

Islington Boat Club – Safeguarding Adults Policy

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Introduction

Islington Boat Club (IBC) is committed to ensuring the wellbeing, safety, and dignity of every adult at risk who engages with our services. We recognise that safeguarding is an essential part of our responsibility as a community-based organisation and is central to the ethos of the club. Safeguarding is not limited to responding when abuse has taken place; it is about creating and maintaining an environment in which individuals feel safe, supported, valued, and empowered to participate fully in activities without fear of harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This includes not only our staff and volunteers, but also trustees, contractors, partner agencies, and visitors to the club. Each individual connected to IBC has a role to play in ensuring that the principles of safeguarding are upheld, that vulnerable situations are minimised, and that any concerns are acted upon quickly and effectively. The club promotes a culture of openness where concerns can be raised without hesitation and will be treated with seriousness, sensitivity, and urgency.

This policy outlines how IBC works proactively to prevent harm, identify risks, and respond appropriately where safeguarding issues arise. It is designed to give clear guidance to all stakeholders about the expectations, procedures, and values which underpin our safeguarding practice. In doing so, it ensures that all those who interact with IBC understand the duty of care we owe to adults at risk and the standards that govern our behaviour and decision-making.

The commitment to safeguarding at IBC extends beyond compliance with statutory duties. We believe that safeguarding is an expression of our values as a club: respect, inclusion, empowerment, and accountability. Our safeguarding approach is person-centred, meaning that the voice, wishes, and experiences of adults at risk are listened to and prioritised in any decision-making. We aim to balance safety with autonomy, recognising that individuals have the right to make choices about their own lives while also being protected from harm.

Safeguarding within IBC operates within the wider legal and policy frameworks set out by national and local authorities, including the Health and Social Care Act 2022, the Care Quality Commission Single Assessment Framework (2024), Paddle UK safeguarding standards, and the procedures of the Islington Safeguarding Adults Board. This policy ensures that our practice not only complies with these frameworks but also translates them into the daily realities of our work on the water and within our community.

Through this policy, IBC affirms its commitment to safeguarding as a continuous process of vigilance, education, prevention, and response. We expect all members of our organisation to familiarise themselves with the content of this document, to complete appropriate safeguarding training, and to actively contribute to maintaining a safe environment. By working together, we can ensure that adults at risk are able to enjoy the opportunities IBC provides with confidence and security.

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Legal and Policy Framework

This Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy at Islington Boat Club (IBC) is grounded in the most current safeguarding legislation and guidance as of 2024. By aligning with national and local frameworks, IBC ensures that its safeguarding practice is not only legally compliant but also reflects sector best practice.

Key frameworks informing this policy include:

- **Health and Social Care Act 2022** – This Act places a duty on organisations providing services to adults to prioritise safety, wellbeing, and dignity. It requires clear safeguarding procedures, robust systems of accountability, and a focus on preventing harm as well as responding to abuse. For IBC, this means embedding safeguarding into every aspect of service delivery, from water-based activities to community engagement.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC) Single Assessment Framework (2023–2024 rollout)** – Although IBC is not a regulated care provider, we adopt the principles of the CQC framework as good practice. The framework emphasises person-centred care, safeguarding responsibilities, and the accountability of leaders in creating safe environments. By following this model, IBC ensures its safeguarding standards are aligned with nationally recognised expectations.
- **Paddle UK Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures (March 2024)** – As a club affiliated with Paddle UK, IBC adheres to the national governing body’s safeguarding standards for paddlesports. Paddle UK provides sector-specific guidance on safe practice, risk management in outdoor activities, and handling disclosures or allegations of abuse within a sporting context. Compliance with Paddle UK requirements ensures that our approach is tailored to the unique settings and risks of water-based activities.
- **Islington Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)** – IBC aligns with the policies and procedures of the local SAB, which coordinates safeguarding arrangements across statutory and voluntary agencies. The SAB sets thresholds for intervention, oversees multi-agency working, and ensures that safeguarding responses are consistent and effective. This local partnership enables IBC to play an active role in the wider safeguarding network.

