

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Eyot Centre

January 2026

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Policy Statement

The Eyot Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who participate in activities at, from, or on behalf of the Centre.

Safeguarding is fundamental to everything the Centre does. The Eyot Centre is a volunteer-led charity and has no employees. Activities are delivered by trustees, volunteers, members and self-employed freelance subcontractors. The absence of employees does not reduce safeguarding responsibilities. Ultimate accountability for safeguarding rests with the Trustees.

The Eyot Centre is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment and will act promptly on all safeguarding concerns.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Trustees
- The Centre Manager (or nominated administrator)
- Volunteers and members
- Self-employed freelance coaches and instructors
- Section leaders and activity organisers
- External hirers and visiting organisations
- Anyone acting on behalf of the Eyot Centre

It applies to:

- Centre-led activities
- Activities delivered by subcontractors on behalf of the Centre
- Activities taking place on Eyot Centre premises
- External room and facility hire involving children or adults at risk
- Trips, expeditions, races and residential activities

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and aligned with:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023)
- *The Care Act 2014*
- Charity Commission guidance: *Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees*
- Paddle UK Safeguarding Children Policy (P1)
- Paddle UK Safeguarding Adults Policy (P6)
- Paddle UK Safer Recruitment of Volunteers Policy (P7)

- British Dragon Boat Racing Association Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (edition 4, October 2024)
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award safeguarding expectations
- Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership procedures

Safeguarding Principles

The Eyot Centre believes that:

- The welfare of children is paramount
- Adults at risk have the right to live free from abuse and neglect
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Concerns must always be acted upon
- The Centre is an agent of referral, not investigation
- Safeguarding concerns override reputational, commercial or contractual considerations
- Transparency, vigilance and accountability are essential

Definitions

Child

A person under the age of 18.

Adult at Risk

An adult who:

1. Has care and support needs that have been assessed as requiring support under The Care Act 2014
2. Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect
3. Is unable to protect themselves because of those needs

Types of Abuse and Harm

Abuse can take many forms and may occur in any setting. It can be a single act or repeated acts, intentional or unintentional, and may be carried out by adults or peers. Abuse may involve exploitation, power imbalance, coercion, or neglect.

The Eyot Centre recognises the following categories of abuse (taken from NSPCC), the Eyot Centre recognises that there may be other forms of abuse not listed here, this list is not exhaustive:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes deliberately causing physical harm to a person. This may involve:

- Hitting, slapping, punching or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Burning or scalding
- Misuse of restraint or physical interventions
- Giving inappropriate medication or deliberately withholding medication
- Forcing participation in physical activity beyond safe limits

Emotional (Psychological) Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent or severe behaviour that damages a person's emotional wellbeing or sense of self-worth. This may include:

- Verbal abuse, shouting, intimidation or threats
- Humiliation, ridicule or sarcasm
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Ignoring or excluding someone deliberately
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Creating an environment of fear or distress

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, persuading or coercing someone to take part in sexual activity they do not want, do not understand, or cannot consent to. This includes:

- Sexual touching or assault
- Sexual activity with a child or adult who lacks capacity to consent
- Sexual exploitation
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Taking, sharing or coercing sexual images
- Online sexual abuse and grooming

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of [child sexual abuse](#). It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (Department for Education, 2017; Nldirect, 2021; Scottish Government, 2018; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2020a).

Children and young people in sexually exploitative situations and relationships are sometimes persuaded or forced to perform sexual activities or have sexual activities performed on them in return for gifts, drugs, money or affection.

CSE can take place in person, online, or using a combination of both.

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a person's basic physical or psychological needs. This may include:

- Failing to provide adequate supervision
- Inadequate food, shelter or clothing
- Failure to provide appropriate medical care
- Leaving children or adults at risk unattended
- Failure to protect someone from harm or danger

Financial or Material Abuse

Financial abuse involves the misuse or theft of a person's money, possessions or assets. This may include:

- Theft, fraud or exploitation
- Pressure to hand over money or valuables
- Misuse of benefits or allowances
- Unauthorised use of bank cards or accounts
- Coercion related to financial decisions

Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse is abuse motivated by prejudice or bias. This may relate to:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Age

It may include harassment, exclusion, bullying, hate speech or unequal treatment.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse includes any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour between people who are, or have been, personally connected. This may include:

- Physical or sexual violence
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Financial control
- Coercive or controlling behaviour

Children may experience domestic abuse directly or indirectly, including by witnessing it.

