








# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Revision History

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## Approval

Name	Position	Signature	Date
S Mavroleon	Designated Safeguarding Trustee		22 Aug 2024
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# Contents

1. Safeguarding and Veterans Coastal Retreats.....	3
2. Safeguarding and you.....	4
3. Safeguarding vulnerable adults.....	5
4. Safeguarding children .....	6
5. Safeguarding concerns relating to staff & volunteers.....	7
6. What is Abuse?.....	8
7. Taking action.....	9
8. Recording, information sharing and confidentiality .....	11
9. Whistleblowing and raising concerns .....	12
10. Link between safeguarding and incident review .....	12
11. Equality and Diversity Statement.....	13
12. Safeguarding Contact List .....	13
13. Links to training.....	13

# I. Safeguarding and Veterans Coastal Retreats

## Overview

Veterans often face unique challenges, including physical injuries, mental health issues and difficulties in transitioning back to civilian life. These are challenges arising as a direct result of service to their country. Families play an integral role in promoting a veteran's well-being, often bearing the emotional and practical burdens of their service.

Our mission is to offer veterans and their families opportunity for rehabilitation, rejuvenation and relaxation which in turn can help them to overcome physical or mental stresses. This we will achieve by offering short breaks and access to outdoor activities, allowing families to bond in a safe and supportive environment.

While supporting veterans and their families facing hardship and distress, we may encounter adults who may be considered vulnerable. We also consider staff and event participants who may also be among those classed as vulnerable and this policy applies equally to them.

This policy will set out how we assess the vulnerability of our beneficiaries, staff and supporters and how we will ensure that we are acting in their best interests, conforming to legislation and guidance laid out by the Charity Commission.

Veterans Coastal Retreats' board of trustees promotes a fair, open, and positive culture to ensure everyone within the Veterans Coastal Retreats community has confidence to identify and report concerns, take appropriate action and contribute to constant improvement.

The board of trustees hold overall responsibility for taking reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with the charity.

This includes:

- people who benefit from the charity's work
- staff, volunteers and trustees
- other people who come into contact with the charity through its work

Veterans Coastal Retreats ensures it is meeting its safeguarding responsibilities by:

- having appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all trustees, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, and other identified stakeholders.
- Making sure safeguarding is central to the charity's culture and that everyone knows their role and responsibility regarding safeguarding.
- Making checks to evidence people are suitable to act in their roles and ensuring quality staff induction.
- Providing guidance, training, and support so everyone knows how to spot and handle concerns in a full and open manner.
- Defining clear systems of referring or reporting as appropriate, including involving external agencies.
- Identifying a systematic process for reviewing policies / guidance and a schedule for updating training.
- Setting out the lines of accountability and governance for safeguarding.
- Providing a clear process of investigation and review for major incidents or when things go wrong.
- Keeping up to date with statutory guidance, good practice guidance and legislation relevant to the charity's safeguarding function.

## 2. Safeguarding and you

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone has a role to play. It is about ensuring general safety and wellbeing whilst taking additional steps for those least able to protect themselves from harm or abuse. All staff, volunteers and other charity stakeholders have a responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of all those coming into contact with the charity or working within the charity.

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety and free from abuse or neglect.

As safeguarding is such a fundamental part of the charity's business it is essential that all trustees, staff and volunteers of Veterans Coastal Retreats are equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet our safeguarding responsibilities, comply with legislation and guidance, and keep our people and vulnerable beneficiaries safe. Every trustee, staff member and volunteer also have responsibility to make sure that they comply with all training and refresher training requirements in relation to their position and as detailed in the Safeguarding Training Schedule.

If an individual experiences a safeguarding incident, or believes they are a victim of bullying or harassment (see the Bullying and Harassment policy) they should follow the procedures outlined in the 'Taking Action' part of this policy.

### 3. Safeguarding vulnerable adults

The Care Act (2014) sets out what constitutes an 'adult at risk'. Adult at risk is the term used to describe those deemed to require additional protection measures because they may be unable to ensure this for themselves. Under safeguarding law an adult at risk is defined as a person 18 and over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether 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.

