Making A Difference Adventures

Community Interest Company

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Document History	
Adopted	**November 2022**
Revised	**November 2023**
Revised	**October 2024**
Revised	**October 2025**
Next Review	**October 2026**

Policy Statement

MAD Adventures CIC (MAD Adventures) recognises that all vulnerable adults have the right to live lives that are free from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and to live in a safe environment.
This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of MAD Adventures in working together to promote adult welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect. Employees, contractors and volunteers working for or representing Mad Adventures must be aware of this policy.

MAD Adventures CIC has a duty of care to safeguard vulnerable adults from harm when they are involved in MAD Adventures CIC related activities. This includes all vulnerable adults regardless of age, ethnicity, social background, ability, sexual orientation, religious belief and political persuasion. MAD Adventures will ensure the safety and protection of all vulnerable adults involved in its activities, through compliance with current UK legislation and by ensuring that its' employees and representatives adhere to this Safeguarding Policy and other codes of practice and guidelines where these are applicable.

MAD Adventures nominate Tim Lanfear to act as "Safeguarding Officer". This officer will be responsible for the recording, co-ordination and forwarding of information to the appropriate authorities where applicable.

MAD Adventures CIC will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse or may already be subject to abuse, even if those concerns prove to be unfounded.

Definition

The Care Act 2014 definition of an adult at risk of abuse:

An adult who has needs for care and support. Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against such abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Principles

The following principles underpin MAD Adventures Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy:

- The overall health, safety and welfare of the vulnerable person will be the paramount consideration.
- That all adults regardless of their age, ethnicity, abilities, social background, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or political persuasion, have the right to live in a safe environment.
- To provide vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care and responsibility of MAD Adventures.
- All managers, instructors and team leaders must ensure that all staff for whom they are responsible are aware of and understand the details of this policy.
- All managers, instructors and team leaders must promote a culture that ensures vulnerable adults are listened to and respected as individuals.
- To allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to safeguarding and protection issues.
- All suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

It is important that staff do not assume levels of expertise that they are not qualified to hold. It is however required that staff will always report any suspected or potential case of abuse.

Recognising abuse is not easy and it is not the job of MAD Adventures staff to determine whether abuse has taken place, or if a vulnerable person is at risk. Staff do however have a responsibility to act if they have a concern in order that appropriate agencies can be informed and for them to take whatever action is necessary.

Recognising how vulnerable adults can be harmed

The term “Abuse” can be subjective and incidents of abuse can be either one-off or multiple and systematic. They can also affect more than one person.
Abuse or neglect may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. Exploitation can be a common theme in cases of abuse. The adult may say or do things to let you know that something is wrong. It may come in the form of a disclosure, complaint or expression of concern. It is essential that MAD Adventures staff and their representatives or agents are aware of what to do and how to get help or advice.

Types of Abuse

The Care Act (2014) identifies the following types of abuse or neglect:

- **Physical abuse**
  - Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- **Domestic violence/abuse**
  - Including physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or financial abuse but by a person with whom you have a close family or intimate relationship such as a partner, parent or child.
- **Sexual abuse**
  - Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography. Witnessing sexual acts, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressurised into consenting.
- **Psychological or emotional abuse**
  - Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support.
- **Financial or material abuse**
  - Including theft fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery**
  - Including slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Discriminatory abuse**
  - Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because you are or are perceived to be different, due to race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- **Organisational or institutional abuse**
  - Including through neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies and processes within an organisation.

- **Neglect and acts of omission**
    - Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs. Failure to provide access to appropriate health care, support or educational services. Withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, nutrition and heating.
- **Self-neglect**
    - Including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings. Includes behaviour such as hoarding

Possible Signs of Abuse

Even for those experienced at working with abuse it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already occurred. MAD Adventures acknowledges that its staff and volunteers are not experts at such recognition. MAD Adventures therefore expects staff to discuss any concerns they may have with regards to the welfare of a vulnerable adult immediately with the person in charge. If this is not practical and the situation is deemed to be too serious to delay, then advice can be sought from Social Services or the Police.

It is important to recognise that some people may have additional vulnerabilities and may face additional barriers or difficulties in communicating any concerns or problems because of their race, gender, age, abilities, religion, sexual orientation. Staff need to recognise this and be particularly sensitive should concerns be raised by such people or in relation to them.

Examples of Behaviour Associated with Abuse

Below are listed some of the characteristics which may be evidence of abuse. These are by no means exhaustive and are only indicators of potential abuse, not confirmation.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to injury.
- Bruising that forms regular patterns and appears on several areas of the body or corresponds to the shape of an object.
- Flinching at close physical contact.
- An injury of which the explanation seems inconsistent and /or the individual is unwilling to discuss.
- The individual describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- Unexplained behaviour changes e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Distrustful of others, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.

