Policy Ref	MADM 005
Version	8
Issue Date	Mar 2026
Review Date	Mar 2027

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, VULNERABLE ADULTS, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

POLICY PURPOSE

This policy outlines the Charity's commitment to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children/youth, its responsibilities, an assessment of potential risks, steps taken to reduce those risks and the steps that should be taken in the event of the Charity becoming aware of a safeguarding issue. MADM has ensured that there are appropriate systems of control in place, including safeguarding policies and procedures.

POLICY STATEMENT

MADM Charity is committed to pro-actively safeguarding vulnerable adults and children/youth with whom the staff, volunteers or anyone acting on or behalf, or deal directly/encounter service users or vulnerable people. Children are always accompanied by an adult (parent/ carer/guardian/support worker).

The welfare and safety of the person at risk is paramount. All vulnerable adults and children/youth, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

The Charity takes all reasonable care to protect its staff, volunteers, supporters, and anyone acting on or behalf, or deal directly/encounter service users or vulnerable people.

The Charity will never exploit vulnerability.

The Charity is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Charity's Equal Opportunities Policy aims to eliminate all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, both direct and indirect.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Trustees are overall responsible for safeguarding, even though certain aspects of the work are delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. They should proactively safeguard and promote the well-being and welfare of the Charity's staff and volunteers and others who encounter the Charity. This is a key governance priority.

The issue of safeguarding is subject to regular reviews at Board level and is reported on by exception at Board of Trustees' meetings. **A Safeguarding Representative Trustee Keeley James** has been appointed as well as designated Safeguarding Officer who carries out/continues to carry out relevant safeguarding training. The Safeguarding Representative and DSO's will report directly to the Board of Trustees'.

Due to the nature of the business, MADM works with a diverse range of clients, workers, and volunteers. MADM has appointed **Rob Foley Charity Manager as the Lead DSO.** The DSO is safeguarding Officer across the charity and will deal with ongoing staff/volunteer training, Health and Safety, and risk assessments. Some duties may be delegated to other staff but overseen and monitored by the Charity Manager.

If you need to contact the charities DSO: Email: robf@madm.org.uk Phone: 01622 687414

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

A child is defined as anyone who is below the age of 18. MADM aims to protect them from abuse, maltreatment, or exploitation, as well as preventing any harm to their health or ability to develop. MADM will make sure all children involved with the charity will have safe and effective care throughout their time with us.

We actively discourage service users to visit the Outreach Centre with their children due to the potentially unsuitable environment. We will allow children to accompany their parents in exceptional circumstances where we are made aware there is no other option.

CHILDREN 13-16 YEARS

MADM will allow children who are working towards their Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award or are carrying out work experience. Those children will always be supervised. **Light duties only**. This is a voluntary role only.

VOLUNTEERS/EMPLOYEES 16-18 YEARS

They may work independently in the vicinity of staff, and they are **always** restricted to **light duties**.

Volunteers/staff of 16-18 years are restricted to set working patterns under UK legislation which MADM must adhere to:

- No more than 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week.
- At least a 30-minute break if the shift lasts more than 4.5 hours.
- At least 12 consecutive hours of rest between each working day.
- At least 2 days off per week.

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS WHO DECLARE SPECIAL NEEDS

We welcome volunteers (13-17) and staff/volunteers aged (16–17), including those with special needs. When a special need is declared, we assess the role to ensure it is safe and suitable. Support, supervision, and reasonable adjustments are provided so all young people can take part safely and positively. All information is treated confidentially and fairly, in line with safeguarding and equality law

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

A vulnerable adult is above the age of 18 and is unable to care for themselves and not able to protect themselves from harm. One of the differences with safeguarding adults is that, while preventing them from risk abuse or neglect, they also need support maintaining control of their own lives. MADM is committed to caring for the wellbeing of those adults who work within the charity and those who require our services and guidance.

ONLINE SAFETY AND DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

The charity recognises risks associated with online environments including cyberbullying, exploitation, and harmful content.

Measures include supervised communication, approved platforms (WhatsApp groups), no personal contact via private accounts is encouraged.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone working or volunteering with the charity.

