

Safeguarding Policy



October 2023

The Charity Commission states all charities have a responsibility to ensure they do not cause harm to anyone who has contact with them; that is, volunteers, staff, donors and beneficiaries. Charities working with children or adults at risk have extra responsibilities. Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

As part of their remit, the **openTrust's** Trustees ensure that the charity fulfils this responsibility and retain overall responsibility for safeguarding within the charity. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Who we are and what we do:

The **openTrust** is a registered charity. Our purpose is the advancement of education, nationally and internationally in a wide range of subjects including environmental, political and biological sciences, the arts and media communication.

This purpose is realised in the main by supporting **openDemocracy**, the independent international media platform who have their own Safeguarding Policy which is available from the Company Secretary on: info@opendemocracy.net.



The Trust is managed by five trustees who are chaired by Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healey Bt and meet twice a year. The Trust is administered by the Trust Administrator who works on a part-time self-employed basis. Staff are contracted on an occasional basis to undertake the independent examination or audit of our accounts, to design and develop our logo and website, and, to provide IT support.

NB: The openTrust does not employ any staff directly and or any staff who work on a voluntary basis. The openTrust does not work with children, young people or adults at risk.

Policy Statement:

The openTrust believes that everyone it engages with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The openTrust will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by its Trustees, its contracted staff, donors and beneficiaries.

The openTrust commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention:

The openTrust:

- Ensures all Trustees and contracted staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy
- Designs and undertakes all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with the openTrust
- Undertakes due diligence on its donors and beneficiaries
- Implements stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying trustees and contracted staff

- Ensures Trustees and contracted staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization
- Follows up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to legal regulations and due process

Everyone working at the Trust ensures that there is a strong safeguarding culture where:

- People are protected from harm
- The charity minimises the risks of any harm or abuse
- Everyone has confidence that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately
- Everyone at the charity understands their role

Additionally, the **openTrust's** Trustees and contracted staff are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promoting the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an **openTrust** Trustee or contracted staff member to the Chair of the Trustees

Reporting:

The **openTrust** ensures that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to the Trustees and contracted staff.

The **openTrust** will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Trustees or contracted staff who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Chair of Trustees. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to the Chair (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to another Trustee or the Trust Administrator who will be able to advise.

Response:

The **openTrust** will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations. Appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied to Trustees, contracted staff or other related parties found in breach of policy.

The **openTrust** will offer support to survivors of harm caused by Trustees or associated staff, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Trustee Safeguarding Responsibilities

Responsibilities are made clear and individuals are provided with necessary training and resources to enable them to carry out their role. This safeguarding policy is reviewed and approved by the Trustees on an annual basis.

Trustees are aware of and comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](#) and also the [10 actions trustee boards need to take](#) to ensure good safeguarding governance.

The Chair of Trustees has the responsibility for the oversight of all aspects of safety, including whistleblowing and health and safety in the workplace. This includes:

- Creating a culture of respect, in which everyone feels safe and able to speak up
- An annual review of safety, with recommendations to the Board
- Receiving regular reports, to ensure this and related policies are being applied consistently
- Providing oversight of any lapses in safeguarding
- Ensuring any issues are properly investigated and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively, and any reporting to the Police/statutory authorities is carried out where appropriate
- Leading the organisation in way that makes everyone feels safe and able to speak up
- Ensuring safeguarding risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks, as part of the Trust's risk management processes
- Ensuring that all relevant checks are carried out in recruiting contracted staff
- Planning programmes and activities to take into account potential safeguarding risks and to ensure these are adequately mitigated
- Listening and engaging with donors, beneficiaries, contracted staff and others and involving them as appropriate

- Responding to any safeguarding concerns sensitively and acting quickly to address these
- Ensuring that personal data is stored and managed in a safe way that is compliant with data protection regulations, including valid consent to use any imagery or video
- Making Trustees and contracted staff aware of:
 - Our safeguarding procedures and their specific safeguarding responsibilities on induction, with regular updates/reminders, as necessary
 - The signs of potential abuse and how to report these
 - To be aware of our procedures, undertake any necessary training, be aware of the risks and signs of potential abuse and, where there are concerns, to report these immediately (see above).

Online Safeguarding Procedures

The **openTrust** identifies and manages online risks by ensuring:

- Trustees and contracted staff understand how to keep themselves safe online. This includes using high privacy settings and password access to online data and information
- online services the **openTrust** provides are suitable and safe for our users
- The protection of people's personal data and following [GDPR legislation](#)
- permission is sought to display any images on the **openTrust's** website including consent from the individual(s) concerned
- users know how to report online concerns by using this policy

The **openTrust** refers to the following for informed guidance on safeguarding:

[Bond's Good governance for safeguarding: A guide for UK NGO boards](#)

[Charity Commission](#)

[Charity Governance Code](#)

[National Council for Voluntary Organisations' Safeguarding Resource](#)