Exploitation

Exploitation occurs when a person is used for someone else's gain. This may include:

- Sexual exploitation
- Criminal exploitation (including county lines)
- Forced labour or services
- Exploitation linked to power imbalance or dependency

Grooming

Grooming is a process where an individual builds a relationship with a child or adult at risk to gain trust for the purpose of abuse or exploitation. Grooming may:

- Occur online or in person
- Involve gifts, favours or attention
- Involve isolating the person from others
- Appear initially positive or supportive

Online or Digital Abuse

Online abuse includes harmful behaviour facilitated through digital technology. This may include:

- Cyberbullying or harassment
- Online grooming
- Sharing or coercing sexual images
- Inappropriate messaging or contact
- Exposure to harmful or extremist content

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child criminal exploitation is a form of child abuse where a child or young person is forced or coerced to engage in criminal activity or commit any type of crime.

Children who experience criminal exploitation can be exposed to many types of harms.

Child criminal exploitation does not yet have a legal definition. It has sometimes been used interchangeably with the term 'county lines'. County lines exploitation makes up a large proportion of child criminal exploitation, but there are other forms of criminal exploitation involving children.

County Lines

County lines is a type of criminal exploitation. Urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns.

Organisational Abuse

Organisational abuse occurs when poor practice, systems or cultures within an organisation lead to harm. This may include:

- Inadequate supervision or safeguarding procedures
- Unsafe practices becoming normalised
- Failure to respond to concerns
- Lack of accountability or oversight

Self-Neglect (Adults)

Self-neglect refers to a person's inability or unwillingness to care for their own basic needs, which may place them at risk. This may include:

- Poor personal hygiene
- Failure to seek or accept medical care
- Unsafe living conditions
- Hoarding behaviour

Self-neglect is considered a safeguarding issue for adults under the Care Act 2014.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse (Children)

Children and young people may abuse other children. This can include:

- Bullying or intimidation
- Physical or sexual assault
- Sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour
- Online abuse or image sharing

Peer-on-peer abuse is taken as seriously as abuse by adults.

Abuse Can Occur in Any Setting

Abuse may occur:

- On-site or off-site
- During activities, trips or expeditions
- Online or through digital communication
- Between peers, adults, or mixed age groups

All concerns **MUST** be reported in line with this policy.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Officer (Welfare Officer)

The Eyot Centre appoints a Safeguarding Officer (Welfare Officer).

Welfare Officer: Lesley Wakelin

Contact details: Safeguarding@eyotcentre.co.uk

Responsibilities include:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns or disclosures
- Ensuring immediate safety where required
- Making referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Safeguarding, Police or LADO
- Reporting paddlesport-related concerns to Paddle UK / BDA **within 24 hours** where external advice or statutory referral is sought
- Ensuring concerns are recorded using the Eyot Centre Safeguarding Concerns Form **within 24 hours where possible**
- Maintaining secure, confidential safeguarding records
- Liaising with external organisations' safeguarding leads
- Advising volunteers, members, subcontractors and hirers
- Providing safeguarding reports to the Designated Safeguarding Trustee

The Safeguarding Officer does not investigate concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Trustee (DST)

The Eyot Centre Management Committee (ECMC) and trustees appoints a Designated Safeguarding Trustee to provide strategic oversight and safeguarding governance.

Responsibilities include:

- Oversight of safeguarding governance and compliance
- Receiving safeguarding reports from the Safeguarding Officer
- Acting as escalation point where concerns involve the Safeguarding Officer
- Ensuring safeguarding is a standing agenda item at trustee meetings
- Considering and submitting Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission
- Leading safeguarding policy review and assurance

Confidentiality:

The DST receives anonymised or summary information only for governance purposes. Individual case records remain with the Safeguarding Officer, unless legal, regulatory or risk-based exceptions apply.

