

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Approved by Trustees: Reviewed/Changed 01/10/2026

Review date: 01/10/2027

Lead Safeguarding Trustee: Colin Jenkins

Operational Safeguarding Lead: Tony Strutt, CEO

Deputy Operational Safeguarding Lead: John Felton, Grants and Administration Lead

1. Purpose

V-Aid is committed to providing a safe environment for everyone who comes into contact with our work.

Our activities may involve adults who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage, including people affected by homelessness, poverty, displacement, domestic abuse, involvement with the criminal justice system, poor mental health, disability, isolation or other forms of crisis.

V-Aid may also, from time to time, deliver activities involving children and young people through schools, cadet organisations, community groups or other partner organisations.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with V-Aid;
- provide staff, trustees, volunteers and sessional workers with clear safeguarding principles;
- ensure concerns are recognised, recorded and acted upon appropriately;
- support safe partnership working;
- promote a culture in which people feel able to raise concerns.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- trustees;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- sessional workers;
- contractors acting on behalf of V-Aid;
- Volunteer Leads and facilitators;
- anyone representing V-Aid in the delivery of its activities.

It applies wherever V-Aid activities are delivered, including V-Aid premises, partner premises and community settings.

3. Our safeguarding principles

V-Aid believes that:

- everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- nobody involved in our work should experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation;
- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- concerns should be taken seriously and acted upon promptly;
- safeguarding arrangements should be proportionate to the activity and level of risk;
- people should be able to raise concerns without fear of being ignored or treated unfairly;
- safeguarding should support inclusion rather than unnecessarily prevent people from participating.

We aim to create an environment in which beneficiaries, participants, volunteers, staff and partners feel safe and able to speak up.

4. Safeguarding leadership and responsibility

The Board of Trustees retains overall responsibility for safeguarding within V-Aid.

The **Lead Safeguarding Trustee** provides governance oversight and ensures safeguarding remains properly considered at Board level.

The **Operational Safeguarding Lead**, normally the CEO, is responsible for day-to-day safeguarding arrangements within V-Aid's activities.

The **Deputy Operational Safeguarding Lead** provides cover where the Operational Safeguarding Lead is unavailable or where it would be inappropriate for a concern to be reported to that person.

Their responsibilities include, as appropriate:

- promoting a positive safeguarding culture;
- receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns;
- ensuring appropriate action is taken;
- considering safeguarding within organisational risk management;
- ensuring relevant policies and procedures remain appropriate;
- ensuring safeguarding matters are escalated to trustees where required;
- ensuring serious incidents are reported to statutory authorities and/or the Charity Commission where appropriate.

5. Adults at risk

V-Aid works with a wide variety of people, some of whom may be experiencing circumstances that increase their vulnerability.

This may include people affected by:

- homelessness or insecure housing;
- domestic abuse;
- physical or learning disabilities;
- mental-health difficulties;

- addiction;
- displacement or seeking asylum;
- involvement with the criminal justice system;
- social isolation;
- financial hardship;
- age-related vulnerability;
- other forms of crisis or disadvantage.

V-Aid will consider safeguarding needs according to the individual, activity and setting rather than assuming that every person within a particular group is vulnerable.

6. Children and young people

V-Aid does not currently operate primarily as a children's organisation.

However, V-Aid activities may from time to time include children and young people through schools, cadet organisations, colleges, community groups or other partners.

Where children or young people participate:

- safeguarding arrangements will be considered before the activity takes place;
- V-Aid will work with the host organisation's safeguarding procedures where appropriate;
- responsibilities between V-Aid and the host organisation will be clear;
- appropriate supervision will be provided;
- V-Aid personnel will receive appropriate safeguarding information or training according to their role;
- any necessary checks will be undertaken where legally appropriate and relevant to the role.

V-Aid will work cooperatively with the host organisation to ensure activities are delivered safely.

7. Working at partner premises

A central part of V-Aid's Community Humanitarian Response model is taking activities into places where participants already feel comfortable and supported.

These may include refuges, veterans' hubs, refugee and asylum-seeker organisations, community centres, schools and colleges, Probation and Approved Premises, prisons where appropriate, churches and faith organisations, disability services and other community settings.

