persons whose behaviour you were concerned about and any witnesses).
- Action taken.
- Date and time of referring the information and to whom the information was referred.
- Your details as the referrer.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with national guidelines.

March 2026 **Policy review date March 2027**