Trustee Board

The Trustee Board holds ultimate accountability for safeguarding and is responsible for:

- Ensuring effective safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensuring safer recruitment and suitability checks
- Taking action to manage risk, including restricting or removing access
- Ensuring appropriate training and resources
- Reviewing safeguarding culture and practice

Safer Recruitment and Suitability

The Eyot Centre follows safer recruitment principles aligned with **Paddle UK** and **NSPCC** guidance.

These apply to volunteers, freelance subcontractors, coaches and section leaders.

Safer recruitment includes:

- Clear role description and expectations
- Identity verification
- Two references where applicable
- Enhanced DBS checks where eligible
- Self-declaration and risk assessment where DBS is not eligible
- Confirmation of qualifications and governing-body membership where relevant
- Safeguarding induction
- Agreement to comply with this policy and Codes of Conduct
- Ongoing suitability monitoring

DBS checks should normally be renewed every three years, in line with Paddle UK guidance.

Training and Awareness

- Trustees receive safeguarding training appropriate to governance roles
- The Safeguarding Officer receives enhanced safeguarding training
- Volunteers and subcontractors receive safeguarding awareness training

- Paddle UK / BDA safeguarding training requirements apply to paddlesport coaches
- Training is refreshed at least every two years, or sooner if required

Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Concerns may arise through disclosure, observation, third-party information, online activity, or patterns of behaviour. All concerns must be taken seriously.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Anyone who witnesses or receives a concern must:

1. Listen calmly and take the concern seriously
2. Reassure, but do not promise confidentiality
3. Avoid leading questions
4. Record what was said or observed
5. Report immediately to the Safeguarding Officer
6. If there is immediate danger, call 999

Concerns must be followed up using the Eyot Centre Safeguarding Concerns Form within 24 hours where possible.

Reporting Pathways

Children

Concerns may be referred to Children's Social Care, Police, Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), and Paddle UK / BDA (within 24 hours where relevant).

Adults at Risk

Adults are assumed to have capacity unless there is reason to believe otherwise. Consent should normally be sought, but may be overridden where others are at risk, serious harm is suspected, capacity is lacking, or a crime may have occurred. Immediate safety takes precedence.

If the Welfare Officer is unavailable or conflicted, statutory services should be contacted directly and the DST informed.

Allegations Against Adults in Positions of Trust

Allegations involving trustees, volunteers, subcontractors, coaches or visiting leaders must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer or DST. No internal investigation will take place. Referrals will be made to LADO, Police or Social Care as appropriate, and Paddle UK / BDA informed within 24 hours where relevant (Appendix 1 for contact details)

External Room Hirers Working with Children or Adults at Risk

External hirers retain primary safeguarding responsibility for participants.

Before hire, the Centre Manager must obtain:

- A safeguarding policy
- Named safeguarding lead
- DBS assurance
- Public liability insurance
- Activity risk assessment
- Supervision and responsibility statement
- Agreement to follow Eyot Centre safeguarding procedures

Concerns observed on site MST still be reported to the Welfare Officer. Bookings may be suspended or terminated if safeguarding concerns arise.

Centre-Led Paddlesport Sessions for External Groups

Where freelance coaches deliver paddlesport sessions on behalf of the Eyot Centre, the Centre is the activity provider and retains primary safeguarding responsibility.

The Centre is responsible for coach vetting, DBS, training, risk assessments and reporting. Coaches must comply with this policy. Visiting organisations retain responsibility for pastoral supervision.

Safeguarding Arrangements for Trips, Expeditions, Races and Away Activities

This section applies to all club trips, training camps, races, expeditions, residential activities and Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) activity organised by or on behalf of the Eyot Centre.

Enhanced Safeguarding

Trips and expeditions present increased safeguarding risk due to travel, unfamiliar environments, overnight stays and reduced access to usual support networks. Enhanced safeguarding arrangements must therefore be in place.

Trip Safeguarding Lead

A Trip Safeguarding Lead must be appointed for every trip involving children or adults at risk. This person must be identified in advance and known to participants and leaders. Where possible, they should not be the primary instructor.

Pre-Trip Planning

Before departure:

- A trip-specific risk assessment must be completed
- Supervision ratios and accommodation arrangements must be risk-assessed
- Emergency contacts must be held
- Behaviour expectations and reporting routes must be communicated
- For DofE activities, programme requirements must be met

During the Trip

Safeguarding remains everyone's responsibility. Concerns must be reported immediately to the Trip Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Officer. Immediate risks must be prioritised.

