



Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Version	2.2 (based on The Wildlife Trusts' 2023 template)
Approval Authority	Board of Trustees
Date First Approved	November 2023
Review Date Due	November 2026
Authored by	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Shared with	All staff, Trustees and volunteer leaders
This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following associated documents	Safeguarding Children Policy Safeguarding Procedures





Background & Context

This policy outlines Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's commitment to Safeguarding Adults at Risk from abuse and neglect.

England (Care Act 2014)

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- (a) Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting and of those needs) AND
- (b) Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND;
- (c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and the associated procedure is to provide clarity to all staff, trustees, volunteers and members of the public on Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's approach to Safeguarding Adults at Risk. A separate "Safeguarding Children" policy exists and should be referred to for all safeguarding for those aged under 18.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is committed to the highest standards of charity governance for Safeguarding and this policy is the foundation of a universal approach across The Wildlife Trusts that puts Safeguarding at the heart of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's engagement with adults at risk.

Through the nature of our work, our visitor experiences, volunteering opportunities and our community engagement work, staff and volunteers at the Trust may interact with some adults at risk of being abused or neglected in a variety of ways. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust has a duty of care to adults at risk, carers and/or families that take part in our activities. We endeavour to provide a safe, friendly and inclusive environment that celebrates all achievements. We will achieve this by ensuring that employees, volunteers and trustees comply with all legal, contractual and professional standards and responsibilities in their work with adults at risk – whether within a group situation or one to one.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in line with key legislation updates or changes and will be promoted through induction, training and ongoing supervision and support.





Context

The Care Act 2014 sets out a clear legal framework for how local authorities and organisations such as charities should protect adults at risk from abuse or neglect.

This means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances (Care Act Guidance 2014).

The Principles of Adult Safeguarding in England (Care Act 2014)

The Act's principles are:

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Making Safeguarding Personal

Outlined in the Care Act, this is an approach to working with adults which supports a person-centred, outcome-focus to Safeguarding. In practice this means talking to the adult about what they want to happen and understanding their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs before any actions are decided. Working in this way helps to ensure the adult is happy with the outcome from a safeguarding enquiry. Upon contacting your local authority to raise a concern, it is likely you will be asked what the adult wants to happen as a result of the referral; so it is important, where possible to have a conversation and understand the wishes and feelings of the adult.

The Wildlife Trusts' Safeguarding Commitment

The Wildlife Trusts believe that everyone has a responsibility to Safeguard children and adults at risk; as a movement we are committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing is at the heart of our engagement with people.





We will:

- Not tolerate any form of abuse or neglect within The Wildlife Trusts
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children and adults at risk who visit our sites, take part in our activities or engage with us online
- Give equal priority to keeping all children and adults at risk safe from harm, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, beliefs, sex, or sexual orientation
- Provide our staff, volunteers and trustees with the knowledge and tools to guide them in protecting children and adults at risk from abuse and neglect

We will achieve this by:

- Supporting staff and volunteers by establishing a clear policy and procedural framework, transparent reporting and by promoting a culture of learning throughout the movement
- Encouraging staff and volunteers to discuss any concerns immediately or as soon as practically possible with their line manager/supervisor or designated safeguarding lead
- Listening to and hearing the voice of children and adults at risk and respecting their views
- Recruiting our staff and volunteers safely including references, disclosure and barring checks as appropriate
- Recording and storing information safely and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Recognising the position of trust in which staff, trustees and volunteers are regularly placed and use our procedures and work with our local authorities to manage any allegations against them appropriately
- Adhering to Online Safety guidelines to keep children and adults at risk and staff safe when using any digital communications
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children and adults at risk, staff and volunteers, by adhering to health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Working in partnership with the statutory agencies responsible for the Safeguarding of children and adults at risk
- Ensuring that any third-party individual or organisation involved in delivering activities on behalf of The Wildlife Trusts has appropriate experience, qualifications and/or accreditation and insurance. If they are operating with any degree of autonomy, The Wildlife Trusts staff will assure themselves that safeguarding procedures are equivalent and arrangements are adequate for the activity.





Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Team

Phone – 01452 383333

Email - safeguarding@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

Recognising the signs of abuse and neglect

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

An adult may confide in a staff member, volunteer or another participant that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of our settings. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. Here are some pointers to be aware of:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- The adult has belongings or money going missing
- The person might start missing sessions and you notice a change in their mood or loss of confidence
- They may have lost weight or have an unkempt appearance
- You might notice a distinct change in their behaviour towards other people in their life e.g. an adult looking quiet when their son comes to collect them from a session in contrast to their support worker who they greet with a wave and a smile
- Self-harm
- A fear of a particular group of people or individual
- Somebody else for example a parent or carer always speaks for the adult and doesn't allow them to make their own choices
- They may also tell you they are being abused or neglected – a disclosure

Abuse and neglect of adults at risk can happen anywhere – it could be on someone in their own home or public place, whilst attending a day centre, in a college or whilst joining a work party. In our everyday engagement with adults at risk, it's important to know the signs of abuse and neglect so if staff or volunteers witness an incident or are told/notice something about an adults' circumstances that causes a concern, we can refer to the people who can help keep them safe.

