



Safeguarding Policy

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sara Beadle, Head of Service
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Ruth Ritter, Volunteer Team Leader

Implementation date	May 2024
Review date	1 October 2025
Review date	22 September 2026
Next review date	22 September 2027

Signed on behalf of all trustees by:

Simon Talbot	Chair of Operations Committee	
Nicola Dawes	Chief Executive	

1. Preliminary

- 1.1 The Charity Commission expects charity trustees to take appropriate steps to safeguard people who come into contact with their charity, including children and adults at risk. The Charity recognises safeguarding as a key governance responsibility and will ensure that its safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and proportionate to the Charity's activities, circumstances and the people it works with. The Charity will have regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026* where applicable.
- 1.2 This Policy is informed by the *Children Act 1989 and 2004*, the *Care Act 2014*, the Charity Commission guidance on safeguarding (2023), 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2026), and related statutory guidance.
- 1.3 This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers of Stripey Stork (referred to in this policy as the "Charity"). In this Policy, "volunteers" means and includes the Charity's trustees and all other volunteers.

1.4 Definition of **Adults at Risk**

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves.

1.5 Definition of **Significant Harm**

For the purposes of this Policy, "Significant Harm" refers to the threshold at which intervention is considered necessary to protect a person from abuse or neglect.

For **children**, it is defined under the *Children Act 1989* as "ill-treatment or impairment of health or development" that is sufficiently serious to justify the intervention of child protection services.

For **adults at risk**, it includes serious harm caused by abuse, neglect or exploitation, as defined by the *Care Act 2014*. This may include physical, emotional, sexual, financial abuse, neglect or self-neglect.

2. Commitment to safeguarding

- 2.1 Those who participate in the activities provided by the Charity or who come onto the Charity's premises are referred to in this Policy as its "Service Users". "Service Users" can include referral partners, visitors, children and young people, adults at risk and other people who participate in or are affected by the Charity's activities. Note that the Charity does not accept direct referrals from families and does not have direct contact with families as part of its normal referral process.
- 2.2 Service Users may be at increased risk of harm due to age, illness, or disability or other factors. The Charity is committed to working in their interests, to promote their welfare and dignity, and to put in place safeguards and measures to protect them. In providing activities for Service Users, the Charity will always endeavour to minimise risk to them and to ensure that they are as safe as the Charity can make them.

- 2.3 The Charity aims to protect all its Service Users from any act or behaviour of any member of staff or volunteer which, whether deliberately or unknowingly on the part of that member of staff or volunteer, gives rise to harm or ill treatment.
- 2.4 Such harm or ill treatment includes abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, discriminatory, institutional or organisational, financial or material), neglect, or impairment of the health or development of the Charity's Service Users.
- 2.5 The Charity is committed to maintaining an inclusive and anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture. Staff, volunteers and trustees must not tolerate or ignore racism, discrimination, prejudice or discriminatory behaviour. The Charity will seek to understand and challenge discrimination where it may affect the safety or welfare of a Service User and will take appropriate action in response to safeguarding concerns involving discriminatory behaviour.
- 2.6 The Charity recognises that every child has the right to be safeguarded from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding concerns will be considered in the context of the individual child's circumstances, needs and experiences, including any disability, discrimination, family circumstances or other factors that may affect their vulnerability or safety.
- 2.7 The Charity also aims to ensure to promote the well-being and welfare of its Service Users.
- 2.8 The Charity recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. The Charity will never knowingly tolerate abuse, neglect or harmful behaviour and will take all safeguarding concerns seriously.
- 2.9 The Charity maintains a Safe Working Practice Guidance. It includes amongst other things:
- (1) Harassment and Bullying Policy
 - (2) Lone Working Policy
 - (3) Mental Health and Stress Policy
 - (4) Domestic Abuse Policy
 - (5) Sexual Harassment Policy
- The Charity will ensure that the relevant guidance and policies are implemented by those within the Charity and that staff and volunteers receive information and training appropriate to their roles.
- 2.10 The Charity will work in partnership with local / national agencies to put in place appropriate procedures for reporting, making referrals, and accessing training and specialist support, as and when required.

3. Safe recruitment

- 3.1 To protect its Service Users, the Charity use appropriate recruitment procedures, safeguards and checks when recruiting staff, trustees and volunteers. Recruitment and safeguarding checks will be proportionate to the duties and responsibilities of the particular role.
- 3.2 The Charity will take up two references for all staff posts prior to appointment.

- 3.3 The Charity will provide an induction programme for all new volunteers and staff and appropriate safeguarding training and ongoing/refresher training appropriate to their roles. The induction will make clear their responsibility to follow this Policy, recognise safeguarding concerns and report concerns promptly.
- 3.4 Where a role is eligible for a DBS check, the Charity will obtain the level of DBS check appropriate to the duties and activities of the role, in accordance with current legislation and DBS guidance. DBS checks will only be requested where the role is legally eligible for that level of check.
- 3.5 The Charity's detailed arrangements for assessing DBS eligibility, determining the appropriate level of check, obtaining and recording DBS checks, considering information disclosed on certificates, use of the DBS Update Service, and reviewing or renewing checks are set out in the Charity's **DBS Checks Policy**.
- 3.6 The Charity will regularly review its DBS arrangements in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance and DBS requirements.