The partner organisation will often have specialist knowledge of the people participating and established safeguarding procedures.

Before delivery, V-Aid will consider whether appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and, where necessary, clarify:

- who is responsible for safeguarding on the day;
- how concerns or disclosures will be reported;
- the role of V-Aid staff and volunteers;
- the role of the host organisation;
- relevant supervision arrangements;
- any reasonable adjustments required;

- any restrictions relating to photography or video;
- any specific risks relevant to the activity.

V-Aid will work alongside the expertise of partner organisations rather than seeking to replace specialist support.

8. Safer recruitment and role suitability

V-Aid aims to recruit staff and volunteers safely and proportionately.

Recruitment and selection procedures may include, depending on the role:

- application or expression of interest;
- informal discussion or interview;
- identity checks;
- references;
- qualification or experience checks;
- safeguarding checks;
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks where the particular role is legally eligible for them;
- induction and training.

Not every volunteer role requires the same level of checking.

The level of checking will reflect:

- the duties being undertaken;
- the degree of responsibility;
- the people the individual will work with;
- whether the person will have unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk;
- applicable legal requirements.

V-Aid will only request DBS checks at a level for which the particular role is eligible.

9. Volunteers and Volunteer Leads

V-Aid seeks to create volunteering opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds, including individuals who may themselves have previously received support.

Safeguarding should enable safe participation rather than unnecessarily exclude people.

Volunteer roles will therefore be considered according to:

- the individual's abilities;
- the nature of the role;
- the setting;
- the level of responsibility;
- supervision available;
- any safeguarding or operational risks.

Volunteer Leads or experienced volunteers taking additional responsibility will receive appropriate guidance, support and training for the role they undertake.

Where a volunteer progresses into paid sessional work, their paid role and responsibilities will be clearly distinguished from their volunteering activity.

10. Recognising abuse, harm and exploitation

Safeguarding concerns may involve:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- neglect;
- self-neglect;
- financial or material abuse;
- discriminatory abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- organisational or institutional abuse;
- exploitation;
- modern slavery;
- online abuse or exploitation.

This list is not exhaustive.

A safeguarding concern may arise from something witnessed directly, something disclosed by an individual, information provided by another person, or behaviour or circumstances that cause concern.

11. Responding to a disclosure

If someone tells a V-Aid representative that they have experienced abuse or harm:

- listen;
- do not conduct an investigation;
- do not press the individual for unnecessary detail;
- do not promise complete confidentiality;
- explain that the information may need to be shared with an appropriate person in order to protect them or someone else;
- record the relevant information as accurately and factually as possible;
- pass the concern promptly to the appropriate safeguarding person.

Where somebody is in immediate danger or a crime is taking place, emergency services should be contacted.

12. Reporting safeguarding concerns

Anyone working with or representing V-Aid who has a safeguarding concern should report it promptly.

The normal reporting route is:

Operational Safeguarding Lead: Tony Strutt, CEO

or, where Tony is unavailable or it would be inappropriate to report the concern to him:

Deputy Operational Safeguarding Lead: John Felton, Grants and Administration Lead

The Operational Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will consider what immediate action is required and whether the matter should be escalated to:

- the Lead Safeguarding Trustee;
- another trustee;
- the police;
- the relevant local authority safeguarding service;
- another statutory safeguarding organisation;
- the safeguarding lead of a partner organisation;
- another appropriate regulatory body.

Where a concern relates to the Operational Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported to the Deputy Operational Safeguarding Lead or Lead Safeguarding Trustee.

Where a concern relates to the Deputy Operational Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported to the Operational Safeguarding Lead or Lead Safeguarding Trustee.

Where a concern relates to the Lead Safeguarding Trustee, it should be reported to another trustee and, where appropriate, the relevant statutory authority.

Anyone who believes the normal reporting route is inappropriate may raise a concern directly with another trustee or relevant statutory authority.

13. Allegations concerning staff, trustees or volunteers

Any safeguarding concern relating to a trustee, employee, volunteer, Volunteer Lead, sessional worker, contractor or other person working on behalf of V-Aid will be taken seriously.

V-Aid will take appropriate steps to protect those involved while ensuring concerns are handled fairly.

Where appropriate, external safeguarding or statutory advice will be sought.