By situating this policy within these frameworks, IBC ensures that safeguarding practice is **evidence-based, legally compliant, and community-informed**. The club recognises that safeguarding is a shared responsibility across agencies and therefore commits to full cooperation with statutory bodies, regulators, and Paddle UK when concerns arise.

This legal and policy foundation underpins every aspect of the procedures set out in this document. It ensures that safeguarding at IBC is not seen as an isolated requirement but as an integral part of delivering safe, inclusive, and empowering opportunities for all adults at risk who engage with our services.

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Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Islington Boat Club (IBC) is **Darren Greenwood, Chief Operating Officer**. Locating this role at senior leadership level demonstrates the organisation's commitment to keeping safeguarding as a strategic priority and ensures that decisions about safety are integrated into all aspects of club management.

The DSL is the **first point of contact** for all safeguarding concerns relating to adults at risk. Staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and visitors must raise issues directly with the DSL without delay. The DSL ensures immediate risks are addressed and that concerns are managed in line with national and local safeguarding procedures.

Key responsibilities include:

- **Record-keeping:** Maintaining accurate, confidential safeguarding records that are factual, timely, and compliant with data protection standards.
- **Referrals:** Making prompt referrals to statutory services including Adult Social Services, the police, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and Paddle UK where appropriate.
- **Multi-agency liaison:** Acting as IBC's safeguarding representative in meetings with external agencies and engaging fully with the Islington Safeguarding Adults Board.
- **Training and awareness:** Ensuring all staff and volunteers complete safeguarding induction, receive regular updates, and access refresher training at least every two years.
- **Reporting to Trustees:** Providing updates on safeguarding matters, compliance, and culture so that Trustees can discharge their governance responsibilities.

Although the DSL coordinates safeguarding activity, responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with Trustees. The DSL's role is not only to respond to individual cases but to lead the development of a **positive safeguarding culture** across IBC, ensuring that adults at risk feel respected, safe, and empowered in all activities.

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Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the term “**adult at risk**” is used in line with current statutory guidance. An adult at risk is defined as any individual aged **18 years or over** who:

- Has care and/or support needs (whether or not these needs are being met by the local authority), and is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves from that abuse or neglect, or from the risk of it.

This definition recognises that vulnerability is not fixed or absolute. A person may be at risk at certain times in their life due to health, disability, age, financial hardship, social isolation, or personal circumstances. Vulnerability can also be **temporary** — for example, someone recovering from illness, crisis, or trauma — or **long term**, such as in the case of ongoing physical or learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, or enduring mental health challenges.

At Islington Boat Club (IBC), we adopt a **flexible and person-centred approach** to safeguarding. This means that we do not assume who may or may not be at risk, but instead consider the **context of each individual’s circumstances**. We recognise that safeguarding concerns can arise in unexpected ways and that adults who appear independent in some areas of their lives may nonetheless require protection and support in others.

Adults at risk who participate in IBC activities may include:

- Individuals with physical or sensory impairments who face barriers to communication, access, or self-protection.
- Adults with learning disabilities who may have difficulty understanding risk or recognising harmful behaviour.
- Those experiencing poor mental health, which may reduce their ability to make safe decisions or seek help.
- People facing domestic abuse, financial exploitation, or social isolation.
- Adults are temporarily vulnerable due to bereavement, addiction, illness, or sudden changes in circumstances.

It is important to emphasise that adults at risk retain their **rights to autonomy, dignity, and self-determination**. Safeguarding practice must always strike a balance between protecting individuals from harm and respecting their right to make informed choices, even where those choices may involve a degree of risk.

IBC’s safeguarding approach therefore places the **voice of the adult at risk at the centre** of decision-making. Whenever possible, adults are consulted about their wishes, supported to express their views, and involved in decisions that affect them. This reflects the principle of **empowerment** that underpins national safeguarding policy and ensures that protection is not paternalistic, but collaborative.

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By adopting this definition and approach, IBC ensures that safeguarding is applied consistently, sensitively, and in a way that values the diversity of experiences among the adults we serve.

