Safeguarding Policy

The Women's Liberation Collective (hereafter referred to as "the Charity") is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all who use its service. The Charity recognises that it has a responsibility, along with others, to protect the welfare of adults at risk and children accessing support through their services. While The Charity doesn't currently have children accessing our services, we do include safeguarding children within this policy to ensure we are considering the needs of children, in anticipation of beginning any work with children, and recognising that women accessing Own My Life in local services may have dependent children and that facilitators of Own My Life may be working with children in their local service(s).

The charity aims to ensure a consistent approach and commitment to high standards of practice in safeguarding the welfare of adults at risk and children. As a third-tier provider of training, the charity has no statutory remit or role to investigate abuse of adults at risk and children but acknowledges its responsibility to pass on to the appropriate statutory agency concerns in relation to the safety or welfare of an adult at risk or child so that these concerns can be investigated.

The action we take to promote the welfare of adults at risk and children, and protect them from harm, is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with adults at risk or children has a role to play.

This Policy applies to all trustees, freelance contractors, staff and volunteers working for or on behalf of The Charity who have contact with adults at risk or children, or who have responsibility for contractors and organisations providing services on behalf of The Charity.

This policy seeks to ensure that freelance contractors, staff and volunteers working with adults at risk and children have a good understanding of safeguarding guidelines and good practice.

1. Definitions and responsibilities

1.1 Adults at risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who is receiving or could need community care services and is (or may be) unable to protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation. This may be because they have mental ill-health, a disability or because they are old, frail or ill.

In this context community care services includes all care services provided in any setting by any agency whether statutory, voluntary or independent in health or social care including hospitals, housing agencies and advice services.

1.2 Safeguarding children

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy the term 'child' or 'children' applies to children and young people under 18 years of age and statemented ("vulnerable") young people under the age of 25.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by "Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, December 2023" as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Acting to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

1.3 Definition of abuse

The definitions of abuse set out below are taken from the Department of Education document "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2013) and the Department of Health document "No Secrets: guidance on protecting adults at risk in care" (2000).

Abuse is "a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons' and can be perpetrated by, and to, anyone, regardless of age, sex, gender, class or ethnicity". Abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

It is important to understand that a child or young person may be abused by another child or young person.

1.3.1 Types of abuse - definitions:

- Discriminatory – Unequal treatment, verbal abuse, inappropriate use of language, slurs, harassment, deliberate exclusion, lack of respect for beliefs and cultural background.
- Physical – The non-accidental infliction of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain or impairment.
- Sexual – Such as rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts, such as unwanted touching, to which the young person has not or could not have consented, or they were pressured into consenting to.
- Psychological – The use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing and other verbal conduct or any other form of mental cruelty that results in mental or physical distress. It includes the denial of basic human and civil rights such as choice, self-expression, privacy, dignity and emotional contact.

- Financial – The unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources belonging to an individual or withholding an individual's funds for own use.
- Neglect – such as ignoring medical or physical care needs and preventing access to health, social care or educational services or withholding the necessities of life such as food, drink or heating.

2. Fulfilling The Charity's Safeguarding Obligations

For any queries relating to 'safeguarding,' freelance contractors, staff and volunteers are required to contact one of the designated safeguarding leads.

2.1 Safe recruitment practices

The Charity will adopt safe recruitment practices to reduce the likelihood of recruiting unsuitable staff or freelancers. This includes ensuring that a statement about the organisation's commitment to safeguarding is included in all recruitment and selection materials including reference to regular DBS checks. Satisfactory explanations for any gaps in employment will be sought. References will always be obtained directly from the referee.

2.2 Appropriate levels of Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be obtained.

2.2.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check Policy

The Charity requires freelance contractors and staff to have an enhanced DBS check if they have unsupervised contact with adults at risk and children. The CEO, in consultation with The Board of Trustees, is responsible for deciding which roles require a DBS check, the level of check required and for ensuring that DBS checks are kept up to date.

2.2.2 Appropriate training for employees

Everyone with access to adults at risk and children shall have regular training on safeguarding matters.

Personnel must accept and be able to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of signs of suspected abuse or neglect to either the Police or the relevant County Council's Central Duty Team, and understand The Charity's obligation to ensure confirmation is received from that County Council that any referrals made are being actively dealt with.

Training needs and opportunities relating to adults at risk and children, and safeguarding and protection issues will be identified and addressed through The Charity's Induction Procedure, and in response to any changes in legislation.

Training may include internal courses/workshops, externally accredited courses/seminars or workshops organised by relevant agencies.

The CEO will keep a record of all freelance contractors, staff and volunteers who have received training.

3. Disclosure of Information

General Data Protection Regulations, Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights laws are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately;

- Personnel must be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so;
- Personnel must seek advice from other practitioners, and more specifically a Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible;
- Where possible Personnel must share with consent and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 Personnel may share information without consent if (in their judgement) there is a lawful reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. They will need to base their judgement on the facts of the case. When they are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, they must be clear on the basis upon which they are doing so. Where there is no consent, Personnel must be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
- Personnel must consider safety and well-being of individuals concerned: They must base their information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions;
- Information sharing must be necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Personnel must ensure that that the information they share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information);
- Personnel must make a record of their decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose. Safeguarding leads will have a central location for this information (Safeguarding Leads can be found in Appendix 1).