- Difficulty making friends.

- Anxious, withdrawn, low self-esteem

- Poor personal hygiene

It must be recognised that the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is not the responsibility of those staff involved in MAD Adventures activities to decide whether abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to act upon any concerns.

Raising Awareness

It is understandable that people who are well motivated, caring individuals can be reluctant to believe that adults may be suffering harm.
However, if MAD Adventures staff become aware of anything which causes them to feel uncomfortable or in any way concerned, they must speak to either a manager or lead instructor or the organisations “Safeguarding Officer” without undue delay.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a “need to know” basis only, which may include the following people:

- MAD Adventures CIC Safeguarding Officer
- The carer or guardians of the individual
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/Police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

All information should be stored in accordance with current data protection legislation and guidance.

How to Respond to a Disclosure, Suspicion or Allegation

An adult in your care may indicate to you that they are being abused in some way or information may come to you of possible abuse. On receiving this information, you should:

- React calmly- do not rush into inappropriate action. What you are told may be shocking but it is important you give the individual some stability.

- Reassure the individual that they are not to blame and that they did the right thing in telling somebody, i.e. you, about the incident.

- Take the individual seriously and listen carefully to them. Recognise how difficult it must be for them to tell you.

- Only ask questions which help to clarify the situation. Do not question any more than is strictly necessary. The law is very strict when it suspects a vulnerable individual has been led or ideas have been suggested.

- Where possible allow only one adult to talk to the individual to begin with. It is possible that discrepancies in the account of what has happened can, in the event of the allegation being referred, lead to legal complications later.

- Try not to make the individual repeat their account unnecessarily.

- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people to stop what is happening but that you will endeavour to keep the incident as confidential as possible.

- Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible.

- As soon as possible discuss with the Gloucestershire County Council Adult Safeguarding Board. The helpline number is **01452 426868**. Email contact address is Socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

- In cases of emergency if someone is breaking the law the police should be contacted on 101 or 999 as appropriate.

Do Not:

- Take sole responsibility for further action

- Approach or try to contact the alleged abuser

- Ignore what has happened

- Make promises you cannot keep

Recording Information

Information that is passed on to the MAD Adventures Safeguarding Officer, Social Services or the Police should include the following where this is available:

- The nature of the incident.
- Times, dates or other relevant information.
- The alleged victims' account.
- A description of any visible injuries.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay and opinion.
- A record must be kept of this information.

All such records must be securely and confidentially stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Training frequency

Mad Adventures will take every step to ensure that all staff, volunteers and agents acting on their behalf maintain safeguarding competence in accordance with national guidance.

Codes of Practice and Behaviour

Positions of Trust

Everyone who works with vulnerable adults is in a position of trust.
In delivering outdoor, adventurous activities workers must recognise that there are certain boundaries in the instructor/student or instructor/client relationship which must not be crossed.

Good Practice

MAD Adventures staff will be working in an environment where physical contact with clients may sometimes be necessary and even inevitable. Staff must ensure that such contact is kept to the minimum, done openly, and in response to the person's needs. Any physical contact should only be made with the knowledge and consent of the person and or their guardian. There may, in extreme circumstances, be situations where unsolicited physical contact is necessary. For example, when used as a restraint i.e. in self-defence, or in preventing risk of injury or damage to property. Such incidents should also be recorded and reported to the lead instructor and where applicable the MAD Adventures Safeguarding Officer.

- Ensure all activities take place in an open, inclusive environment. People often respond better if they feel they are part of the process.
- Always explain why you are doing what you are doing.
- When there is a mixed event or activity ensure there is at least one male and one female helper.

The following should only be sanctioned if no alternative is available and then only when the lead MAD Adventures instructor has been informed.

- Taking vulnerable adults alone on vehicle journeys.
- Spending time alone with vulnerable adults.

The following must never be sanctioned:

- Taking vulnerable people alone to your home.
- Sharing sleeping facilities with a vulnerable person.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a vulnerable person, even in fun.

- Doing things of a personal nature for a vulnerable person that they can do themselves.

- Allowing vulnerable people to consume alcohol or take illegal recreational drugs.

What happens if you are accused of an abusive action

In the event of an accusation:

- Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the person in question as soon as possible.

- Seek access to professional and legal advice.

- Ensure that you are no longer working with the person making the allegation.

- Follow the procedures laid out in the Safeguarding Policy and supporting documents.

- Accept that colleagues may not be able to discuss the matter with you while the investigation is underway.

- Accept that you may be suspended from working with any vulnerable people.