V-Aid will not attempt to undertake a criminal or statutory safeguarding investigation itself.

14. Recording and confidentiality

Safeguarding concerns will be recorded accurately and stored securely.

Information will be shared only where necessary, with appropriate individuals or organisations, and in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities and data-protection requirements.

Safeguarding information should not be discussed unnecessarily.

Confidentiality will not prevent information being shared where this is required to protect an individual or meet a legal or regulatory responsibility.

15. Training and awareness

Safeguarding information and training will be proportionate to people's roles.

Trustees and relevant staff will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities.

Volunteers and sessional workers will receive safeguarding information as part of induction and additional training where appropriate to their role or activity.

Training requirements may vary according to:

- the people being supported;
- the delivery environment;
- level of responsibility;
- whether work involves children or adults at risk;
- requirements of partner organisations.

16. Risk assessment

Safeguarding will form part of V-Aid's wider approach to risk management.

Activities will be planned with consideration of:

- participants;
- setting;
- staffing and supervision;
- equipment;
- accessibility;
- travel where relevant;
- safeguarding requirements;
- partner arrangements.

Additional safeguards may be introduced where the nature of the activity or participant group requires them.

17. Photography, video and media

V-Aid may use photographs and video to demonstrate its work, promote volunteering and report to funders.

Appropriate permission will be obtained where required.

Particular care will be taken where images involve:

- children or young people;
- people living in refuges or confidential accommodation;
- people whose safety could be affected by identification;
- people in justice settings;
- people who may not be able to provide informed consent;
- other vulnerable participants.

No person's safety or dignity should be compromised for promotional purposes.

18. Online safety

V-Aid will take reasonable measures to manage safeguarding risks associated with social media, online meetings, digital communication, photography, video and sharing personal information.

Staff and volunteers should use appropriate privacy and security arrangements and follow V-Aid's Data Protection Policy.

19. Working with other organisations

When working with another organisation, V-Aid will take reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding arrangements appropriate to the activity and setting are in place.

Where appropriate, partnership arrangements should clarify:

- respective roles;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- reporting arrangements;
- monitoring requirements.

V-Aid will work within the safeguarding arrangements of the host organisation where appropriate, while retaining responsibility for the conduct of its own staff, volunteers and representatives.

20. Serious incidents

Trustees will consider whether a safeguarding incident meets the criteria for reporting to the Charity Commission as a Serious Incident.

Where required, appropriate statutory or regulatory bodies will also be informed.

21. Raising concerns and speaking up

V-Aid wants anyone involved with the organisation to feel able to raise concerns.

Nobody should be discouraged from reporting a genuine safeguarding concern.

Where someone does not feel comfortable using the normal internal route, they may speak to another trustee or, where appropriate, seek advice or report directly to the relevant statutory authority.

22. Monitoring and review

The Board of Trustees will review this policy at least annually, or earlier where:

- legislation or guidance changes;
- V-Aid significantly changes its activities;
- a safeguarding incident identifies a need for improvement;
- experience of delivering activities indicates that procedures should change.

Safeguarding incidents or concerns should be used as opportunities to review whether V-Aid's arrangements remain appropriate and proportionate.

23. Related V-Aid policies

This policy should be read alongside relevant V-Aid policies and procedures, including:

- Volunteer Policy;
- Volunteer Recruitment & Selection Policy;
- Equal Opportunities Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy or arrangements;
- Complaints Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy or arrangements;
- Conflict of Interest Policy;
- relevant risk assessments and activity procedures.

Appendix 1 – Basic safeguarding response

If somebody is in immediate danger

Call 999.

If somebody discloses abuse or harm

Listen → reassure → do not investigate → record → report.

If you observe something concerning

Record what you observed factually and report it promptly.

Normal V-Aid reporting route

Operational Safeguarding Lead: Tony Strutt, CEO

Deputy Operational Safeguarding Lead: John Felton, Grants and Administration Lead

Lead Safeguarding Trustee: Colin Jenkins

If the concern involves the person you would normally report to, use the next appropriate person in the reporting structure.

Trustee approval

Approved by the Board of Trustees on: 01/10/2026

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Name: Christin Lau

Review date: 01/10/2027