4. Procedure where there are concerns

Any freelance contractor, employee, volunteer or trustee of The Charity who has concerns about the welfare of an adult at risk or child must raise those concerns with one of the designated safeguarding leads without delay, and in any event, within 48 hours of the information coming to light.
The first priority should always be to protect the safety of all adults at risk and children and it is the responsibility of all employees, volunteers or trustees of The Charity to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect.

The information of the concerns and the action taken should be recorded and passed to the relevant agencies within 7 days.

If an adult or child is at risk of immediate harm, then through discussion with a designated lead, the employee, volunteer or trustee will inform the appropriate agency without delay and in any event not later than 48 hours after the concerns have been raised. All action and reason for action is to be recorded within The Charity's paperwork. Failure to report concerns may lead to suspension pending investigation and for staff, disciplinary action

If a freelance contractor or a member of staff, volunteer or trustee is alleged to have put the welfare or safety of an adult at risk or child at risk, the designated lead will inform the appropriate agency and cooperate fully with the agency in the manner in which the matter is dealt with, including the immediate suspension of the person pending an investigation.

If The Charity is notified of safeguarding concerns from any concerned person about any organisations that run the Own My Life course, any individuals who attend our training, any individuals who go on to facilitate the Own My Life course with women or women who attend the Own My Life course, we will take appropriate action to notify the relevant authorities. This may include:

- Notifying the relevant Police Authority.
- Making a referral to Children's Social Care, if a child is at risk.
- Making a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer, if the issue involves an adult who may work with children, however that work is carried out.
- Making a referral to Adult Social Care, if an adult is at risk, or if the issue involves someone who may work with vulnerable adults.

5. Allegations against freelance contractors, staff and volunteers

It is important that any concerns for the welfare of an adult at risk or child arising from abuse or harassment by a freelance contractors, a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding person and an incident form completed. Concerns about poor practice should also be reported to the designated person

(if the concerns are relating to the designated person, then it must be reported to the board of trustees using the details in our Complaints Policy, available HERE).

Where there are allegations of abuse or concerns about poor practice of freelance contractors, staff or volunteers there are three strands of investigation as follows:

- Adult at risk/child protection investigation (externally led)
- Criminal investigation (externally led by the Police Authority)
- A disciplinary investigation (internally led)

It may be that the employee will be suspended with pay (or a freelancer's contract suspended) during an investigation or a volunteer asked to cease volunteering pending the outcome of the investigation.

6. Designated Safeguarding Personnel

6.1 Trustee responsible for safeguarding

It is the responsibility of the Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding to:

- Ensure that this policy and procedure is available to all freelance contractors, staff, trustees and volunteers and that it is integrated into practice.
- Ensure all freelance contractors, staff, trustees and volunteers are aware of the policy and the procedures to be followed.
- Take a lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding issues and providing information, advice and support to staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Support the designated safeguarding person(s) with their responsibilities.
- Liaise with trustees around allegations of abuse against freelance contractors, staff and volunteers.

6.2 Designated Person

It is the responsibility of the designated person to:

- Take the designated responsibility for safeguarding issues raised by freelance contractors, staff or volunteers and for referring on concerns for the safety of an adult at risk or child.
- Inform The Charity's Trustee for Safeguarding of concerns raised and the process followed.
- Follow up concerns and safeguarding issues to the relevant agencies.
- Liaise with the relevant agencies as identified in accordance with The Charity's confidentiality procedure.
- Liaise with the scheme's Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding on safeguarding adults at risk and children about the safeguarding concerns particularly where there

are allegations against freelance contractors, staff, trustees and volunteers within local adult at risk policies and procedures.

6.3 Training for safeguarding personnel

Designated safeguarding personnel should participate in safeguarding training at least once every two years. This training should be sourced by the individual so as to enable them to participate as easily as possible, and will be paid for by the charity. It is anticipated that this training should cost less than £250 per person. The date of each individual's completed training should be entered into Appendix 1. During the Board meeting following each individual's training, they will present briefly about the training, focussing particularly on any matters relating to the charity that the training raised for them.

7. Retention of Records

A factual, dated record of concerns about an adult at risk or child will be kept in line with The Charity's record keeping and procedures.

Records kept by employees about adults at risk and children should only include contacts made, referrals made including date, time and reason, and referral agency.

This policy will be reviewed annually and more regularly if appropriate.

Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding: Viran Wiltshire

Designated Person: Natalie Collins (natalie@ownmylifecourse.org)

Date reviewed: October 2025
Next review due: October 2026

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Training

Trustee responsible for Safeguarding	
Name	Viran Wiltshire
Date of training	N/A
Next training due	N/A
Comments	Viran is a Detective Sargeant with the Metropolitan Police and therefore safeguarding training and delivery constitutes an ongoing part of her role.

Designated Person	
Name	Natalie Collins
Date of training	14th July 2025
Next training due	End of 2027
Comments	Level 2 training was completed with the CPD Online College.