

Heritage Chester CIC Safeguarding Policy

Adopted February 2026. For review February 2026.

1. Policy Statement and Purpose

Heritage Chester CIC is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all people who engage with our organisation, particularly **children** (under 18s) and **adults at risk**. We believe that everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, has the right to equal protection from all types of harm, abuse, and neglect.

This policy applies to all **Trustees, Directors, paid staff, volunteers, freelancers, contractors, and anyone acting on behalf of Heritage Chester CIC** (referred to collectively as “personnel”).

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect all participants, especially children and adults at risk, from harm arising from their contact with the CIC’s personnel or activities.
- Provide personnel with clear procedures for responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals engaging with Chester’s heritage.

2. Definitions and Scope

- **Safeguarding:** Safeguarding: Protecting children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect, promoting their health and development, and ensuring that they are able to live in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- **Child:** Child: Anyone under the age of 18.
- **Adult at Risk:** Adult at Risk: An individual aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and 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 (as defined by the Care Act 2014).
- **Abuse and Neglect:** Abuse and Neglect: Includes physical, sexual, emotional, financial, institutional, domestic abuse, modern slavery, self-neglect, discriminatory abuse, and online abuse.

3. Responsibilities and Roles

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Role	Name/Position	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Jane Hebblewhite (Director)	07776 238121
Deputy DSL	Stuart Robinson (Director)	01244 631262

- The DSL will take the lead on all safeguarding matters, manage the reporting procedures, liaise with external agencies, and ensure the policy is up-to-date and implemented.
- Trustees/Directors are ultimately responsible for ensuring the CIC complies with all safeguarding legislation and that this policy is embedded into the organisation's culture.

All Personnel Responsibilities

All personnel must:

- Be familiar with, and adhere to, this policy and the associated Code of Conduct.
- Attend all mandatory safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Be alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.
- Report any concerns immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL. Never investigate a concern yourself.

4. Code of Conduct

All personnel must maintain professional boundaries and conduct themselves in a manner that minimises the risk of harm or misunderstanding.

Do	Do Not
Treat everyone with respect and dignity.	Do not have inappropriate physical contact.
Challenge inappropriate language or behaviour.	Do not use inappropriate language or share abusive content.
Respect privacy and confidentiality.	Do not take photos/videos of children/adults at risk without explicit consent from them and/or their parent/carer.
Work openly in public areas where possible.	Do not arrange to meet participants outside of the CIC's organised activities.
Record and report concerns immediately.	Do not keep secrets or promise confidentiality if a disclosure is made.

5. Reporting Procedures

If you have a safeguarding concern, you must follow these steps:

1. **Safety First:** If a person is in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed, call 999 immediately.
2. **Report to DSL:** As soon as possible, and ideally within 24 hours, report your concern to the DSL (or Deputy DSL if unavailable). The report should include:
 - What you observed or were told (the concern).
 - The names of the person concerned and any alleged abuser.
 - Date, time, and location of the incident/disclosure.
 - Use the person's own words where possible, and do not add your opinion or interpretation.
3. **DSL Action:** The DSL will record the information and take advice from the appropriate statutory agencies (e.g., Cheshire West and Chester Council Social Care or Police) to determine the next steps.
4. **Record Keeping:** All concerns and actions taken will be recorded accurately and securely, separately from general files, and only accessed by those with a need-to-know, in line with Data Protection laws.

External Statutory Contacts

Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) – Children's Social Care (MASH): 0300 123 7034

Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) – Adult Social Care: 0300 123 7034

Police (Non-Emergency): 101

Integrated Access and Referral Team (iART) – Child Welfare Concerns

If you or a member of the public have concerns about a child's welfare, or feel that a child may be being abused or neglected, please contact the Integrated Access and Referral Team (iART) or the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) for help and advice. Alternatively, call the police.

- Telephone (iART): 0300 123 7047
- Hours: Monday–Thursday 8.30am–5.00pm; Friday 8.30am–4.30pm
- Out of hours / bank holidays – Emergency Duty Team: 01244 977277
- Email: i-ART@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

6. Safe Working Practices and Risk Management

Heritage Chester CIC is committed to safer practice through:

- **Safer Recruitment:** Safer Recruitment: Implementing robust procedures including DBS checks (where legally required for roles involving unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk), taking up references, and interviewing.
- **Training:** Training: Providing mandatory safeguarding training for all personnel relevant to their roles.
- **Lone Working:** Lone Working: Establishing clear guidelines for personnel working alone, especially when interacting with participants (e.g., having accessible contact methods, informing a colleague of the activity).

- **Online Safety:** Online Safety: Ensuring that any digital engagement (e.g., social media, online workshops) is conducted safely with clear boundaries and protocols.
- **Whistleblowing:** Whistleblowing: Maintaining a separate Whistleblowing Policy to ensure personnel can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice internally without fear of reprisal.

7. Event Planning – Safeguarding Procedures

The following procedures apply to all Heritage Chester CIC events at which children or vulnerable adults are taking part or attending.

7.1 Lost Children and Vulnerable Adults

Heritage Chester CIC has a procedure in place for lost children and vulnerable adults at all events. The specific location of the lost children point is identified as part of the event planning process for each event, as this will vary depending on the venue and layout.

