



PNFS – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

1 What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means creating a safe and welcoming environment, where everyone is respected and valued. Peak and Northern Footpaths Society (“The Society” or “we”) are committed to safeguarding. This commitment is fulfilled by ensuring that our charity is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. This policy ensures that the Society is ready to respond swiftly and appropriately whenever safeguarding concerns are raised or uncovered. Everyone in the Society has a role to play in safeguarding.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone under the age of 18. A vulnerable adult is someone of 18 years or older who is unable to care independently for themselves. This might include people who:

- 1) have a physical disability, illness, or injury, or have become severely frail through old age
- 2) have a mental health illness (including dementia), or have learning difficulties
- 3) need community care
- 4) are unable to protect themselves from harm, for example through experiencing domestic violence or substance addiction

2 Our Duty

The Society is a volunteer-led charity which has a duty to safeguard all volunteers from harm, neglect, abuse, or the risk of such arising. While this policy focuses primarily on the Society’s duty to children and vulnerable adults, the principles are widely applicable to all volunteers and others who come into contact with the Society or our work.

The Society is committed to inclusion. We treat all individuals with dignity and respect, and do not discriminate on basis of age, disability, ethnicity, sex or gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief system, marital or parental status, or any other characteristic that may be protected by law.

3 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline roles, responsibilities, and commitments of volunteers and trustees in relation to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults. The policy further demonstrates our commitment to the safeguarding of all volunteers. This policy ensures that trustees and volunteers are aware of:

- 1) The legislation, policy, and procedures for safeguarding children, vulnerable adults, and other volunteers.
- 2) Their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children, vulnerable adults, and other volunteers.
- 3) How to report and act on concerns relating to the welfare, wellbeing, or safety of any child, vulnerable adult, or other volunteer.

4 Scope

This safeguarding policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in the work of the Society including, but not limited to, Trustees, Volunteers, and Members. It relates to any and to all concerns about the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of children, vulnerable adults, and other volunteers, whilst participating in the activities of the Society or on its premises.

5 Commitments

In order to implement this policy, the Society will ensure that:

- 1) Trustees, volunteers, and other relevant parties are aware of this policy and the associated safeguarding procedures and know how to report and respond to a concern relating to the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of a child, vulnerable adult, or other volunteer.



PNFS – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

- 2) All reported concerns are properly investigated and responded to in accordance with this policy and its associated procedures.
- 3) The well-being of those at risk of harm will take the highest priority. While taking all reasonable steps to respect the wishes of individuals involved in any report, the Society will at all times act in accordance with the duties set out in this policy and all applicable laws.
- 4) Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- 5) Confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedures.
- 6) The Society will cooperate with the Police and the relevant Local Authorities in acting to safeguard a child, vulnerable adult, or other volunteer.
- 7) All Trustees, Members, and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding volunteers and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding volunteer training appropriate for their role.
- 8) The Society shares information about anyone found to be a risk to volunteers with the appropriate bodies. For example: Disclosure and Barring Service, Police, Local Authorities, Social Services.
- 9) When planning activities and events the Society includes an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all volunteers from abuse and neglect.
- 10) Actions taken under this policy are reviewed by the trustees annually.
- 11) This policy, related policies (see below) and the Safeguarding Volunteers Procedures are reviewed no less than annually, or whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required by the Local Safeguarding Board, or as a result of any other significant change or event, whichever is the soonest.

6 Implementation

The Society is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy and procedures. In order to do so the following will be in place:

- 1) A clear line of accountability within the organisation for the safety and welfare of all volunteers.
- 2) Access to relevant legal and professional advice.
- 3) A regular review (at least annually) to the Trustees of any safeguarding reports received and actions taken under this Policy and associated Procedures.
- 4) Safeguarding volunteer procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- 5) Collaboration with other relevant organisations, as determined necessary by the Trustees, to safeguard and promote the welfare of volunteers, including arrangements for sharing information.
- 6) Codes of conduct for trustee Board members, Volunteers, and Members and other relevant individuals that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.
- 7) Risk assessments for all activities that specifically include safeguarding of volunteers.
- 8) Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Safeguarding Volunteers policy.
 - a) Social Media protocol
 - b) Risk assessments
 - c) Codes of Conduct and a process for breach of these (such as the Good Practice in Communication)
 - d) Complaints Procedure
 - e) Walks Safety



PNFS – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

7 Responsibilities of Trustees

The Trustees of the Society are ultimately accountable for the safeguarding of volunteers, members, and others with whom the Society has contact. Trustees are responsible to ensure this Policy and related Procedures remain relevant and fit for purpose and to ensure the implementation of the same.

Trustees promote a culture of inclusion and ensure that all involved in the Society feel able to report concerns and confident that they will be heard and receive appropriate response.

Trustees are committed to manage all confidential information safely, following its Data Protection Policy.

