



# Safeguarding Policy – The Larder Belfast

## 1. Policy Statement

The Larder Belfast is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk.

Although we do **not engage in regulated activity**, we regularly interact with children and vulnerable adults through our services and therefore recognise our duty of care.

We believe that:

- The welfare of the child or adult at risk is paramount.
- Everyone has the right to protection from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

This policy is informed by key UK and Northern Ireland legislation and guidance, including:

- **Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007**
- **Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)**
- **Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015)**
- **The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (UK)**
- **Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008**
- **Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

This safeguarding policy aims to:

- Protect children and adults at risk who interact with The Larder Belfast.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding roles.
- Provide clear procedures to follow where concerns exist.
- Reduce the risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All volunteers
- All staff
- Trustees and board members
- Contractors or partner organisations working with the Larder Belfast
- Anyone representing the organisation

## **4. Definitions**

### **4.1 Child**

A person under the age of 18.

### **4.2 Adult at Risk**

An adult aged 18 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, abuse, or exploitation due to age, disability, mental illness, or circumstances.

### **4.3 Safeguarding**

Actions taken to promote welfare and protect individuals from harm.

### **4.4 Abuse**

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory, organisational, or neglect.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Trustees**

- Ensure safeguarding is embedded throughout the organisation.
- Approve and review safeguarding policy and procedures.

### **5.2 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

- Acts as first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.

- Maintains records of concerns and actions taken.
- Liaises with statutory services when necessary.

### 5.3 Staff and Volunteers

- Must follow this policy and report concerns immediately.
- Must attend safeguarding training when offered.
- Must act professionally and appropriately at all times.

## 6. Safe Working Practices

Although we do not carry out regulated activity, we implement safe practices to protect everyone:

### 6.1 Code of Conduct

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult where possible.
- Do not develop personal relationships outside The Larder Belfast activities.
- Do not give personal contact details or accept personal requests online.
- Use clear and appropriate language.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries.

## 7. Recruitment of Volunteers

While activities are not regulated, we will:

- Conduct application and informal interview processes.
- Obtain two references for new volunteers.
- Request an **Enhanced Access NI check where roles meet eligibility** criteria.
- Require volunteers to agree to the Code of Conduct.

## 8. Recognising Signs of Abuse

Volunteers should be alert to:

- Unexplained injuries
- Disclosure of abuse
- Signs of neglect
- Abnormal fearfulness or withdrawal

- Inappropriate relationships or behaviours

If in doubt—share the concern.

## 9. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

**If a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger:**

**Call 999 immediately.**

**If the concern is not an emergency:**

- Report to the **Designated Safeguarding Officer** (Gordon McDade 07885436734) immediately.
- Record the concern using the organisation's safeguarding form.
- The DSO will consider whether to contact:
  - Gateway Services (children)
  - Adult Safeguarding Team
  - PSNI

**Volunteers must NOT:**

- Investigate themselves
- Promise confidentiality
- Ask leading questions

## 10. Information Sharing & Confidentiality

- Safeguarding concerns are shared **on a need-to-know basis** only.
- Records will be kept securely and in line with GDPR.
- Individuals have the right to privacy unless risk of harm overrides that right.

## 11. Safeguarding During Activities

The Larder Belfast will:

- Ensure safe ratios of volunteers to participants.
- Ensure all activities are in line with our risk management policy..
- Monitor who enters and exits the premises.
- Ensure venues are safe, clean, and appropriate.
- Make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities.

## 12. Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Any concern involving a volunteer or staff member must be reported to the DSO or a trustee immediately.

The organisation will:

- Act quickly and fairly.
- Suspend or reassign the individual if necessary.
- Inform statutory agencies where appropriate.
- Keep detailed records.

## 13. Training

All volunteers and staff will receive:

- Basic safeguarding awareness training.
- Role-specific training, if required.

## 14. Record Keeping

The Larder Belfast will maintain:

- Safeguarding concern forms
- Incident reports
- Logs of referrals made
- Training records

These will be kept securely and reviewed periodically.

## 15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or sooner if legislation changes or incident learning requires an update.

## **16. Approval**

**Approved by The Larder Belfast Trustees on Sunday 1st February 2026**

To be reviewed on or before 1st February 2027