The person causing the harm may be a stranger, but it's more likely to be someone known to the adult such as a health or care professional, family member, neighbour or member of staff. The abuser is usually someone in a position of trust or power to the individual.

It is important to consider the signs of abuse and neglect for adults at risk engaging with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in two contexts –

- experiencing possible abuse or neglect in their home or care environment
- experiencing possible abuse or neglect where undertaking activities organized by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust or by staff members or volunteers





The following are the categories of abuse for Safeguarding adults, a description of each indicator and what to look out for. There are 11 different categories of abuse and neglect for adults at risk.

Category of abuse	Description	Indicators and what to look out for in adults at risk
Physical Abuse	Physical abuse includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">unexplained or inappropriately explained injuriesadult exhibiting untypical self-harmunexplained cuts or scratches to mouth, lips, gums, eyes or external genitalia
Psychological abuse	Psychological abuse includes 'emotional abuse' and takes the form of threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), cyber bullying, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">adult appears anxious or withdrawn, especially in the presence of the alleged abuseradult exhibits low self-esteemuntypical changes in behaviour (e.g. continence problems, sleep disturbance)adult is not allowed visitors/phone calls
Financial	This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">lack of heating, clothing or foodinability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of moneylack of money, especially after benefit/pension or pay day
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">adult appears unusually subdued, withdrawn or has poor concentrationadult exhibits significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlookadult's underclothing is torn, stained or bloodya woman who lacks the mental capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant





Neglect	These include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">adult has inadequate heating and/or lightingadult's physical condition/appearance is poor (e.g. ulcers, pressure sores, soiled or wet clothing)adult is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and/or is dehydrated
Organisational Abuse	Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or where care is provided within their own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">an adult's environment is unsafe and unhygienicthe adult is given an inflexible routinelack of privacy, dignity, and respect for people as individualsthe adult withdraws from community and family supportno choice offered with food, drink, dress or activitiesno respect or thought given to religion, belief, or an adult's occupation
Self-neglect	Self-neglect entails neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">living in very unclean, sometimes verminous, circumstancespoor self-care leading to a decline in personal hygienepoor eating habits and the adult may have lost weightinappropriate clothingthe adult is withdrawn and isolatedfailure to take prescribed medicationhoarding within the home is often associated with self-neglect
Domestic abuse	This is typically an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the adult may seem unhappy or distressedthe adult may appear frightened, anxious or agitated without identifiable cause, or in relation to certain people



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they may be experiencing sleeping problems
Modern Slavery	Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced and compulsory labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adult is not in possession of their legal documents (passport, identification and bank account details) and they are being held by someone else; the adult looks malnourished, unkempt, or appears withdrawn they have few personal possessions and often wear the same clothes what clothes they do wear may not be suitable for their work.
Discriminatory abuse	This includes discrimination on the grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments and jokes based on a person's disability or any other form of harassment, slur or similar treatment. Hate crime can be viewed as a form of discriminatory abuse, although will often involve other types of abuse as well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an adult may reject their own cultural background and/or racial origin or other personal beliefs, sexual practices or lifestyle choices an adult making complaints about the service not meeting their needs.
Sexual Exploitation	Adult Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that involves someone taking advantage of an adult, sexually, for their own benefit through threats, bribes and violence. Perpetrators usually hold power over their victims due to age, gender, sexual identity, physical strength or status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an adult self-harming or displaying significant changes in emotional well-being developing inappropriate or unusual relationships or associations displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour including behaviour, language or dress unexplained acquisition of money, clothes and mobile phones.





Online Safety

The Charity Commission is very clear that operating online carries specific risks that may link to wider Safeguarding issues and organisations must ensure these risks are managed and reflected in policies and procedures.

Online Safety guidance is to ensure everyone involved with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is protected, as far as reasonably possible, from the risks inherent with online engagement.

Staff, volunteers, and trustees must be provided with the information to help keep themselves safe, establish safe online engagement and understand how to respond to incidents, ensuring Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is operating in line with its values and the law.

Please see Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's Online Safety Guidance.

Roles and Responsibilities for Safeguarding within Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

Role	Responsibilities
Trustee Lead for Safeguarding Safeguarding@gloswildlifetrust.co.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• taking an overall lead in this area on behalf of the Board of Trustees• challenging any strategic decisions which adversely affect anyone's wellbeing
All Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• supporting the Lead Trustee in creating a positive Safeguarding culture that works to protect children and adults at risk who come into contact with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust• approving Safeguarding policy and procedures and ensuring that Safeguarding is considered at every stage within decision making.
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure that safeguarding is embedded within all decisions made by the Senior Management Team by:• maintaining a clear strategic and operational focus on safeguarding children and adults at risk• ensuring Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust meets the required legislative standards• making sure everyone in the organisation is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to respond to concerns• reporting serious incidents as necessary to the Charity Commission
Designated Safeguarding Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• safeguarding subject expert and the point of advice throughout the Trust





	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• responsible for developing policy, procedure, training and reporting mechanisms as well as being a support for the Safeguarding point of contacts• responsible for ensuring that staff complete regular training appropriate to their roles• responsible for making referrals and overall safeguarding case management
Designated Safeguarding Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• they will be the point of contact for concerns and will be responsible for liaising with the local authority when referrals are necessary• they will offer support and advice
All Trust staff, volunteers and trustees	Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone has a duty to understand and act upon any concerns they may have regarding children and adults at risk

Duty to refer

The Charity Commission is very clear that as an organisation working with adults at risk we have a responsibility to recognise and refer any concerns or disclosures of abuse and neglect, as well as put in place the correct supportive frameworks and recruitment processes to enable this.