Trustees ensure that all members are aware of our safeguarding principles and the procedure to make reports. This is achieved through regular inclusion in the Society's meetings and periodicals, and publication of this Policy on the Society's website.

8 Safeguarding Volunteers Procedures

8.1 Reporting of concerns

Any person having concerns about the welfare of a member, volunteer, or other person in contact with the Society through our work, should report those concerns immediately to the Trustee responsible for safeguarding (or any other Trustee where the individual feels this is necessary).

Where there is a threat of immediate harm, the individual should first make a report to the Police or other relevant authority. This should then be reported to the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding as soon as practicable. Failure to report a concern where it involves the work of the Society, or takes place on any property owned or leased by the Society, will be considered a breach of our Code of Conduct. The Society reserves the right to take any action deemed necessary by the Trustees or an independent panel appointed by them against individuals who breach the Code of Conduct.

While the Society will treat all reports confidentially and in compliance with our Privacy Policy, we make no guarantee of secrecy and will report relevant concerns to other bodies as required by law.

8.2 Responding to Reports

In the event that concerns are raised about the safety or well-being of any individual or group arising out of the work of the Society or taking place on its premises, the Trustees will ensure the following actions are undertaken:

- 1) Immediate action will be taken to protect the safety of the individual concerned. Where the report involves a member of the Society, that member shall be suspended until the report is closed in accordance with the steps below.
- 2) The Trustee responsible for Safeguarding will assess the concerns raised, or in the event of that Trustee being involved in the case, an independent trustee
- 3) Based on this assessment, the Trustees may determine to take the following actions:
 - a) Close the matter and provide a detailed response to the reporting individual outlining the reasons why the matter is closed.
 - b) Appoint a committee of Trustees to investigate the report further, taking professional and legal advice as determined necessary to advise the committee.
 - c) Appoint an independent body to investigate the report and recommend actions.
- 4) Where the report involves a Trustee, then only option c) of point 3) above shall be used.
- 5) Professional advice (and if necessary legal advice) will be sought to advise the trustee appointed to investigate the case.
- 6) Any investigation conducted by a committee appointed in accordance with 3) b) above shall follow the best practices and guidelines provided by the government, NCVO, and other relevant organisations.
- 7) Following the investigation, a confidential report will be prepared for the Trustees and presented to them during a Managing Committee meeting. The committee or independent body preparing the report may attend to make oral presentations but may not be present when the report is discussed and actions made.



PNFS – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

- 8) All actions determined by the Managing Committee shall be considered final, and the report closed. A detailed and confidential response will be provided to the reporting individual outlining the actions taken.

8.3 Working with children and vulnerable adults

Membership of the Society is open to all adults. On occasion the Society may agree to work with young persons from other organisations who are committed to our aims (for example the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme). Though vulnerable adults and children are permitted to participate with the Society, the Society does not provide specialist care or supervision. Children and adults unable to meet their own needs must be supervised or accompanied by a parent or support worker (such as a supervisor from a sponsoring organisation) at all times. Trustees, or others appointed by them to supervise the work of the Society, may at any time refuse the participation of any individual if these conditions cannot be met.

All members and volunteers of the Society agree to abide by the following principles when working with children or vulnerable adults:

- 1) **ALWAYS** ensure that a signed consent form has been received before undertaking activities with a child or vulnerable adult
- 2) **ALWAYS** act with dignity and respect toward others
- 3) **ALWAYS** respect an individual's right to personal privacy
- 4) **ALWAYS** create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all
- 5) **ALWAYS** ensure that a risk assessment of any activity is completed, including specific actions to maintain the well-being of participants
- 6) **ALWAYS** report concerns or allegations of inappropriate behaviour immediately
- 7) **NEVER** be alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- 8) **NEVER** supervise the work of the Society under the influence of alcohol or other substances
- 9) **NEVER** engage in horseplay or inappropriate physical contact
- 10) **NEVER** use, or allow to be used, bullying, intimidating, or otherwise inappropriate language

The Society undertakes to evaluate all volunteers for suitability of their positions. This includes reviewing the work and volunteering history of potential volunteers. Where the Trustees believe it appropriate, they may seek references from employers or organisations with whom the potential volunteer has been affiliated.

Trustees, and any volunteers who act in a supervisory position (for example, the Volunteer Coordinator, or other the Trustees determine) should supply the Society with a basic DBS certificate, to be renewed annually. The Society will securely maintain a record of certificate numbers in accordance with its Privacy Policy.

Trustees and volunteers in supervisory roles will also complete safeguarding training as determined by the Trustees as soon as practicable after their appointment. This training should be renewed at least every three years.



PNFS – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Version Control

Policy	Version	Created / Updated	Owner
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	1	Created & Adopted 26 th November 2021	David Gosling, Chad Wilkinson
	1.1	Reviewed 30 th October 2022	Chad Wilkinson