4. Volunteers

- 4.1 All volunteer roles will be supported by a Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- 4.2 Before they take up their role, they will each be given a clear description of the requirements and responsibilities of their role and the member of staff or trustee recruiting them will discuss their role with them, to ensure that they understand what is expected of them.
- 4.3 Volunteer roles involving children or adults at risk will be assessed in accordance with the Charity's **DBS Checks Policy** and relevant safeguarding requirements. Volunteers will not undertake duties for which they are unsuitable or legally prohibited from undertaking.

4.4 Safeguarding Young Volunteers

Where volunteers are under the age of 18, the Charity recognises that they are children for safeguarding purposes. Young volunteers may be at increased risk of harm or exploitation and must be treated as children in line with safeguarding legislation.

The Charity will:

- Ensure that any role offered to a young volunteer is age-appropriate, risk-assessed.
- Obtain consent from a parent or guardian before the young person begins volunteering.
- Provide close supervision and ensure the young volunteer is never left alone with adults at risk or children.
- Make clear to staff and adult volunteers the boundaries of appropriate behaviour towards young volunteers.
- Ensure that young volunteers have access to a named supervisor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they have any concerns.

- Include young volunteers in safeguarding training if relevant to their role.

4.5 Safeguarding Young Adults with Additional Needs.

The Charity recognises that **young adults (aged 18–25) with additional needs** may face increased risks and barriers when accessing services or volunteering. They may not fit neatly into existing child or adult safeguarding categories, but may still be vulnerable due to physical, learning, mental health, or social needs. When a young adult with additional needs is attending Charity activities accompanied by a carer, teacher, or support worker, the accompanying adult will normally retain responsibility for the individual's day-to-day supervision while on-site. This does not remove the Charity's responsibility to take appropriate action where a safeguarding concern arises. The Charity recognises that some young adults aged 18-25 with additional needs may be at increased risk of harm or may meet the definition of an adult at risk. Staff and volunteers should remain alert to safeguarding concerns and respond in accordance with this policy.

5. Safeguarding Officer

5.1 The Charity's appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Sara Beadle, Head of Service, and they are supported by Ruth Ritter, Volunteer Team Leader as Deputy Safeguarding Officer (DSO). They will have access to appropriate safeguarding training to support them in these roles.

5.2 Contact details for the DSL and DSO are as follows:

Sara Beadle, Head of Service	sara@stripeystork.org.uk	07941 261090/ 01737 423771
Ruth Ritter, Volunteer Team Leader	ruth@stripeystork.org.uk	01737 423771

5.3 They will be available to all staff, volunteers and Service Users to speak to when they have any concerns, issues, or complaints regarding the safety, well-being or conduct of Service Users, volunteers or staff.

5.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Officer will liaise with appropriate local and national agencies, contribute to appropriate policies, maintain records, keep confidentiality, adhere to and promote this Policy within the Charity, and support or provide access to support for individuals suffering harm or abuse.

6. Awareness of harm and abuse within the Charity

6.1 All incidents of harm to any Service User will require an appropriate response to reduce risks and improve the Charity's activities.

6.2 Harm may be caused by accidents, deliberate abuse (including physical, psychological, sexual, emotional, financial or discriminatory abuse), neglect

(deliberate or not), exploitation, coercive or controlling behaviour, domestic abuse, bullying, prejudicial attitudes, or a failure to enable a person to participate in activities that are open to most of their peers. Harm may occur within families, intimate or other relationships, within groups or organisations, or through online activity.

The Charity recognises that a child or young person may experience more than one form of harm at the same time and that safeguarding concerns should therefore be considered in the context of the individual's wider circumstances.

- 6.3 Deliberate acts of harm (physical, psychological, sexual, emotional and financial) and neglect are abuses against the person. Those acts will incur disciplinary proceedings and require reports and referrals to social services, the police, other professional bodies, and the DBS if the act is by someone in Regulated Activity. Where a member of staff or volunteer has been removed from a regulated activity with children or adults, or would have been removed had they not left the Charity, the Charity will consider whether a referral to the DBS is required and will make any referral required by law.

7. Awareness of Sexual Harassment responsibilities

All members of staff are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in our place of work. This means freedom from sexual harassment, feeling safe and supported, and having access to redress if such behaviour does arise.

Stripey Stork takes this responsibility seriously, and has developed a Sexual Harassment Policy in order to address this issue specifically. For full details of our approach, reporting procedures and support for individuals affected, refer to our Sexual Harassment Policy.

8. Confidentiality and information sharing

All safeguarding reports and records will be kept securely and confidentially in accordance with the Charity's Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation.

Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and only where there is a legitimate safeguarding or other lawful reason to do so. Where necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child or adult at risk, the Charity will share relevant information with appropriate statutory agencies and other relevant organisations in accordance with applicable legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.