The main piece of legislation governing Safeguarding Adults at Risk is the Care Act 2014, which sets out clear legal frameworks for how local authorities and organisations such as charities should protect adults at risk from abuse or neglect. This includes the duty for all to refer incidents of concern.

Where a local authority believes an adult at risk is experiencing or at risk from abuse or neglect, it must make enquiries or cause others better placed to do so, such as Police or health professionals. Those professionals leading the enquiry may contact any organisation working with them, such as Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, for information to help build a full picture of their life and to ascertain if any further concerns have been raised or noted.

Under this legislation local authorities have Safeguarding duties that have been created to protect adults at risk and any person or organisation such as Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust must cooperate with enquiries and provide information when requested.

An enquiry overseen by the local authority must establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop the abuse and neglect and most importantly, ascertain the adult's views and wishes.

As well as a duty to refer any concerns about individuals, we also have a duty to act upon and escalate any concerns regarding the conduct of staff or trustees working with adults at risk. If your concerns relate to a member of the Safeguarding leads, or how a Safeguarding incident is being managed, please consult the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy or the Human Resources Team.

Please see the Safeguarding Procedure for further information about making referrals.





Persons in a Position of Trust (PiPoT)

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust has a responsibility to respond to allegations or concerns raised about a person, whether an employee, volunteer or student (paid or unpaid) who works with adults with care and support needs as part of their role. These individuals are known as People in a Position of Trust (PiPoT).

If a PiPoT is alleged to have abused or harmed an adult with care and support needs, or who may pose a risk of abuse to an adult with care and support needs, it is essential that the concerns are appropriately reported to the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Lead who in turn may need to notify their Local Authority. Examples of concerns could include allegations that relate to a person who works with adults with care and support needs who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed an adult or child
- Committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult or child
- Behaved towards an adult or child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs

Concerns could also arise from the person's home or personal life, as well as within their work. Where concerns relate to personal/private life, if the Trust is the employing organisation, they would maintain the responsibility for oversight of a case. This may include situations such as :

- A person has behaved (or is alleged to have behaved) towards another adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs. For example, this may include situations where a person is being investigated by the police for domestic abuse to a partner and undertakes voluntary work with adults with care and support needs.
- A person has behaved (or is alleged to have behaved) towards children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to adults with care and support needs. For example, this may include situations where a person is alleged to have abused a child, and is a student undertaking professional training to work with adults with care and support needs.
- A person is the subject of a formal safeguarding enquiry into allegations of abuse or neglect which have occurred in one setting. However, there are also concerns that the person is employed, volunteers or is a student in another setting where there are adults with care and support needs who may also be at risk of harm.

Any allegations must be investigated promptly in line with the Trust's internal allegations management process. Unless it puts the adult at risk or a child in danger, the person should be informed of an allegation against them.

If the person is employed, volunteers or is a student (paid or unpaid) in another local authority area, inform the relevant local authority area. If there is a concern the individual may also pose a risk to children, the Trust should inform the relevant Local Area Designated Officer (LADO).

Alongside the duty of care towards the adult at risk, is the duty of care to the staff member/volunteer/trustee who the allegation has been made against. The Trust must ensure they provide support to minimise stress associated with the process, for example; support to understand the procedures being followed, regular updates on developments as well as the opportunity to respond to allegations/concerns and support to raise questions or concerns about the allegation.





Supporting adults with mental health difficulties

Mental health is fluid and can change day to day, week to week and year to year. Many people with mental health problems do not receive support services and when 'well' would consider themselves able to take care of themselves independently. This means if we have concerns about individuals experiencing mental health difficulties, they may not be eligible for a safeguarding adult's referral, and we need to be aware of other pathways for support. These may include encouraging them to talk to their GP, local support services in their area, attending A&E in an emergency or accessing support through MIND or Samaritans. Please utilise GWT's Mental Health First Aiders and Employee Assistance Programme for support if needed.

Serious Incidents and Charity Regulators

A serious incident amounts to a situation whereby harm has occurred to GWT beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or others who encounter GWT through our work.

In **England and Wales** the Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. The responsibility for this lies with the Trustees, however operationally this is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and the Compliance Manager and Safeguarding Lead must also be notified before any incident is reported.

In all circumstances RSWT must be notified of any member of staff, trustee or Wildlife Trust reporting a serious incident to a charity regulator.

Signatories

	Signed:
CEO, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	
Date 23/04/2025	
	Signed:
Trustee Lead for Safeguarding, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	
Date 17 June 2025	