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Types of Abuse

Abuse can take many different forms and may be carried out by family members, carers, professionals, peers, strangers, or even organisations.

The main categories recognised in national safeguarding guidance include **physical abuse, neglect and acts of omission, self-neglect, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, domestic abuse, organisational abuse, modern slavery, financial or material abuse, discriminatory abuse, and online/cyber abuse.**

Each type presents its own risks and challenges, and in many cases, more than one form of abuse may occur simultaneously. Abuse can be deliberate, such as physical violence or financial exploitation, but it may also result from neglect, poor practice, or a failure to act in someone's best interests.

It is essential that all staff and volunteers at Islington Boat Club (IBC) remain alert to the **signs, behaviours, and indicators** that may suggest an adult is experiencing abuse. These indicators may not always be obvious, and in some cases, they may be subtle or hidden. For example, changes in mood or withdrawal from activities could point to psychological abuse.

While unexplained injuries might suggest physical harm. Recognising abuse requires both vigilance and sensitivity, as well as the confidence to act when something does not seem right. IBC ensures that definitions, examples, and indicators of abuse are set out clearly in this policy and in training materials so that all those working with adults at risk can respond promptly and appropriately if concerns arise.

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Safeguarding Principles

Islington Boat Club (IBC) recognises that safeguarding is most effective when guided by clear values and principles. Our safeguarding practice is underpinned by six nationally recognised principles: **Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership, and Accountability**. These principles reflect the standards set by national safeguarding frameworks and are reinforced through the Care Quality Commission (CQC) **Single Assessment Framework (2024)**, which places strong emphasis on safe, person-centred practice.

Empowerment means ensuring that adults at risk are treated as active partners in safeguarding decisions, not passive recipients of protection. Adults should feel confident that their views will be listened to, their consent sought wherever possible, and that they will be supported to make informed choices about their own lives. At IBC, we encourage participants to speak openly about concerns and empower them by making safeguarding processes transparent and supportive.

Prevention focuses on stopping harm before it occurs. This includes creating safe physical environments, establishing clear codes of conduct, providing training for staff and volunteers, and fostering a culture where concerns are reported early. Preventative measures are built into IBC's daily routines, from supervision practices to safe recruitment procedures, so that risks are minimised before they develop into incidents.

Proportionality requires that responses to safeguarding concerns are appropriate to the level of risk presented. At IBC, we commit to acting decisively when adults are at immediate risk of harm, but we also recognise the need to avoid unnecessary intrusion where risk is low. This principle ensures that adults at risk receive the right support, at the right time, and in the least restrictive way possible.

Protection is at the heart of safeguarding. It refers to providing help and advocacy for those in greatest need. At IBC, this means responding promptly to disclosures, ensuring immediate safety, and working with statutory partners such as Adult Social Services, the police, and Paddle UK to deliver effective protection when required.

Partnership recognises that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. No single organisation can address abuse alone, and collaboration with statutory agencies, regulators, families, and community groups is essential. IBC is an active partner in Islington's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and shares information responsibly to achieve the best outcomes for adults at risk.

Finally, **Accountability** ensures that safeguarding practice is transparent, consistent, and subject to oversight. IBC accepts responsibility for safeguarding decisions and actions, ensuring that all staff and volunteers know their roles and that the Chief Operating Officer and Trustees are accountable for governance and leadership in this area.

Together, these six principles form the foundation of safeguarding at IBC. They are not abstract ideas, but practical commitments that guide daily behaviour, decision-making, and service delivery. By embedding these principles into everything we do, IBC creates a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment in which adults at risk can thrive.

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Prevention and Good Practice

IBC prevents abuse by embedding safe practices into everyday operations: activities are planned so staff are visible to others, with one-to-one contact avoided wherever possible; when transporting members, two adults should be present; all visitors must be supervised at all times, with no unsupervised access permitted; staff and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries; supervision sessions provide opportunities to discuss safeguarding concerns and reflect on practice.

