

MenWalkTalk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

(Version: February 2025)

1. Introduction

MenWalkTalk is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all trustees, staff, volunteers, and walk-leaders have a duty to uphold the safety and wellbeing of those engaging with our charity.

This policy sets out how MenWalkTalk will ensure the protection of vulnerable adults, providing clear guidelines on recognising, reporting, and responding to concerns.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all MenWalkTalk trustees, employees, volunteers, and anyone representing the organisation. It covers all activities delivered by MenWalkTalk, including group walks, events, online interactions, and any other form of engagement with vulnerable adults.

3. Definitions

- **Vulnerable Adult:** A person aged 18 or over who may be at risk of harm or abuse due to age, disability, mental health, illness, or any other circumstance making them unable to protect themselves or seek help.
- **Safeguarding:** Actions taken to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and protect them from harm.
- **Abuse:** Any act or failure to act that results in harm or distress to a vulnerable adult. This may include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or neglect-related abuse.

4. Key Principles

MenWalkTalk is committed to:

- Ensuring all vulnerable adults accessing our services feel safe, respected, and supported.
- Responding promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Promoting an organisational culture where safeguarding is prioritised.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate guidance.
- Working in partnership with statutory agencies when necessary.

5. Recognising Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** – Hitting, shaking, pushing, inappropriate restraint.
- **Emotional abuse** – Verbal threats, humiliation, isolation, intimidation.
- **Sexual abuse** – Non-consensual sexual activity, inappropriate touching, exploitation.

- **Financial abuse** – Misuse of money, coercion into financial decisions, fraud.
- **Neglect** – Failing to provide necessary care, assistance, or access to basic needs.

6. Reporting Concerns

All concerns or disclosures regarding safeguarding must be reported as soon as possible.

6.1 Responding to a Disclosure

If a vulnerable adult shares a safeguarding concern:

- Listen carefully and offer reassurance.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality—explain that you may need to share the information with relevant professionals.
- Record what was said as soon as possible, using the individual's exact words where possible.
- Report the concern following the procedures below.

6.2 Reporting Procedure

- Immediate danger: Call 999 and ensure the person is safe.
- Concern about abuse but not immediate danger: Report to MenWalkTalk's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.
- If the DSL is unavailable: Contact the Chair of Trustees.
- If necessary, refer to Adult Social Care (via the Local Authority) or seek advice from the local Safeguarding Adults Board.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Matt Pollard

Email: Matt@menwalktalk.co.uk

Phone: 07544 871442

6.3 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Safeguarding concerns must be handled sensitively and confidentially.
- Information should only be shared with relevant individuals/agencies in line with GDPR and safeguarding best practices.
- Concerns will be recorded securely and only accessed by those who need to know.

7. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Trustees

- Ensure MenWalkTalk has an effective safeguarding policy.
- Review safeguarding procedures annually.
- Support the DSL in managing safeguarding concerns.

7.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken when safeguarding issues arise.
- Maintain records of safeguarding concerns and liaise with external agencies.

7.3 Staff, Volunteers, and Walk-Leaders

- Be aware of safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Attend safeguarding training where required.
- Report concerns or disclosures following the reporting procedure.

8. Safe Recruitment and Training

- All staff, trustees, and volunteers working directly with vulnerable adults will be required to complete appropriate safeguarding training.
- DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks will be conducted where necessary.
- References will be obtained as part of the recruitment process.

9. Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Any allegations of abuse against a staff member or volunteer will be taken seriously.
- If an allegation is made, it must be reported to the DSL immediately.
- If necessary, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Adult Safeguarding Team will be contacted.
- The individual concerned may be suspended while an investigation takes place.

10. Risk Assessment and Prevention

- Safeguarding risks will be considered when planning activities and events.
- Walk-leaders will be encouraged to identify potential risks and report concerns.
- Lone working will be avoided wherever possible, and appropriate risk assessments will be conducted.

11. Online and Digital Safeguarding

- Online interactions must be conducted in line with safeguarding principles.
- Private one-on-one digital communications with vulnerable adults should be avoided.
- Social media content should be respectful and not disclose personal or sensitive information.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in safeguarding legislation. Trustees, staff, and volunteers will be consulted as part of the review process.

Date of next review: February 2026