Post-Trip Review

Safeguarding concerns or near-misses must be reviewed and learning recorded.

Safeguarding concerns override competition, performance or programme completion.

Record Keeping and Reporting

Safeguarding records will be factual, accurate, securely stored and accessible only to the Safeguarding Officer and, where required, the DST.

The Safeguarding Officer will provide:

- Immediate escalation of serious incidents
- At least one annual safeguarding summary report to the ECMC

Charity Commission Serious Incident Reporting

The Trustee Board will consider whether a safeguarding concern meets the threshold for reporting to the Charity Commission as a Serious Incident. The DST leads this process.

Whistleblowing

Safeguarding concerns may be raised with the Safeguarding Officer, DST, Chair of ECMC, Paddle UK / BDA, NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline or Charity Commission. No one will be penalised for raising concerns in good faith (Appendix 1 for contact details).

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, following any safeguarding incident, changes in legislation, or changes to the Centre's activities or risk profile.

Appendix 1

SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS AND EXTERNAL AGENCIES

This appendix sets out the **key safeguarding contacts and external agencies** referred to in this policy.

Contact details should be checked periodically to ensure they remain current.

Emergency Services

Emergency (immediate danger or serious harm):

 999

Police (non-emergency):


 101

Local Authority Safeguarding – Wokingham Borough Council

The Eyot Centre is located in Henley-on-Thames and falls under Wokingham Borough Council for safeguarding purposes.


Children’s Safeguarding (MASH)

Wokingham Children’s Services – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

 **0118 237 7777**


 <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-families-and-you/child-protection-and-safeguarding/>

Out of hours (children):

 **01344 786 543**


Adult Safeguarding

Wokingham Adult Safeguarding Team

 **0118 974 6000**

 <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/adults/adult-social-care/safeguarding-adults/>


Out of hours (adults):

 **01344 786 543**

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO must be contacted for allegations against adults in positions of trust (including volunteers, trustees, coaches, instructors).

Wokingham LADO

 **0118 237 7718**

 <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-families-and-you/child-protection-and-safeguarding/allegations-against-professionals-lado/>

National Governing Bodies

Paddle UK – Safeguarding

Paddle UK must be informed within 24 hours of any safeguarding concern relating to paddlesport activity where statutory advice or referral is sought.

 safeguarding@paddleuk.org.uk

 <https://www.paddleuk.org.uk/safeguarding/>

British Dragon Boat Racing Association (BDA)

For safeguarding concerns involving dragon boating activity.

 <https://www.dragonboat.org.uk>

 (Safeguarding contact details available via BDA website)

Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

For safeguarding concerns relating to DofE expeditions or activity delivered as part of the DofE programme.

 <https://www.dofe.org/about/safeguarding/>

Safeguarding concerns are normally escalated via the relevant Licensed Organisation in addition to statutory agencies. For the Eyot Centre this is Oxfordshire Open Award

Charity Commission

The Charity Commission must be notified where a safeguarding concern meets the threshold for a Serious Incident Report.

 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

 **0300 066 9197**

NSPCC

NSPCC Helpline

For advice about safeguarding concerns involving children.


 **0808 800 5000**

 help@nspcc.org.uk

 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

For concerns about unsafe practice within an organisation.

 **0800 028 0285**

 whistleblowing@nsc.org.uk

 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/whistleblowing/>

Centre Safeguarding Contacts

Safeguarding Officer (Welfare Officer)

Name: Lesley Wakelin

Contact details: Safeguarding@eyotcentre.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Trustee

Name: Dr Tom Crossland (Honorary Treasurer)

Contact details: treasurer@eyotcentre.co.uk

Use of These Contacts

- These contacts are provided for guidance and escalation
- In an emergency, always contact 999 first
- If the Safeguarding Officer is unavailable or there is a conflict of interest, concerns should be escalated directly to statutory services
- Advice sought from external agencies should be recorded and, where relevant, shared with Paddle UK / BDA

Review of Contact Information

This appendix will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following changes to legislation or local arrangements
- Following any safeguarding incident