It is important to note that being an "adult at risk" can be temporary or changeable and there are other risk factors to consider –

- Mental health and psychological factors (capacity)
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Physical dependency
- Low self esteem
- Previous abuse as an adult or child

Although beneficiaries of Veterans Coastal Retreats cannot exclusively be categorised "at risk", under the provisions of the Care Act (2014), there are those using our services who are permanently within this category and many others who will variously cross this threshold on a temporary basis. These include beneficiaries with serious mental illness, complex comorbid (presence of one or more diseases or disorders co-occurring concurrently) presentations, individuals with acquired brain injury and those physically dependent due to injury. Likewise, it is important to recognise that others also may be more at risk because of their relationships, being socially isolated, a sense of duty or being lonely (this list is not exhaustive).

It is for these reasons that Veterans Coastal Retreats will adopt procedures laid down in this policy which treat **all** beneficiaries of the charity as "at risk" as many of these risks may not be immediately apparent.

Detailed guidance on how to respond if a safeguarding incident is suspected can be found in the 'Taking Action' section of this policy.

## 4. Safeguarding children

Veterans Coastal Retreats has a duty to comply with legislation and statutory guidance to keep children safe.

Safeguarding Children means protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up with safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Many parents with mental health problems are able to manage their condition and minimise its impact on their children, particularly if they are able to access appropriate support. However, some parents and carers with mental health problems may need support to cope with the routines of daily life, even during times of recuperation such as on holiday.

They may also find it more difficult to:

- control their mood and emotions around their children
- recognise and respond to children's physical and emotional needs
- engage socially with their children
- set and maintain safe and appropriate boundaries and manage their children's behaviour.

If parents/carers don't get the support they need from family, friends, neighbours and/or professionals, these challenges may escalate. In extreme cases, children may experience abuse and/or neglect.

Signs that a child might need extra support include:

- being worried about their parent or carer's condition
- taking on a caring role for parents and other family members
- putting the needs of their family above their own
- having negative feelings about their parent's condition
- finding it hard to make friends, feeling isolated or being bullied
- not feeling able to talk to their parents or another trusted adult about their worries.

If a parent has severe mental health problems, children may have to cope with frightening and upsetting situations such as:

- being separated from their parents, either because parents need to go into hospital and/or because the child is taken into care
- a parent attempting to take their own life
- a parent displaying extremely volatile behaviour.

The scope of this policy ensures that Veterans Coastal Retreats staff, trustees, volunteers, and the wider community understand their responsibilities, can recognise, and prevent risks, and know what action to take to protect children should the need arise. Detailed guidance on how to respond if a safeguarding incident is suspected can be found in the 'Taking Action' section of this policy.

## 5. Safeguarding concerns relating to staff & volunteers

Veterans Coastal Retreats recruits colleagues in accordance with guidance outlined by the Charity Commission and legislation, and adopts due diligence when selecting individuals for roles.

In the case of any safeguarding allegation made against a member of staff, this will be dealt with swiftly, rigorously, and fairly.

In such instances the Safeguarding Trustee will work with relevant partners/organisations to ensure an assessment is undertaken immediately to manage the level of risk to all concerned. Part of this assessment is to consider whether it is safe for them to continue in their role or any other role within the service whilst an investigation is undertaken. This investigation is overseen by the Safeguarding Trustee and may be in conjunction with the police, social services or other appropriate agency.

In the event the allegation has been made against the Safeguarding Trustee, the Chair of the Trustees will undertake this role.

Where a member of staff or volunteer is thought to have committed a criminal offence, or if a crime has been witnessed, the police will be involved.

## 6. What is Abuse?

Care and support statutory guidance identifies 10 categories of abuse. Additionally, Veterans Coastal Retreats includes cyber abuse.

- Physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint.
- Sexual abuse: including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material.
- Psychological or Emotional abuse: including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation.
- Financial or Material abuse: including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.
- Domestic: including physical / psychological violence, financial abuse, coercive control, harassment, stalking, on-line / digital abuse.
- Neglect and Acts of Omission: including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food, or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs.
- Discriminatory abuse: including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.
- Institutional or Organisational: including regimented routines and cultures, unsafe practices, lack of person-centred care or treatment.
- Modern Slavery: including sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude, child labour / child soldiers.
- Self-neglect: including personal care, diet, hoarding, insanitary or squalid living conditions, neglecting household maintenance.
- Cyber abuse: including grooming, incitement, bullying, fraud, radicalisation.

Knowing what to look out for is vital to the identification of risk factors or abuse. The schedule of training, and guidance provided by UK Government and the Charities Commission along with this policy are essential in supporting with this. If someone is unsure, advice is available through the charity's safeguarding trustee.



## 7. Taking action

Safeguarding is primarily about preventing the risk of harm, abuse, or exploitation. Therefore, in addition to this policy, this principle is a central consideration across all Veterans Coastal Retreats policies and standard practices. This list includes, but is not exhaustive, safer recruitment, risk assessment, action planning, data and digital management, professional standards and boundaries, complaints, and whistle-blowing policies.

Where risk or abuse is identified, Veterans Coastal Retreats staff, contractors and volunteers will ensure that their work reflects the principles, outlined in section 2, and ensure the person is involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained. It is essential to ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. Relevant partners from the community should be involved in any safeguarding work to prevent, detect, or report neglect and abuse. Any decisions or action taken by Veterans Coastal Retreats in relation to safeguarding will be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

Staff, contractors, and volunteers who have any safeguarding concerns should:

### 1. Respond

- Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services.
- If a crime has been committed contact the police and preserve any forensic evidence
- Get details about what has happened and what the person's wishes are, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation.
- Where possible seek consent from the person to act and to report the concern. Consider whether the person may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If a decision is made to act against their wishes or without their consent, a record of this, and the reasons, must be kept.

### 2. Record

- As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated, and signed.
- All safeguarding recording will be held securely by the Safeguarding Trustee.
- Access to such confidential information should not be given to any unauthorised person, including the sharing of passwords.

### 3. Report

- Reports of safeguarding concerns or incidents must be reported to the Safeguarding Trustee as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- The Safeguarding Incident Report Form is available in the policies section of the VCR website.
- If the Safeguarding Trustee is unavailable, concerns should be passed to the Chair of the Trustees.
- For advice regarding whether a concern should be raised, see the 'Need Further Advice' paragraph at the end of this section

#### 4. Refer

Where possible this will be done in consultation with, or by, the Safeguarding Trustee. In deciding whether to refer or not, the following is to be considered:

- (1) the person's wishes and preferred outcome
- (2) whether the person has mental capacity to make an informed decision about
- (3) their own and others' safety
- (4) the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
- (5) whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
- (6) whether a crime has been committed

This will inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:

- the police if a crime has been committed and/or
- Local Authority Adult or Children's Services
- relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities commission
- service commissioning teams
- family/relatives as appropriate

#### Who to go to with a concern?

Veterans Coastal Retreats Designated Safeguarding Officer is Simon Mavroleon, Safeguarding Trustee

[Simon.m@vcr.email](mailto:Simon.m@vcr.email)

#### Need further advice?

- For a safeguarding concern **involving a child**, contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). Our child protection specialists will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.
- For safeguarding concerns **regarding adults or older people** there are also professionals you can contact. You can pass on your concerns to the person's GP and social worker. Local authorities have social workers who deal specifically with cases of abuse and neglect. Call the person's local council and ask for the adult safeguarding co-ordinator. You can also speak to the police about the situation. Some forms of abuse are crimes, so the police will be interested.

**If the person is in danger or needs medical attention, call their GP (if known) or emergency services if immediate assistance is required.**

You can also call the free, confidential Hourglass helpline on **0808 808 8141**.

Further contact details of agencies that can provide support can be found at the following link:  
[Social care telephone helplines and forums - Social care and support guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

## 8. Recording, information sharing and confidentiality

All safeguarding information relating to recipients of charity services is held securely within the safeguarding area of the Veterans Coastal Retreats OneDrive and access to the folder will be limited by password to the Safeguarding Trustee and Chair of the Trustees.

