



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Purpose**

All organisations including charities, who may have contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are recommended to have some sort of safeguarding policy. It is important that an organisation such as the RCTS - a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) adopts a suitable policy with the level of safeguarding determined by and proportionate to the risk inherent in the activities taking place. In the case of the RCTS and its activities, whether at branch or national level, risks are likely to be low with little more than a need to have a knowledge of the Safeguarding Policy, and what to do and who to contact in the event of any safeguarding concerns.

The RCTS does not provide services for children and young people although some venues where meetings are held, for example, may well be shared with other users and there may, therefore, be children and/or young adults present in areas also used by RCTS members. Children and young people are not barred from RCTS meetings but should have a parent, guardian or other designated responsible adult taking care of them at meetings or other RCTS activities where they may be included. Sometimes there are vulnerable adults present at RCTS meetings or taking part in other Society activities, and vulnerability could involve physical, mental or learning difficulties. As some of our members and guests may fall into one or more of these categories, we do have a duty to do our best to ensure that they do not come to harm while they take part in our activities.

Venues used by the RCTS are likely to have their own Safeguarding Policy and branches, or whoever is organising a Society event at national level, should ask for a copy of this policy as a guide to what they should do if there are any concerns about or allegations of abuse even if it concerns others using the venue at the same time. For regular branch meetings for example, the venue may ask you to sign up to their Safeguarding Policy even though it is likely that most of it will not apply to RCTS activities – we do not employ staff and would not be expected to carry out DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks for example. However, it is important to know who to approach should there be any concerns.

The main purpose of the safeguarding policy for the RCTS is to recognise any potential concerns and what to do about them. There is a lot of information widely available and some of this has been used to form the Safeguarding Policy for the RCTS – please see the reference section at the end of this document for more details.

The purpose of the policy is not only to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, but also Society members and guests. The policy will be reviewed periodically.

## **Safeguarding Policy Statement**

The following statement was agreed by the Trustees/Management Committee(MC) of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society (RCTS):

**The RCTS is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults and to ensuring their well-being.**

- We believe that everyone whether child or adult should know that they are valued and should be able to safely enjoy any activities that we provide including membership of the RCTS.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of children and adults.
- We recognise that Children's Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- We recognise that Adult Services has responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is a whole organisation responsibility and the RCTS as a CIO takes its responsibilities in this respect very seriously.

**We are committed to:**

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the people, whether children or adults, that we have contact with know that they are valued and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Reporting any concerns about abuse of children or vulnerable adults.

## **What are we protecting people from?**

The definitions of abuse differ between children and adults at risk.

### **What is abuse? Adults in need of protection**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Discrimination should also be considered abuse in this context. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

### **What is abuse and neglect? Children**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. The abuse may take any one of a number of forms that could include physical, emotional, sexual or neglect.

## **What to do if there are any safeguarding concerns**

At branch level, any concerns should be raised with a member of the branch committee who will decide what action to take. This may involve contacting either children's or adults services within the local Social Services. If the concern is with someone who is not part of RCTS activities but is present at the same venue, then it should be reported to the person who deals with these issues for the venue. If you do not know who this is, you should ask without delay. They can then follow their own policies and procedures as appropriate.

At national level, any concerns should be raised with a Trustee/MC member who will take this to the Trustees/MC for a decision on what action to take.

It may be appropriate to contact the police by dialling 999 if there are immediate concerns for a person's safety whether child or adult.

Any safeguarding concerns raised, decisions made and action taken should be recorded. At branch level, a record should be forwarded promptly and securely to the Society Chairman for consideration as to whether the incident has been dealt with correctly and to take any such further action as may be required in consultation with the Trustees/MC. The final decision for any incident either at branch or national level will rest with the Trustees/MC. Any breach of safeguarding by a member of the Society may result in immediate withdrawal of membership as well as being reported to either the police and/or social services as appropriate. Any such records should be kept confidential bearing in mind privacy legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for example.

## **Main References**

NCVO - National Council for Voluntary Organisations Guidance

NCVO – Safeguarding for volunteer involving organisations

Woking URC Safeguarding Policy

Charity Commission – guidance on Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

Charity Commission – policy paper on Strategy for dealing with safeguarding issues in charities

NSPCC – example of a safeguarding policy statement

Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board – Safeguarding adults policy and procedure template with associated guidance

There is a lot of information widely available relating to safeguarding and the above is a selection from the material directly used in the writing of this policy.