

Safeguarding Policy

July 2024

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Preface

OutdoorLads runs a range of sociable outdoor activities aimed at the gay, bi and trans community right across the UK and further afield. These activities include things such as hiking, climbing, camping, biking, canoeing, scrambling, running and sailing, as well as purely social events. In activities such as ours, the majority of adults are healthy, autonomous individuals who manage their own safety without issue, and sometimes that of those who they may be leading.

It is recognised that OutdoorLads does not have the infrastructure for, and is not a provider of welfare, health or relief services, but we understand that we have a responsibility for the general safety and wellbeing of all members who attend our events. Our volunteer leaders do not to act as social workers or carers for our members and there is no expectation that our leaders take on this additional responsibility.

If, or when, a member or leader becomes aware that an adult may be at risk, they should feel able and supported to raise a concern or take relevant actions aligned with this Policy and their role in OutdoorLads. Our Code of Conduct is our reference for good practice in relation to all members. Failure to follow our Code of Conduct may be considered to be poor practice.

What this Means for You

If you become aware of a situation, you should offer reasonable support and, if the adult accepts that offer, then follow the policy outlined below. The exception to this of course is when a crime is being committed or the person is in immediate danger, in which case you should call 999.

Responding to Concerns about a Person

If you become aware that abuse or poor practice is taking place, or you suspect abuse or poor practice may be occurring, or you are told about something that may be abuse or poor practice that negatively impacts an adult at risk – either at an OutdoorLads event, or that relates to the behaviour of OutdoorLads staff, volunteers or members – please follow the procedures outlined in this document.

You should also report the circumstance to the OutdoorLads Lead Safeguarding Officer, Joe Bailey via joe.bailey@OutdoorLads.com once it is safe to do so. It is important to note that the Adult at Risk may not be an OutdoorLads member. Whether you are a leader or another member, if you have concerns about an adult who is at risk or is vulnerable, there are a number of things you can do immediately.

These are listed below:

- If it is an emergency contact the police. Phone 999 if the person is in immediate danger.
- If possible, try speaking to the person you have concerns about and ask them whether they are they happy with what is happening to them or not.
- If they need further support consult Adult Social Care in the area in which they live (a quick internet search will give you this information).
- If you are a member on an event, highlight your concerns to the leader of the event who may be able to provide further support.

1. Introduction

OutdoorLads Safeguarding Policy applies to all individuals involved in OutdoorLads activities.

Roles and Responsibilities of those within OutdoorLads

OutdoorLads is committed to having the following in place:

- 1.1. The Trustee Board will designate a Lead Safeguarding Officer to produce and disseminate guidance and resources to support the policy and procedures.
- 1.2. Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse or poor practice against members of staff and volunteers.
- 1.3. Regular reporting of issues and concerns to the Board of Trustees.
- 1.4. A Code of Conduct within which a process may be initiated if an incident warrants an investigation or further action.
- 1.5. Support and guidance for leaders who become aware of a situation that is impacting a vulnerable adult during any OutdoorLads events.
- 1.6. Appropriate whistle blowing procedures and an open and inclusive culture that enables safeguarding and equality and diversity issues to be addressed.

2. Principles

- 2.1. All adults regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- 2.2. The safety of our members is paramount to OutdoorLads. There may be times and circumstances where OutdoorLads cannot guarantee the safety of a member on an event and have authority to remove them from that activity for the safety of themselves and other members.
- 2.3. OutdoorLads will seek to reasonably make our activities inclusive and make reasonable adjustments where possible for abilities, disabilities or impairments.
- 2.4. We recognise that ability and disability can change over time, such that some adults may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have a dependency on others or have different communication needs.
- 2.5. We recognise that a disabled adult may or may not identify themselves or be identified as an adult 'at risk'.
- 2.6. We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all adults and will act appropriately and report concerns.
- 2.7. All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in line with OutdoorLads Safeguarding Policy.

3. Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

It is important to have awareness of some of the types of abuse that may impact adults. Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected, these include but are not limited to:

- 3.1. Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- 3.2. Personal belongings or money goes missing.
- 3.3. Person stops attending / no longer enjoying their events.

- 3.4. Weight gain or loss / an unkempt appearance.
- 3.5. A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person.
- 3.6. Self-harm.
- 3.7. Fear of a particular group or individual.
- 3.8. Disclosure – they tell you that they are being abused.

4. Recording a Disclosure

- 4.1. Make a note of what the person has said using their own words as soon as practicable. Complete an Incident Form (see Appendix 1 or website “Governance” section) and submit to the OutdoorLads Lead Safeguarding Officer or designated OutdoorLads Staff member.
- 4.2. As long as it does not increase the risk to the individual, you should explain to them that it is your duty to share your concern with the OutdoorLads Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- 4.3. Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- 4.4. Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.
- 4.5. Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times, this information must only be shared the OutdoorLads Lead Safeguarding Officer and others on a need-to-know basis.
- 4.6. Remember, if a matter is urgent and relates to the immediate safety of an adult at risk then contact the appropriate emergency services immediately.

5. Definitions

To assist with working through and understanding this policy a number of key definitions need to be explained:

- 5.1. Adult at Risk: is any adult, who has a need for care or support, long or short term (whether or not any of those needs are being met by authorities), and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those care or support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.
- 5.2. Adult: is a person who is 18 years of age or older.