Where there are concerns about an at-risk person, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between professionals and organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or at-risk adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns.

Therefore, the correct management of information is central to good safeguarding practice and Veterans Coastal Retreats understands the critical importance of information sharing between professionals and local agencies. Any transfer of safeguarding data is actioned securely in accordance with the charity's and government's guidelines concerning data protection.

Information sharing requirements should be discussed with the Safeguarding Trustee and/or the Data Protection Trustee before any sensitive information is shared, unless a delay in the information being shared would pose an increased risk of harm to an individual.

A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to anyone about a safeguarding concern (including parents / carers or other external agencies) or promise to keep a secret which might compromise safety or wellbeing.

For further information on how other sensitive data is held within Veterans Coastal Retreats, the Data Handling Policy should be consulted.

## 9. Whistleblowing and raising concerns

All staff need to be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, relating to safeguarding. These may include the attitude or actions/inactions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the charity's safeguarding arrangements. This list is not exhaustive.

Veterans Coastal Retreats aims for everyone connected with the charity to feel able to report any concerns through existing procedures, including the whistleblowing and complaints policies. The Charity is committed to ensuring that staff, contractors, and volunteers who, in good faith, whistle-blow in the public interest, will be protected from reprisals and victimisation.

For free, confidential advice on whistleblowing, 'Protect' has a support line which can be used and it is recommended that all considering whistleblowing speak to them for advice before filling in and submitting the form below.

**The Whistleblowing report form can be found on the Policies section of the VCR Webpage**

The completed form should be sent to the Whistleblowing officer, or the Designated Safeguarding Trustee if the concern relates to the Whistleblowing officer. All submissions will be treated with anonymity wherever possible.

If any member of the organisation is unhappy with Veterans Coastal Retreats' decision about the safeguarding concern or whistleblowing report, they are to refer to the complaints policy.

**The complaints form can be found on the Policies section of the VCR Webpage**

## 10. Link between safeguarding and incident review

Veterans Coastal Retreats is registered with the Charities Commission and therefore all staff, contractors, and volunteers have a legal Duty of Candour to give a full and honest explanation to people about when things go wrong. The Charity also takes seriously the need for constant review and improvement.

Moreover, The Charity Commission holds trustees to account where things do go wrong and will check that the guidance and law are being followed. Where there has been a serious incident or where things have gone wrong the board of trustees will ensure a process of rigorous investigation and make changes where necessary. This may include reporting to, and working with, the Charity Commission in order to meet compliance.

## 11. Equality and Diversity Statement

### Veterans Coastal Retreats

**ACCEPTS** that in society certain groups or individuals are denied equality on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, caring responsibilities, disability, gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion/belief or any other factor irrelevant to the purpose in view.

**WELCOMES** the statutory requirements laid down in the Equalities Act 2010; and is committed to complying with the Equalities Act 2010 with such other acts and statutory requirements furthering equality of opportunity for all as also apply to its charitable activities.

**RECOGNISES** that it has moral and social responsibilities that go beyond the provisions of the above-mentioned acts and regulations, and that it should support and contribute to the wider process of change through all aspects of its work and practices in order to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and diversity.

**IS COMMITTED** to taking positive steps to ensure that:

- All people are treated with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all
- Equality of opportunity and diversity is promoted
- Services are accessible, appropriate and delivered fairly to all
- The mix of its trustees, volunteers and management committees reflects, as far as possible, the broad mix of the population of its local community
- Traditionally disadvantaged sections of the community are encouraged to participate in policy decisions about, and the management of, the services provided

For further information on the above policy and procedures, please see the Equal Opportunities policy.

## 12. Safeguarding Contact List

Designated Safeguarding Trustee: Simon Mavroleon; [Simon.m@vcr.email](mailto:Simon.m@vcr.email)

Chair of Trustees: Richard Perkins; [Richard.p@vcr.email](mailto:Richard.p@vcr.email)

## 13. Links to training

[Safeguarding for charities and trustees \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

