

Connect4Life Safeguarding Policy

March 2025

Introduction/background

Connect4Life does not work directly with children nor with adults at risk.

Nevertheless, Connect4Life is committed to proactively safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all those who come into contact with Connect4Life, directly or indirectly.

Connect4Life does not engage in any activity with children or with adults at risk that is regulated by UK safeguarding legislation, but it does take seriously its obligations to operate in a way that ensures, so far as is possible, that its work does no harm to anyone with whom it engages.

Should it come into contact with vulnerable groups (including children), Connect4Life will take responsibility to ensure it is doing all it can to protect such groups from all forms of harm, including abuse, neglect and exploitation and to ensure appropriate action is taken if such harm occurs.

Understanding the risks

Vulnerable persons can be harmed, or put at risk of harm, by organisations and institutions of all types. Such harm may result from unintentional acts or deliberate actions. Unintentional acts may lead to harm due to a lack of 'due diligence' or competence or through organisational negligence, such as inadequate care and supervision, lack of policies, procedures and guidance to inform programming and practice, or lack of staff compliance with legal requirements. Also, deliberate actions may be taken by people with intent to abuse vulnerable people.

Scope of this policy

1. For Connect4Life staff and contractors

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all Connect4Life staff. For the purpose of this policy 'staff' is defined as anyone who works for, or is engaged by Connect4Life, either in a paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time capacity. This includes directly employed staff, contractors, agency staff, consultants, volunteers, interns and equivalents.

2. For board members and trustees

Board members and trustees must act at all times in the best interests of Connect4Life and the ultimate communities being served and they are also expected to comply with this policy

Statement of commitment

Connect4Life commits to taking all reasonable measures to ensure vulnerable groups (including children) impacted by Connect4Life's staff & trustees are protected as far as possible from harm, including exploitation, neglect and abuse of all kinds.

Connect4Life commits to:

1. Developing a zero tolerance 'safety culture' within Connect4Life that creates and maintains protective environments.
2. Placing safeguarding at the heart of recruitment practices by requesting three written references, and checking qualifications and certifications, where appropriate.
3. Ensuring Connect4Life staff and board members are fully cognisant of safeguarding issues.
4. Increasing understanding and raising the awareness of staff within the organisation of risks relating to safeguarding, ensuring that appropriate guidance is provided for those with a greater exposure.
5. Taking appropriate and proportionate action if the policy is not complied with.
6. Making sure safeguarding considerations are integrated into relevant activities of the Connect4Life, for example during face-to-face training events and conferences.

7. Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to report concerns and of steps to take/who to go to in order to report such concerns
8. Ensuring that safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly and through the appropriate channels.
9. Reporting safeguarding incidents, allegations or concerns to external authorities, regulators and auditors, as appropriate, and in accordance with best practice. Connect4Life will fully assess such reporting to ensure that submitting a report is unlikely to cause further harm to the individual(s) to whom harm has already been caused

Reporting and responding to concerns

Connect4Life staff & trustees are required to immediately report any concerns or suspicions of possible/actual harm to staff or the communities it is serving, including abuse, exploitation and neglect and policy non-compliance, or risk of such, resulting from action or inaction by anyone covered by this policy. This includes any suspected historic abuse. In the first instance, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The person making the report should otherwise keep the matter strictly confidential and not seek to investigate the incident or suspicion themselves.

The Safeguarding Lead Trustee who sits on Connect4Life's board of trustees, will have oversight of the safeguarding and welfare incidents that arise.

The names of the Designated Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Lead Trustee can be found in the Contact Information section at the end of this policy.

We are committed to reporting all relevant incidents to the Charity Commission for England and Wales via a Serious Incident Report. We will also report incidents to other regulatory bodies and government departments or funding bodies, where appropriate. Where there is evidence that criminal activity may have taken place, or concerns have been raised in relation to a child or vulnerable adult, we will report to the relevant police and/or safeguarding authorities as appropriate.

Decisions to report to external authorities will be fully assessed and anonymisation/pseudonymisation considered when necessary. Reporting will not be avoided on the basis that it may harm Connect4Life's reputation or give rise to litigation. Any concerns in relation to data protection will not act as a barrier to reporting, although will be carefully considered to ensure that the disclosure is made within the legal framework for so doing.

Policy Review

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly. This policy will be reviewed by the board of trustees bi-annually, when there is a change in UK law and/or best practice, or when an incident occurs that highlights a need for change (whichever occurs first).

Contact Information

Designated Safeguarding Officer:	Ian Burnham
Safeguarding Lead Trustee:	Ian Burnham

This individual has access to the email inbox for reporting concerns, which are [**contactus@Connect4Life.org.uk**](mailto:contactus@Connect4Life.org.uk)

Publishing this policy

Connect4Life will ensure that this policy is at all times publicly accessible on its website.

Date of original policy: 20 March 2025

Date of next review: March 2027

Glossary of terms used in this policy

Term	Definition
Abuse	There are various types of abuse; • Physical abuse – actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person e.g. hitting, shaking, pushing. • Emotional abuse - a harm that can affects your mental well-being. Although it doesn't leave you with physical scars, it can have a huge impact on your confidence and self-esteem. Emotional abuse comes in many forms e.g. intimidation, threats, criticism, undermining. Sexual abuse - is a general term for any type of sexual activity inflicted on a person by someone without willing, active, unimpaired consent e.g. unwanted sexual touch, sexual assault (rape).
Anonymisation	The removal of identifying particulars or details from a report.
Child	According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is anyone under the age of 18.
Disciplinary action	Action taken by Connect4Life for dealing with staff who causes problems or do not adhere company policies e.g. removing them from their job.
Domestic safeguarding legislation	Relates to the legislation that covers specific industries e.g. The Care Act 2014.
Due Diligence	The reasonable care that Connect4Life undertakes to avoid harm to people.
Exploitation	Refers to the use of an individual for ones' own benefit, gratification or satisfaction.
Harm	Refers to a negative impact on an individual's physical, emotional or behavioural health and well-being. Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation often lead to an individual being harmed.
Neglect	Failure, either deliberate or through carelessness, to an act or series of actions or events which lead to harm.
Pseudonymisation	The replacement of the most identifying fields within a database with artificial identifiers, or pseudonyms e.g. a name is replaced with a unique number.
Risk assess	The action to investigate and evaluate the risks.
Safeguarding	Describes the steps taken to protect people from harm, including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, and other people who come into contact with Connect4Life and/or their partners. While safeguarding principally refers to the prevention of harm, it also encompasses practices to handle incidents and/or complaints.
Safety culture	A definition as the way in which safety is managed in Connect4Life. It is the combination of beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of employees toward the safety of workers and the overall safety of the work environment.
Vulnerable People/Groups	Those that are a heighten risk of being at harm, due to various circumstances e.g. age, frailty, ill health, disabilities.
Zero Tolerance	Appliance of rules or penalties to even minor infringements of a code in order to reinforce its overall importance.