

POLICY REFERENCE:

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version 2: JANUARY 2026

1. Policy Overview

- 1.1. At Zarach, one of our guiding principles is to be a 'safe for all' charity. As such, Zarach is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults we encounter in the course of our work to end child bed poverty. We believe that no child or adult at risk should experience abuse or neglect. We are committed to ensuring that our staff and volunteers act responsibly, confidently, and appropriately to safeguard those we serve, and know how to keep themselves safe.
- 1.2. We recognise our moral duty and our legal obligations under English law to promote the welfare of children and protect adults at risk. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we expect all associated with Zarach to share this commitment.
- 1.3. This policy sets out Zarach's commitment to safeguarding and our principles for meeting that duty. It informs staff, volunteers, partners, beneficiaries and the general public of the overarching principles in relation to safeguarding and protecting children & young people. It describes our approach to preventing harm, responding to concerns, and ensuring continuous improvement.
- 1.4. This policy applies to all trustees, the chief executive, leadership team, staff, contractors, volunteers, external partners, supporters, beneficiaries, and any other individuals connected with the organisation in any capacity.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Child:** Anyone under 18 years old.
- 2.2. **Adult at Risk (or vulnerable adult):** A person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support and may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.
- 2.3. **Safeguarding:** Protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.
- 2.4. **Abuse:** Forms of harm that can include physical, emotional, sexual, financial abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation.
- 2.5. **Risk of Abuse:** Any current or potential circumstance, situation, or behaviour that increases the probability of an individual (child or adult at risk) experiencing harm, abuse, or neglect.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Zarach operates in England and adheres to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- 3.1. Children Act 1989 and 2004
- 3.2. The Children & Social Care Act (2004, updated 2017)
- 3.3. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023)
- 3.4. Care Act 2014 (for adult safeguarding)
- 3.5. Charities Act 2011 and Charity Commission guidance on safeguarding (including CC3)
- 3.6. Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. **Trustees:** Hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding. Ensure appropriate policies, procedures, and resources are in place. At all times there will be a named Trustee responsible for safeguarding.
- 4.2. **Chief Executive / Leadership:** Promote a culture of safeguarding, ensure implementation of this policy and related procedures.

- 4.3. **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** At Zarach, the Head of Family Engagement & National Development serves as the DSL. Create and maintain appropriate policy & procedures, compliance, oversight of concerns, supporting Deputies, escalating and supporting high risk cases.
- 4.4. **Deputy DSL:** The Regional Warehouse and Logistics Managers and Regional Family Engagement Managers serve as deputy DSLs at Zarach. Supports and covers for the DSL where required. Responsible for receiving concerns, advising staff/volunteers, escalating as needed, maintaining records, and liaising with statutory agencies.
- 4.5. **Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs):** The Regional Warehouse and Logistics Officer and Regional Family Engagement Officers serve as DSOs at Zarach. Provide an accessible safeguarding contact for staff and volunteers across regions/teams. Support colleagues in recognising and reporting concerns. Pass all safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. The Head of People & Operations will also be DSO trained due to the safeguarding-related responsibilities of the role.
- 4.6. **All Staff and Volunteers:** Must read and comply with this policy and related procedures. Must complete required training in line with their role. Must report any safeguarding concerns promptly in line with our procedures.

5. Our Safeguarding Approach

- 5.1. Zarach commits to:
 - 5.1.1. Preventing harm through robust recruitment, training, and supervision.
 - 5.1.2. Being proportionate and person-centred in our safeguarding response.
 - 5.1.3. Encouraging a 'safe for all' culture, empowering those we work with to share concerns safely.

- 5.1.4. Working in partnership with statutory services and other agencies, where required.
 - 5.1.5. Ensuring accountability and transparency in decision-making.
 - 5.1.6. Providing support to all staff and volunteers with any safeguarding concerns or incidents.
- 5.2. We recognise that our work - delivering beds and providing support to families living in bed poverty - exposes our teams to households where safeguarding concerns may arise.
- 5.3. We train staff and volunteers to recognise and appropriately respond to these situations. As Zarach is not a statutory service, we partner only with schools, who hold a statutory responsibility for child protection, and we ensure that all relevant safeguarding disclosures and concerns are immediately relayed back to the appropriate school. Detailed operational guidance on our safeguarding practices is contained in our Safeguarding Procedures. [See appendix 1 for information on what is contained within our procedures]
- 5.4. To ensure the safety of everyone that comes into contact with Zarach, the following measures are taken:
- 5.4.1. Complete appropriate levels of DBS checks for all Zarach personnel - repeated every 3 years
 - 5.4.2. Adopt Safer Recruitment practices when recruiting service delivery staff and Family Engagement volunteers.
 - 5.4.3. Have a clear process for raising and escalating safeguarding concerns.
- 5.5. We also commit to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of people we engage with through all areas of our work, including but not limited to public-facing fundraising activities.

6. External reporting of concerns

Any individual external to Zarach who wishes to raise a safeguarding concern regarding a Zarach staff member or volunteer should email the Designated Safeguarding Leads directly at: safeguarding@zarach.org.

7. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside, and operates in conjunction with:

- 7.1. Safeguarding Procedures
- 7.2. Recruitment Policy
- 7.3. Volunteer Code of Conduct
- 7.4. Whistleblowing Policy
- 7.5. Complaints Policy
- 7.6. Disciplinary and Grievance Policies and Procedures
- 7.7. Health and Safety Policy
- 7.8. Data Protection Policy
- 7.9. Any other policies introduced by the charity which relate to safeguarding

8. Review and Oversight

- 8.1. This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by Zarach's Board of Trustees annually, or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational practice.
- 8.2. The accompanying Safeguarding Procedures will be reviewed annually, or in-line with national policy or operational changes in the quarterly safeguarding meeting.
- 8.3. Lessons learned from safeguarding incidents or near-misses will be reviewed at the Safeguarding meeting and inform policy and procedure updates to promote continual improvement.

Note: The Safeguarding policy set out may be changed by the charity in line with legal or operational changes.

Version	Policy Author	Approved By	Policy Date	Review Date
1	Helen Kenneally and Kelly Read	Board of trustees	October 2024	October 2025
2	Jess Sandy and Srish Arjen	Board of Trustees	January 2026	January 2027

APPENDIX 1 – SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES: KEY AREAS

This safeguarding policy is supported by a comprehensive, separate **Safeguarding Procedures Document**, which provides detailed operational guidance on the following key areas:

- **Responding to Concerns:** Detailed, step-by-step guidance on how all staff and volunteers must respond when a concern is raised (either directly or observed).
- **Managing Allegations:** The formal process for handling and investigating allegations of abuse or neglect made against a staff member or volunteer.
- **Referral Pathways:** Specific protocols and contact information for making referrals to local statutory authorities (Local Authority Designated Officer – LADO, and Children's/Adult Social Care).
- **Information Sharing and Confidentiality:** Rules and guidance on when and how to share sensitive information to ensure safeguarding and meet legal duties, while respecting GDPR.
- **Record Keeping:** Requirements for documenting concerns, actions taken, and decisions made in line with best practice and legal requirements.
- **Safer Working Practices:** Specific behavioural guidance for interaction with service users, including rules on lone working and digital communication.