The Charity will seek consent to share information where appropriate. However, safeguarding information may be shared without consent where this is permitted or required by law and is necessary and proportionate to protect an individual or promote their welfare.

Staff and volunteers must not assume that information cannot be shared simply because consent has not been obtained or because a statutory child protection threshold has not been reached.

9. Reports of possible or actual harm

- 9.1 The Charity supports and encourages all Service Users, volunteers and staff to promptly speak up and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer where there is a concern (i.e. a worry, issue or doubt about practice or about treatment of a Service User or colleague, or their circumstances), or a disclosure (i.e. information about a person at risk of or suffering from Significant Harm) or an allegation of an incident or a possibility that a volunteer or staff member has caused harm or could cause harm to a person in their care. This includes incidents of sexual harassment, or suspected sexual harassment.
- 9.2 Staff or volunteers can report, and have a responsibility to report, something that they become aware of if they suspect or discover that it is not right or is illegal or if it appears to them that someone at work is neglecting their duties, putting someone's health and safety in danger or covering up wrongdoing. They may become aware of any of these things from what they see or hear or from something another person has disclosed to them.
- 9.3 A safeguarding concern should be reported promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officer. A staff member or volunteer may also report the concern to their line manager or the Charity trustee with appropriate safeguarding responsibility. If the concern involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, line manager or another person to whom the concern would normally be reported, the concern should be reported directly to the Charity trustee with appropriate safeguarding responsibility or, where appropriate, to an external safeguarding agency.
- 9.4 The Charity prefers that anyone should use internal processes whenever possible to make a report as above, but this does not prevent them from making a report or referral, in their own right as a private individual, to statutory agencies such as social services or the police.
- 9.5 More detailed guidance, in accordance with the NSPCC and current statutory guidance for responding to the disclosure of and reporting possible child abuse is available in the document '*Stripey Stork Safeguarding Concerns and Procedure Guidance*'. The Designated Safeguarding Lead can provide a copy of this if you do not have one.
- 9.6 The Charity cannot promise confidentiality to staff or volunteers making an internal report (to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Officer, the Charity's trustee with appropriate responsibility or their line manager) where it has to be shared with any statutory agencies.
- 9.7 The Charity also supports its staff or volunteers to raise concerns or to disclose information, which they believe shows malpractice - whistle-blowing (disclosure in the public interest). This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Charity's Whistleblowing Policy.
- 9.8 Where a concern or allegation relates to a member of staff or volunteer who works with children, the Charity will follow the procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children, including seeking advice from and, where appropriate, referring the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police or children's social care.

10. Online Abuse

The Charity will take a greater interest in training and awareness around online abuse and recognising the signs of that in the people we work with. The Charity's *Safeguarding Concerns and Procedure Guidance* includes further advice on how to recognise and respond to online safeguarding concerns.

11. Designated Safeguarding Lead's action

Where there is a safeguarding concern or a risk of harm to any Service User, volunteer or staff member, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Officer have the power to act as necessary and, in particular, as follows:

- log all conversations regarding the issue
- sign and request signatures on reports and statements
- confidentially seek advice from expert sources
- share concerns (with consent where required and appropriate) internally with senior staff / Chair of the Board of trustees
- share concerns and make referrals to external agencies such as social services or the police, as appropriate to the circumstances.
- consider and make a referral to the DBS that is required by law where a person has been removed from a regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, because they pose a risk of harm to children or adults.

12. Communication by the Charity about safeguarding and this Policy

- 12.1 All staff and volunteers have an obligation to understand the safeguarding responsibilities relevant to their role and to know how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.
- 12.2 The Charity will communicate this Policy (using appropriate methods, formats and language to communicate the substance of it) to all of its staff, volunteers, and Service Users as appropriate. The Charity will make the Policy available to the public and will provide accessible information about how safeguarding concerns can be raised. Nicola Dawes, Chief Executive, will be responsible to the Board of trustees for communicating this Policy to them.
- 12.3 To encourage everyone involved in the Charity to understand that safeguarding is the business of everyone, and to assist all staff and volunteers to learn about protection issues and their related responsibilities.

13. Implementation of this Policy

- 13.1 This Policy must be followed by all staff and volunteers of the Charity and must be promoted by all of its trustees and senior staff. Failure to follow it will be treated as a very serious matter.
- 13.2 The Board of Trustees will ensure that safeguarding arrangements are appropriately monitored, that safeguarding risks are considered as part of the

Charity's risk management arrangements, and that trustees receive sufficient information and training to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

- 13.3 This Policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures of the Charity:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- DBS Checks Policy
- Safeguarding Procedures Guidance Document
- Sexual Harassment Policy

14. Adoption, coming into effect, and review, of this Policy

- 14.1 This Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and approved by the Operations Sub-Committee on behalf of the Board of trustees of Stripey Stork on 28/9/26
- 14.2 The Board of Trustees will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this Policy and will review it at least annually, and sooner where there are significant changes in legislation, statutory guidance, the Charity's activities or safeguarding risks.
- 14.3 The next scheduled review of this Policy will be September 2027.