The lost children procedure is communicated to all personnel during pre-event inductions and reiterated at team briefings on the day of the event.

In the event of a lost child or vulnerable adult, personnel must:

1. **Stay calm and remain with the child or vulnerable adult at the designated lost children point.**
2. **Immediately notify the event lead or DSL on duty.**
3. **Do not leave the child or vulnerable adult alone at any time.**
4. **Do not attempt to reunite the child with an adult unless that person's identity as a parent or guardian has been clearly confirmed.**
5. **If the child or vulnerable adult cannot be reunited with their party within a reasonable time, or if there are any concerns for their safety, call 999.**
6. **Record the incident, including times, actions taken, and outcome, and report to the DSL as soon as possible after the event.**

Any supervised facility for children or vulnerable adults at Heritage Chester events is managed by appropriate staff who have undergone relevant suitability checks. For larger events, the lost children procedure is discussed in advance with the security manager and, where applicable, the police officer in charge.

7.2 Age-Restricted Products

Heritage Chester CIC does not directly sell age-restricted products (including alcohol, tobacco, vapes, or fireworks) at its events. Where third-party vendors or venue operators sell such products at or alongside a Heritage Chester event, Heritage Chester CIC will:

- Confirm in advance that the vendor or venue holds the appropriate licence for the sale of any age-restricted products.
- Request written confirmation that the vendor or venue has a Challenge 25 policy in place and that staff are trained to implement it.
- Include reference to age-restricted product responsibilities in any event agreements or terms with third-party vendors.

Should Heritage Chester CIC ever directly sell or distribute age-restricted products at a future event, a Challenge 25 policy will be implemented in advance, including staff training

and a clear procedure for handling situations where an underage person attempts to purchase or is found consuming such products.

7.3 Regulated Entertainment

Heritage Chester CIC events may include regulated entertainment such as live music, recorded music, performances of a play, or performances of dance. Heritage Chester CIC relies on venue licences to cover regulated entertainment at its events, rather than holding its own premises licence.

Before programming any regulated entertainment, the event organiser must:

- Confirm with the venue that its licence covers the planned entertainment activity and any applicable conditions.
- Review the licence conditions and ensure the event programme complies with them.
- Assess whether the content of any performance is appropriate for the expected audience, including whether children should be accompanied by an adult.
- Include details of any additional safeguarding measures for children in the event plan.

If a film screening is included in any Heritage Chester event:

- The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) rating must be clearly displayed.
- For any film rated other than U (Universal), procedures must be in place to ensure only audience members of the appropriate age are admitted (e.g. PG, 12A, 12, 15, or 18).
- Films without a BBFC certificate are considered to be 18 age-restricted.
- Age verification checks should be conducted where necessary, and stewards briefed accordingly.

7.4 Sale of Sex Articles and/or Sexual Entertainment

Heritage Chester CIC events do not include the sale of sex articles or the provision of sexual entertainment. In the unlikely event that a third-party vendor at a Heritage Chester event is found to be selling such articles, or if a performance includes unexpected nudity or sexual content, the event lead must:

- Immediately take steps to ensure children are not exposed to the articles or performance.
- Halt the relevant activity if it cannot be adequately screened from children.
- Assess whether the activity reaches the threshold at which a licence under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 would be required and take advice from the DSL or relevant authority if uncertain.
- Record the incident and report to the DSL.

7.5 Performance by Children

Heritage Chester CIC events rarely involve children performing. However, where this does occur, child performance licence requirements must be observed.

The law requires children of compulsory school age to be licensed by the Council if involved in performances of all kinds, including performances in licensed premises, performances where a charge is made, any broadcast performance, and performances recorded for public exhibition.

Where a Heritage Chester CIC event is to include a performance by children, the event organiser must:

- Confirm whether a child performance licence is required for each child involved.
- Submit licence applications to the Education Welfare Service, Child Licensing Team at Cheshire West and Chester Council at least 21 days before the event. Applications received with less than 21 days' notice may be refused.
- Ensure that a responsible adult is present and accountable for each performing child throughout the event.
- Confirm that any chaperones are appropriately licensed or approved.

Heritage Chester CIC will not programme a child performance without first confirming that all licence and chaperone requirements are in place.

7.6 Complaints Procedure

Heritage Chester CIC is committed to handling all complaints promptly, fairly, and transparently. A complaints procedure is in place for all events.

How to raise a complaint:

Any concerns or complaints relating to safeguarding, conduct, or any aspect of a Heritage Chester event should be directed to:

Email: info@heritagechester.co.uk

Complaints procedure:

1. **All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.**
2. **The complaint will be reviewed by the DSL or a Director, depending on the nature of the concern.**
3. **Where the complaint relates to a safeguarding matter, it will be handled in accordance with the reporting procedures set out in Section 5 of this policy.**
4. **A full response will be provided within 20 working days wherever possible. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the reason for the delay and given a revised timescale.**
5. **All complaints and responses will be recorded and retained securely in line with Heritage Chester CIC's data protection obligations.**
6. **If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may escalate their complaint to Cheshire West and Chester Council or another relevant statutory body.**

Heritage Chester CIC treats all complaints seriously and will use feedback to improve future events and safeguarding practices.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees/Directors annually or following any significant change in legislation or statutory guidance.