

HERITAGE CHESTER

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Heritage Chester CIC Safeguarding Policy

Adopted November 2025. For review November 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:** 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:** Anyone under the age of 18.
- **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:** 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 (Local Authority)

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

6. Safe Working Practices and Risk Management

Heritage Chester CIC is committed to safer practice through:

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

7. Review

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

The Bluecoat Building, Upper Northgate Street, Chester, United Kingdom, CH1 4EE.