TRAINING FREQUENCY

Safeguarding training will be refreshed every 2–3 years with updates as required.

YOUNG PEOPLE (ALONG WITH THEIR GUARDIANS), VULNERABLE ADULTS, AND SERVICE USERS HAVE THE RIGHT:

- To be made aware of this policy
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- To be involved in any process as appropriate
- To receive information about the outcome

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Our trustees have a duty to manage risk and to protect the reputation and assets of the Charity. It is therefore vital that Trustees assess the risks that arise from the Charity's activities and operations involving vulnerable adults and children/youth and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures to protect them. MADM management has a duty to carry out risk assessments, these are sent to the trustees to further assess and monitor. They must also undertake on-going monitoring to ensure that these safeguards are being

effectively implemented in practice. MADM has risk assessments in place that are updated by management/trustees and overseen by the trustees.

Key safeguarding risks for the Charity are:

• Potential abuse of vulnerable adults and children/youth, through failure to safeguard them.

• Failure to deal with any incident responsibly, appropriately and in a timely manner.

• Failure to ensure that Trustees are clear about their responsibilities for safeguarding.

• Failure to ensure that staff, Trustees, and volunteers coming into frequent contact with vulnerable adults and children/youth have a current enhanced DB.

• The reputational risk of damaging public trust and confidence in the Charity through the occurrence of any alleged or actual incident.

The Charity seeks to manage effectively the risks associated with activities and events through departments/teams:

• Completing a risk assessment process which involves identifying risks and means of reducing or eliminating them, for any new activities or events involving or potentially vulnerable adults and children/youth, and if changes are being made to activities or events involving or potentially involving vulnerable adults and children/youth

• Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis.

• Ensuring that the appropriate level DBS disclosure checks are conducted, depending on eligibility, for any individuals working with vulnerable adults and children/youth.

• Requiring that new employees and individuals working with vulnerable adults and children/youth familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and the Code of Conduct.

Receive necessary training and refresher training. Management will ensure that a Safeguarding Training Log is maintained and updated and is overseen by Trustees.

REPORTING ABUSE

It is expected that all staff follow the Safeguarding Policy Guidelines

1. If a member of staff suspects a vulnerable person is being abused or is at risk of abuse, they are expected to report concerns to their line manager or a Trustee.
2. If at any time the member of staff feels the person needs urgent medical assistance, they have a duty to call for an ambulance or arrange for a doctor to see the person at the earliest opportunity.
3. If at the time the member of staff has reason to believe the vulnerable person is in immediate and serious risk of harm or that a crime has been committed the police must be called.
4. An Incident Report form must be completed where there are allegations of abuse and given to their Lead or Deputy DSO. Failing this they should make their Line Manager aware.

SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO REPORT ABUSE

Anyone making a complaint or allegation, or expressing concern, whether they are employees, volunteers, service users or members of the public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously.
- Comments will be treated confidentially, unless MADM is required to report to any appropriate authorities.

ALLEGED ABUSER AND VICTIMS WHO ARE BOTH SERVICE USERS

It is important that consideration be given to a co-ordinated approach and partnership working, where it is identified that both the alleged abuser and alleged victim are service users. Where both parties are receiving a service, staff should discuss cases and work together, however meetings with both the alleged abuser and alleged victim in attendance, are not considered appropriate.

ALLEGATION OF ABUSE BY A STAFF MEMBER

Employees should be aware that abuse is a serious matter that can lead to a criminal conviction. Where applicable the organisation's disciplinary policy should be implemented.

In this incidence the concern should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Trustee appointed as the Safeguarding Representative in cases of allegations concerning the DSO.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

'No Secrets' [DH 2000] states that the government expects organisations to share information about individuals who may be at risk from abuse. This is also stressed by Safeguarding Adults [ADSS 2005] the framework for good practice. It is important to identify an abusive situation as early as possible so that the individual can be protected. Withholding information may lead to abuse not being dealt with in a timely manner. Confidentiality must never be confused with secrecy. Staff have a duty to share information relating to suspected abuse with Social Care and Kent Police.

