

Wandsworth Society

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

This policy and procedure is written to enable the committee to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding includes incidents between members, and concerns regarding abuse or neglect that a Wandsworth Society member may be experiencing outside of the Wandsworth Society.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of the Wandsworth Society to safeguarding their members and to ensure that everyone involved in Wandsworth Society is aware of:

- The legislation, policy, and procedures for safeguarding Vulnerable People.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding Vulnerable People
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or well-being of a Vulnerable Person within the Wandsworth Society

Scope

This safeguarding policy and procedure apply to all individuals involved in the Wandsworth Society, including the Committee, group leaders and members, and to all concerned about the safety and wellbeing of members taking part in Wandsworth Society activities.

Safeguard Commitments

To implement this policy, the Wandsworth Society will ensure that all members are aware of the safeguarding procedures and know who to contact if they have a concern about the welfare or well-being of an adult or child.

The Wandsworth Society committee has a duty of care to its members and is committed to upholding this safeguarding policy to protect its members.

The Wandsworth Society recognises that some people are potentially at risk of abuse and neglect. Where abuse or neglect is suspected, the Wandsworth Society will aim to respond promptly and efficiently to any situation with a risk of or perceived risk of harm.

The Wandsworth Society does not hold any statutory authority. Matters of concern will be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities and charity regulatory authorities, as appropriate. This may include the local authority, the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), or the police in an emergency.

Where there are concerns for a member's well-being or safety, the Wandsworth Society committee will contact the relevant statutory authorities as needed. It is not appropriate for the Wandsworth Society to take the lead role in any Safeguarding Enquiry (under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 (England and Wales).

The Wandsworth Society recognises that various forms of abuse can be perpetrated by volunteers, members, relatives, friends, and neighbours. The Wandsworth Society will not condone nor tolerate any form of abuse or neglect and believes that all people should be able and, where necessary, enabled to live in an environment that is safe and free from harm.

The Wandsworth Society will put the well-being of those at risk of harm first, and they will be actively supported in communicating their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported unless there are overriding reasons not to. Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm. A list of the types of safeguarding risks and harm can be found on the England and Wales Charity Commission website, which is applicable.

The Wandsworth Society will monitor the implementation of this policy and procedure annually through its committee. When following the safeguarding procedure, the Wandsworth Society will strive to uphold the principles that those involved in incidents are entitled to:

- Privacy
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- lead an independent life and to be enabled to do so choosing how they live their lives
- the protection of the law
- having their human and civil rights upheld regardless of ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religious or cultural background.

The Wandsworth Society will also follow the principles enshrined within the England and Wales Care Act 2014:

- Principle 1 – Empowerment – whereby the approach is focused on the individual making their own decision and gaining informed consent, where possible.
- Principle 2 – Prevention – seeking to take steps to prevent issues from arising or escalating.
- Principle 3 – Proportionality – responding in a proportionate way to the issue/s being presented.
- Principle 4 – Protection – seeking to keep the membership safe and protection for those deemed to be at risk
- Principle 5 – Partnership – reporting incidents to the relevant statutory bodies and liaising with the Trust.
- Principle 6 – Accountability – accurate recording of incidents. Reporting incidents, as required, to the Trust and to relevant regulatory authorities.

Procedure

Introduction

The Wandsworth Society has a responsibility to ensure that its committee members and group leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

We do not vet our volunteers, nor do we engage in any “regulated activities.” Those Under 18 are welcome to engage in our activities where appropriate but must be accompanied by responsible adult who understands that volunteers are not vetted

Depending on the nature of the allegation and the identified risk, The Wandsworth Society will support the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators of any abuse as well as any volunteer who becomes aware of an allegation as far as this does not compromise any safeguarding enquiry or investigation into the allegation or place other adults at risk.

The Wandsworth Society will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any information that is disclosed under this policy and procedure, however due to the seriousness of allegations confidentiality is not absolute. Information will be recorded and stored securely in accordance with Data Protection Act 2018, but information may have to be shared with relevant authorities on a ‘need-to-know’ basis only, to prevent:

- Danger to a person’s life
- Danger to a person’s health
- Danger to others
- Danger to the community
- To facilitate the investigation of a serious crime

Courses of Action

- Our approach to safeguarding will include members who exhibit health concerns that could put themselves or others at risk, convictions (previous or pending) that include offences of a sexual or violent nature, inappropriate behaviour exhibited by a member including sexual advances, bullying, aggression or violent behaviour, harassment, and/or discrimination. This can include behaviour exhibited face to face as well as electronic communications or via social media platforms.
- Where the committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, steps will be taken, as needed, to ensure the safety of adult/s at risk is secured as a priority. The steps to take to address this will be discussed and agreed between the Executive Officers of the committee in the first instance. No committee member will act in isolation when dealing with a safeguarding concern. The steps taken should be documented and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Where our committee becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, the first step will be to gather as much information as possible to assist with the decision as to the next steps. A risk assessment will be developed and recorded as soon as possible after the concern comes to the attention of the committee.
- Where it is deemed that the risk is high and immediate action needs to be taken, the committee will contact the relevant authorities and the Trust for advice and support.
- As far as possible, the adult at risk’s wishes will be respected as to whether to refer any concerns to the local authority as a Safeguarding Enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. However, it may be necessary to override their wishes in the best interests of other adults at risk.

- All actions taken will be recorded. Any records will remain confidential to the committee unless a prior decision has been taken to share the record with the relevant statutory bodies