Safer Recruitment

Recruitment procedures include: completion of a full application form; two written references followed up if unclear; exploration of employment history including gaps; mandatory disclosure of safeguarding-related convictions; Enhanced DBS checks for all staff and volunteers before appointment regardless of role; safeguarding induction and probation; and ensuring contractors and partners provide evidence of safeguarding compliance.

Responding to Concerns

When a concern arises: ensure immediate safety and call 999 if necessary; listen carefully if a disclosure is made, reassure the person, and do not promise confidentiality; record concerns factually using the individual's own words, signed and dated; submit reports to the DSL within 24 hours. The DSL will decide next steps, referring urgent cases immediately to Adult Social Services, police, Paddle UK, or the CQC.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Concerns about staff or volunteers must be reported to the DSL. If the allegation involves the DSL, report to the Chair of Trustees. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed. Suspension may be considered during investigations. Support will be provided to both the adult at risk and the staff member.

Whistleblowing

IBC fosters a culture of openness. Staff and volunteers can raise safeguarding concerns with the DSL, Chair of Trustees, Safecall, Adult Social Services, or the CQC. Whistleblowers are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Training and Awareness

All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding induction within one month. Refresher training is required every two years. The DSL completes advanced safeguarding training and attends Paddle UK updates. Trustees receive annual safeguarding briefings.

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Monitoring and Review

The DSL produces an annual safeguarding report for Trustees. Recruitment, training, and safeguarding records are audited. Feedback from members helps evaluate safeguarding culture. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if national frameworks change.

Key Contacts:

DSL - Islington Boat Club: Darren Greenwood, Chief Operating Officer: 0784 509 4200

Islington Adult Social Services: 020 7527 2299

Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours): 020 7226 0992

Metropolitan Police: 999/101

CQC: 03000 616161

Paddle UK Safeguarding Team: 0115 865 5354

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Appendix B: Definitions of Abuse

Type of Abuse	Definition	Examples / Indicators
Physical Abuse	The use of force which results in pain, injury or impairment.	Hitting, slapping, misuse of medication, restraint, unexplained injuries.
Neglect	Failure to meet a person's basic needs.	Poor hygiene, malnutrition, untreated medical needs, unsafe environment.
Self-Neglect	Failure by an individual to care for their own health or environment.	Extreme hoarding, poor hygiene, refusal of essential services.
Sexual Abuse	Any sexual act without consent, or where consent cannot be given.	Rape, assault, harassment, inappropriate touching, grooming.
Psychological Abuse	Actions that cause mental distress or emotional harm.	Bullying, threats, humiliation, controlling behaviour, intimidation.
Domestic Abuse	Patterns of control, coercion, violence, or abuse in intimate/family settings.	Physical assault, controlling finances, psychological manipulation.
Organisational Abuse	Poor or unsafe care within institutions or services.	Rigid routines, lack of dignity, unsafe supervision, neglect in care settings.
Modern Slavery	Exploitation of people for labour, services, or criminal activity.	Human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, domestic servitude.
Financial Abuse	Improper or unauthorised use of someone's money or assets.	Theft, fraud, coercion around wills, misuse of benefits or property.
Discriminatory Abuse	Harassment or unfair treatment due to personal characteristics.	Racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks; exclusion from services.
Online / Cyber Abuse	Harm caused through digital technology.	Grooming, exploitation, harassment, cyber-bullying, inappropriate messaging.

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Appendix C: Reporting Procedure:

1. 1. Concern identified (abuse suspected, disclosed, or witnessed).
2. 2. Ensure the immediate safety of the adult at risk (call 999 if urgent).
3. 3. Record the concern factually using the individual's own words where possible.
4. 4. Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
5. 5. DSL reviews and decides on next steps:
 - Contact emergency services (if immediate danger).
 - Make a referral to Adult Social Services within 24 hours for significant concerns.
 - Inform Paddle UK / CQC where relevant.
6. 6. DSL records all actions taken and outcomes securely.
7. 7. Trustees notified of safeguarding matters in line with governance responsibilities.
8. 8. Ongoing monitoring and support provided for the adult at risk.