

Coodal Safeguarding Policy

(Protecting Vulnerable Beneficiaries)

1. Purpose and Scope

Coodal is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable beneficiaries, including children, young people, and adults at risk. This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, and representatives acting on behalf of Coodal.

2. Principles

- **Zero tolerance of harm** – Coodal will not tolerate abuse, neglect, or exploitation in any form.
- **Duty of care** – Everyone involved with Coodal has a responsibility to safeguard beneficiaries.
- **Rights and dignity** – Vulnerable people must be treated with respect, listened to, and involved in decisions affecting them.
- **Best interests** – The welfare of the child or adult at risk is always paramount.
- **Partnership** – Coodal will work with statutory agencies, local safeguarding boards, and other organisations to protect individuals.

3. Definitions

- **Child:** Anyone under the age of 18.
- **Adult at risk:** Anyone aged 18 or over who, due to age, disability, mental health needs, illness, or other circumstances, is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.
- **Abuse:** May include physical, emotional, sexual, financial, neglect, discrimination, organisational, or online abuse.

4. Responsibilities

- **Trustees:** Hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding within Coodal.
- **Safeguarding Lead:** A named person will be appointed as Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). They will act as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Must complete safeguarding training, understand this policy, and report any concerns immediately.

5. Safer Recruitment

- All trustees, staff, and volunteers in regulated activity will undergo **appropriate DBS checks**.

- Recruitment processes will include reference checks and safeguarding questions at interview.

6. Code of Conduct

All representatives of Coodal must:

- Treat all beneficiaries with dignity and respect.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Avoid situations where they are alone with a vulnerable person, unless unavoidable and risk-assessed.
- Never engage in inappropriate or abusive behaviour, including favouritism, physical punishment, or sexual contact.

7. Reporting Concerns

- Concerns about abuse or neglect must be reported **immediately** to the Safeguarding Lead.
- If someone is in **immediate danger**, call **999**.
- Concerns will be recorded factually and kept confidential, only shared on a need-to-know basis.
- The Safeguarding Lead will escalate to the relevant **Local Authority Safeguarding Team** or **Police** as required.

8. Training and Awareness

- All trustees, staff, and volunteers will receive safeguarding induction and periodic refresher training.
- The policy will be made available on Coodal's website and in staff/volunteer handbooks.

9. Whistleblowing

Coodal encourages a culture of openness. Anyone raising safeguarding concerns in good faith will be protected from victimisation or detrimental treatment.

10. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- Records of safeguarding concerns will be stored securely and retained in line with data protection law (UK GDPR).
- Confidentiality must be maintained, except where sharing is necessary to protect a vulnerable person.

11. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the trustees, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.
- Learning from safeguarding incidents will be used to strengthen practice.

✦ **Named Safeguarding Lead (DSO):** [Insert Name]

✦ **Deputy Safeguarding Lead:** [Insert Name]

✦ **Date of Approval:** [Insert Date]

✦ **Next Review Date:** [Insert Date]

Would you like me to also draft a **shorter “Safeguarding Code of Conduct” one-pager** for volunteers and staff, so they have a quick reference guide alongside the full policy?