Such events are difficult for all concerned. MAD Adventures will do its utmost to remain impartial in all matters relating to an accusation. The main concern with any incident is the individual's welfare. For an individual, against whom an allegation has been made this will be a difficult time. It is important that you seek help and support.

MAD Adventures Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

The rules governing checking of individuals that work or volunteer with young people changed following the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. They refer to:

1. **Supervised Access** – where no DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is required.
2. **Regulated Activity and Unsupervised Access** – where a DBS check is required.

To ensure individuals go through the correct vetting procedures the following guidelines are to be used:

1. **Supervised Access** – where no DBS check is required

A worker (this includes volunteers) who is being **"supervised"** when working with vulnerable adults does **not** need to be DBS checked. A worker is deemed to be "**supervised"** when they are in direct sight or hearing of someone who is both over-seeing them and has been enhanced DBS checked.

It is important to note that supervision must take place on an on-going basis and so it must not be permitted to tail off as time goes by.

Example
Alex, a volunteer coach, helps at a climbing wall once or twice a week taking groups of children through basic movement skills and bouldering. Alex is based in the main part of the climbing wall in sight of the Development Coach who oversees these activities. The Development Coach has been enhanced DBS checked.
Ales is therefore **"supervised"** and does not require a DBS check.

2. Regulated Activity
Regulated activity is work that a barred person must not do. It is defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (SVGA), which has been amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA).

3. Unsupervised Access
Where an individual would require an Enhanced DBS check.

To summarise, the law makes three main points:

- There must be supervision of a worker who is working with vulnerable adults in a regulated activity unless they hold an enhanced DBS check.
- The supervision must be regular and day to day.
- The supervision must be reasonable in all circumstances to ensure the protection of the vulnerable person/s.

Guidelines for the Use of Photography

It is not the intention of this document to prevent the use of video or photography equipment. Video used in an appropriate way is a valuable coaching aid. Photographs of adventurous activities have done much to promote and encourage others to get outdoors and take part. However, there is evidence that some people have used such events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage. It is advisable that all individuals be vigilant and any concerns reported to the MAD Adventures lead instructor/representative at an event.

Photographers briefing

1. If you are commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event, it is important to ensure they are clear about your expectations of them.

2. Ensure all individuals involved are aware of what is appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.

3. The MAD Adventures event co-ordinator or organiser must ensure they are aware of all individuals taking photographs. They may decide to insist that all official photographers wear identification.

4. As part of any MAD Adventures activity or event all participants, parents or guardians should be informed if there is to be a photographer present. Parents and guardians should also be given the opportunity to object if they do not wish images to be taken or used.

5. Avoid naming vulnerable adults in photographs.

Dealing with suspected abuse

Are you concerned with the health, safety and welfare of somebody in volved in a MAD Adventures event/activity

Is there need for immediate medical assistance

Yes	No
Summon professional medical assistance & inform the practitioner that you believe this may be a Safeguarding issue	Report your concerns to the MAD Adventures lead instructor or Safeguarding Officer
Refer concerns immediately to the police or social services who will advise on what to do next.	
Complete the MAD Adventures Safeguarding Incident Report Form. Make this available to the Police & Social Services. Keep a copy.	

MAD Adventures CIC - SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM

use additional sheets if necessary

EVENT DETAILS	
Name of event	
Date of event	
Co-ordinator	
YOUR DETAILS	
Name	
Your position	
Tel	
Adults DETAILS	
Name	
Address (incl. post code)	
Tel	
Date of Birth	
PARENTAL/GUARDIAN DETAILS	
Name(s)	
Address (incl. post code)	
Tel (if different to above)	
WITNESS DETAILS	
Name (1)	
Address (incl. post code)	
Tel	
Name (2)	
Address (incl. post code)	
Tel	

INCIDENT DETAILS	
Date and time of incident	
Your observations (i.e. what is the nature of the allegation (including dates, times and any special factors or other relevant information (make clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay). Describe any visible bruising or other injuries, behavioural signs or indirect signs. Use additional sheets.	
The vulnerable persons' account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred (remember, do not lead the child – record actual details). Use additional sheets if necessary.	
Actions taken so far (including whether anyone else has been contacted and if so who?)	
Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?	Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes give name:	
OTHER PROFESSIONALS CONTACTED	
Have any external agencies been contacted (i.e. Police, Social Services, NSPCC, BMC). If yes, please provide details below.	Yes ☐ No ☐
Police?	Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, which?	
Name and contact number	
Details of advice received	
Social Services?	Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, which?	
Name and contact number	
Details of advice received	
MAD Adventures CIC?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Name	
Details of advice received	
Other (e.g. NSPCC)?	Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, which?	
Name and contact number	
Details of advice received	

Approved By:

Name:	ED SHAW
Company Position:	C.E.O
Date:	29th JANUARY 2026
Signature:	