Consent is not required to breach confidentiality (capacity issues must be considered) and make a safeguarding referral where:

- A serious crime has been committed.
- Where the alleged perpetrator may go on to abuse others
- Other vulnerable adults are at risk in some way.
- The vulnerable adult is deemed to be in serious risk.
- There is a statutory requirement e.g., Children's Act 1989, Mental Health Act 1983, Care Standards Act 2000
- The public interest overrides the interest of the individual.
- When a member of staff of a statutory service, a private or voluntary service or a MADM volunteer, staff member, or Trustee is the person accused of abuse, malpractice, or poor professional standards.

INCIDENT REPORTING (see full Incident Reporting Procedure Policy)

MADM charity has Incident reporting procedures in place including an Incident Reporting form and Incident reporting Log monitored and kept up to date by our Lead Safeguarding Officer Rob Foley and overseen by the charity's Safeguarding Representative Trustee.

Staff, volunteers, and trustees are required to be aware of their responsibilities for reporting concerns in relation to safeguarding matters and the circumstances in which the Safeguarding Representative/Officer should make a referral to Charities Commission, Local Authority, or police if necessary.

Safeguarding concerns about implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis. Where there is a concern, this should be reported to the appropriate person (Safeguarding Representative and Safeguarding Officer/Lead) immediately where possible, but at least within 24 hours, to determine what action, if any, must be taken. This will enable each situation to be investigated thoroughly, whilst treating the parties involved fairly and with sensitivity. It will also ensure that suitable steps are taken because of any investigations, which may include contacting the police and/or fulfilling the legal duty to refer information to the DBS. Not all concerns justify a notification to the Charities Commission, Local Authority, or police, but must still be recorded.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

MADM Charity has a responsibility to ensure the suitability of those Trustees, employees and volunteers who may work with, or encounter vulnerable adults and children/youth at risk.

The Charity's recruitment process, quality of our volunteer agreement and employment contract and staff handbook are critical to our approach to safeguarding; they must be sufficiently rigorous, robust, and appropriately reviewed.

Those who deal directly with service users or vulnerable adults and children/youth on behalf of MADM will need to have an enhanced DBS check carried out.

Any requirement for a DBS check is spelt out in the job advert. This may be a basic or enhanced check depending on role. (please see DBS Policy). These will be carried out every 3 years or earlier if required

As part of recruitment good practice, the Charity will also make other checks, as undertaking DBS checks is not enough on its own.

As part of our robust recruitment process, we:

1. ask candidates to attend an interview.
2. To offer their CV and attend an interview where employment gaps can be investigated and relevant experience for the role being applied for can be discussed.
3. Ensure we have clear shortlisting and interviewing procedures. There is a process in place for making an offer should the candidate be successful.
4. Offer role and if accepted we carry out the relevant process for hire.
5. Ask candidates to fill in an application form which includes a declaration of any unspent or relevant criminal convictions.
6. Ask for two references wherever possible; one being their most recent employer (if applicable), and a character reference (who is not a family member - unless they are U18 and are completing voluntary work)
7. Complete our induction process once a new employee has started. This includes asking for identification and eligibility to work in the UK, all documentation will be held on the employees HR file.

The Charity will also:

1. Make clear to the candidate the needs of the charity within the role being applied for.
2. Make notes of the interview to be stored on file if the candidate is successful in gaining employment.

MADM charity has an Induction process in place for all new members of staff. The safeguarding policy along with other policies/procedures/code of conduct and confidentiality make up the staff handbook which will be given to all existing and new employees.

MADM has ensured that robust safer recruitment practices have been implemented to safeguard and protect vulnerable adults, clients, children/youth, and staff/volunteers.

All new staff and volunteers participate in an induction process which includes safeguarding as part of us in house training.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Charity policies and procedures:

- General Data Protection Regulation & Privacy Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy (in this policy)
- DBS Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Incident Reporting Procedure Policy

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by management, the safeguarding representative, and the designated safeguarding officer/lead annually. The refreshed/updated version will be presented to the trustee board for review.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and the Charity may amend it at any time.

This policy operates in line with current UK safeguarding legislation including the Children Act 1989, Care Standards Act 2000, Care Act 2014, and Children and Social Work Act 2017.