

THE ARMED FORCES EQUINE CHARITY

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with The Armed Forces Equine Charity. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with The Armed Forces Equine Charity
- The design and implementation of The Armed Forces Equine Charity programmes and activities

2. **What this policy does and does not cover.** The policy lays out the commitments made by The Armed Forces Equine Charity and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace – this is dealt with under The Armed Forces Equine Charity Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy in the Staff Handbook.
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by the Charity or associated personnel.

3. **What is safeguarding?** In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes. Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

4. **Scope.** All staff contracted by The Armed Forces Equine Charity and associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to The Armed Forces Equine Charity, including but not limited to the following: consultants; volunteers; contractors; programme visitors including journalists, celebrities and politicians.

5. **Policy Statement.** The Armed Forces Equine Charity believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Armed Forces Equine Charity will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel. The Armed Forces Equine Charity commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response. This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding:

- Child safeguarding,
- Adult safeguarding,
- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

These key areas of safeguarding have different policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies in the Staff Handbook).

6. **Prevention.** The Armed Forces Equine Charity will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.

- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with [NGO]. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

7. Staff responsibilities

a. **Child safeguarding.** The Armed Forces Equine Charity staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking.

b. **Adult safeguarding.** The Armed Forces Equine Charity staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect.

c. **Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.** Charity staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

d. **Additional.** Additionally, Charity staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an [NGO] staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

8. **Reporting.** Charity Staff will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities we work with. Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by The Charities Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy. The Charity will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

9. **How to report a safeguarding concern.** Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager. If the staff

member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate staff member. For example, this could be a senior manager or a member of the Charity HR Team.

10. **Response.** The Charity will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations. The Charity will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy. The Charity will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

11. **Confidentiality.** It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

12. **Associated policies.** The following are the associated policies to this Safeguarding Policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Anti Bullying and Harassment policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) policy
- Child Safeguarding policy
- Adult Safeguarding policy
- PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by staff) policy
- Complaints Policy
- Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns
- Procedures for safeguarding in staff recruitment
- Other policies as appropriate

13. **Safeguarding Statement.** The Charity CEO provides the Charity Safeguarding Statement on an annual basis. This should be read in conjunction with this policy and the latest version can be found after the Glossary below.



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Policy History		
Date	Action	Person / Group Responsible
November 2023	In Year Review	CEO
February 2023	Annual Review	CEO

Glossary of Terms

Beneficiary of Assistance

Someone who directly receives goods or services from the Charity. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the Charity serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

A person below the age of 18

Harm

Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

Safeguarding

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect¹

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

Sexual abuse

¹ NHS 'What is Safeguarding? Easy Read' 2011

The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation

The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

Survivor

The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

At risk adult

Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this statement is to:

- Protect children, young people and adults who receive Armed Forces Equine Charity's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who receive our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and adults, and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This statement applies to anyone working for Armed Forces Equine Charity including staff, trustees, volunteers. Safeguarding is firmly embedded within the core duties of

This statement has been drawn up based on legislation protecting children, young people and adults in England as follows:

- Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Care Act 2004

It should be read alongside Armed Forces Equine Charity's organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents. These include :

- Role description for the designated safeguarding leads
- Handling disclosures
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Recording concerns and information sharing
- Records keeping and confidentiality.
- Code of conduct for trustees, staff and volunteers
- Behaviour codes for service users
- Media image guidance
- Safer recruitment
- Anti-bullying and harassment
- Whistleblowing
- Online safety
- Health and safety
- Adult-to-child/vulnerable young person or adult supervision
- Induction, training, supervision and support

DEFINITIONS

Definition of abuse

Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes them harm, impairment of health and development, endangers life or violates their rights.

Abuse may be:

- Physical - for example, hitting, slapping, pushing, restraining.

- Sexual
- Psychological – for example, repeatedly being made to feel unhappy, humiliated, afraid or devalued by others, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse.
- Financial or material – stealing or denying access to money or possessions.
- Neglect
- Discriminatory – abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards race, religion, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or cultural background
- Grooming or behavioural stalking
- Via social media, internet or other technology and includes cyber bullying

Definition of child and young person

A child is someone who has not reached school leaving age. A young person is someone aged under 18.

Definition of vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability and who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

A **vulnerable person** may fall into any one of the following groups: older and frail people; people with a mental health need, a learning difficulty, a physical impairment, a sensory impairment; people who are substance or alcohol dependent, or family carers providing assistance to another vulnerable adult.

OUR COMMITMENT

We believe that:

- Children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all young children, young people and adults to keep them safe and practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount to us and in all the decisions we take all children/young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- Some children, young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of earlier experiences, their level of dependency, communications needs or other issues.
- Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults and their carers, parents and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by assuring that we:

- value, listen to and respect them.
- appoint a nominated safeguarding lead for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- ensure that all those who come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in their work understand and undertake their duty to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- ensure that all children/young people and vulnerable adults are treated with respect and respect their right to personal privacy.
- adopt child protection and safeguarding for young people and vulnerable adults' best practice in our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- develop and implement an effective online safety policy and related measures.
- provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- recruit and select staff and volunteers, ensuring all the relevant checks are made.
- record, store and use information professionally and securely in line with data protection legislation and guidance (www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations.)
- share information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets and posters.
- make sure children, young people and vulnerable adults know where to go if they have a concern.
- use our safeguarding and child protection [procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies which need to know, and involving young children, young people and vulnerable adults, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- use our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers.
- create an anti-bullying environment and ensure that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- ensure that we have effective whistleblowing measures in place.
- ensure that we have a safe physical environment in place for children, young adults and vulnerable young people by applying health and safety measures, risk assessments in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- build a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and vulnerable young adults, and their families and carers treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

FUNDAMENTAL RULES

If an employee or volunteer sees or suspects any behaviour which would contravene this policy statement, they should challenge and report it. Employees and volunteers must not:

- Engage in inappropriate physical behaviour.
- Make over-familiar or sexually suggestive comments or approaches to a child/young person or vulnerable adult even as a 'joke'.
- Let any potential abuse go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature that children/young people or vulnerable adults can do for themselves.
- Allow inappropriate computer activity whether internet or network related. This includes mobile phone or related technologies.

BREACHES OF SAFEGUARDING

Incidents of abuse will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter and dealt with under the charities disciplinary procedures and could result in dismissal without notice.



Jamie Balls

Chief Executive

Policy History		
Date	Action	Person / Group Responsible
July 2023	Review	CEO