



## RSPB Safeguarding Policy Statement

The RSPB recognises the importance of involving vulnerable people in the work that we do. We believe that helping more people to feel deeply connected to nature is crucial for ensuring society and decision makers value nature more and do more to protect and restore it. We want to encourage their interest in and understanding of nature conservation issues, and help them to connect to and take action for nature through our work projects and programmes in the UK and Internationally in the following ways:

- Through visits to nature reserves
- Through volunteering
- By participating in RSPB activities.
- Through membership of RSPB, RSPB Wildlife Explorers and RSPB Phoenix, individually or as families

We want everyone to enjoy their involvement with the RSPB, and must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable people and anyone who encounters our organisation. They are entitled to protection from physical, sexual, and emotional harm or exploitation and have the right to a safe, positive and enjoyable environment when involved with the RSPB.

### **Safeguarding Principles**

This Safeguarding Policy is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of the vulnerable person is paramount.
- In line with our Diversity Policy, we aim to ensure that all workforce, members and the public are treated fairly. Unless it can be shown to be justified, this will be regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, or national origin), disability status, medical status, age, religion or belief, political opinion, social or economic status or ex-offender status.
- All vulnerable people will have a positive, enjoyable and safe experience with the RSPB.
- All allegations, suspicions of harm, abuse or exploitation and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- It is our intention that our workforce and any other person encountering the RSPB and its activities will have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of abuse. Where this is not in place we will take steps to make it available.

- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of vulnerable people prioritising their safety.
- Everyone will work in partnership to ensure the dignity of the victim/survivor.
- Our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity.
- We work with all partners to promote safeguarding in those organisations both in the UK and internationally.
- Our safeguarding policy has a specific element to reflect the uniqueness of operating in a global context and how our safeguarding approach is applied under the laws and cultures of other countries.

### **As part of our Safeguarding Policy RSPB:**

- Promotes and prioritises the safety and well-being of vulnerable people.
- Ensures that where concerns arise the views and wishes of the vulnerable person are prioritised and used to shape all decision making.
- Ensures everyone working with vulnerable people clearly understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, exploitation, neglect and other safeguarding concerns.
- Ensures appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensures that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevents the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals to roles involving working with vulnerable people.
- Ensures robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
- Has a Safeguarding Group chaired by the Designated Safeguarding Officer that meets bi-monthly. The purpose of the group is to provide an overview and strategic direction for RSPB policies and procedures to protect vulnerable people.
- Has a Safeguarding Adviser Group which meets quarterly. The purpose of the group is to provide an operational overview for the delivery of safeguarding within the organisation including to provide the workforce with training and advice on all matters connected with vulnerable people.
- Has a Global Safeguarding Sub-Group which meets quarterly. The purpose of the group is to provide an operational overview of our international operations/programmes, to understand the challenges involved and to build our international partners capacity to deliver effective safeguarding by providing guidance and training.
- Has a clear procedure for raising safeguarding concerns, issues and complaints.

## **The purpose of our Safeguarding Policy is:**

- To provide protection for the vulnerable people who encounter our organisation or activities.
- To provide workforce with guidance on how they should respond to concerns or allegations of abuse.

All RSPB workforce and representatives **must** act in accordance with this policy, without exception.

Safeguarding vulnerable people is everyone's responsibility as is acting when concerns arise.

RSPB Board of Trustees are accountable for safeguarding of vulnerable people and responsible for reviewing this policy annually in line with legislative and organisational developments.

RSPB Safeguarding Group are accountable for our Safeguarding Policy and its implementation.

All RSPB workforce and other representatives are obliged to report any safeguarding concerns following the required RSPB procedure. Failure to report a safeguarding concern could be a breach of RSPB Policy and could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

There is no obligation placed on any individual to report any incident that has happened to themselves.

The Safeguarding and Investigations Manager and Safeguarding Advisers can offer further support to workforce and other representatives on implementing this policy.

## **We seek to safeguard vulnerable people by:**

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them and placing them at the heart of our decision making.
- Adopting ways of working that promote safeguarding through appropriate procedures and Codes of Conduct.
- Recruiting workforce safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with everyone encountering our organisation.
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies who need to know, and involving carers, parents and vulnerable people appropriately.
- Providing effective leadership and management for workforce working with vulnerable people through supervision, support and training.

## **Monitoring our approach to safeguarding**

Our Safeguarding Policy is reviewed regularly by our Safeguarding Group. Our Safeguarding Policy may also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance in England & Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland

- As required by the Disclosure & Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland and Access NI or other appropriate regulatory bodies
- As a result of changes in policy or guidance issued for Charities by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, Scottish Charity Regulator or Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
- As a result of any other significant change or event or following internal review of procedures

## **Prevention of bullying, harassment and abuse**

RSPB will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or sexually abusive or exploitative acts against adults or children being perpetrated by our workforce or anyone associated with the delivery of our programmes. The workforce **must** report people or incidents that they believe cause concern directly via their line manager.

The Code of Conduct sets out standards of behaviour for all members of our workforce, including employees, volunteers and contractors.

RSPB managers have a duty to ensure that allegations are investigated in line with our safeguarding related policies including our **Codes of Conduct** and **Bullying and Harassment Policy** and that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken in line with our **Disciplinary (Conduct) Policy and Procedure**.

At the RSPB we believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence, exploitation, and harassment.

We recognise that there are unequal power dynamics across the organisation and that we face an inherent risk of some workforce members exploiting their position of power for personal gain.

We also recognise that there are unequal power dynamics with donor and beneficiary relationships and an inherent risk of some workforce members exploiting their position of power for personal gain.

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seek to protect vulnerable persons in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

## **We also take account of the following guidance in our Safeguarding Policy:**

**IASC** (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) six core principles - Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989** – Child Labour - “Every child has the right to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or that is likely to harm the child’s health, physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.”

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006.**

**United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) 1982** ‘Worst Form of Child Labour Convention’.

**Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (CAPSEAH)** - RSPB endorse, and are a signatory to, this global collaboration to work to prevent SEAH (Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment).

***Where our policy contravenes or is more stringent than local legislation, guidance will be provided by the RSPB Safeguarding Group.***

## **Safeguarding & Our Supporters**

RSPB fundraising is carried out in line with the latest guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Fundraising and the Fundraising Regulator in the Code of Fundraising Practice.

The way charitable institutions and fundraisers ask for support affects people's trust and confidence in fundraising.

This section sets out the behaviour we expect from all fundraisers. It includes treating people fairly and with respect, explaining your cause in a way which does not mislead people, and being sensitive to people who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising guidance is found here:

<https://ciof.org.uk/events-and-training/resources/treating-donors-fairly-2021>

The Fundraising Regulator, Code of Fundraising Practice is found here:

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code/all-fundraising>

We provide training for our face-to-face fundraising and Supporter Services workforce regarding vulnerable people or those in vulnerable circumstance.

**RSPB Safeguarding Group**

Last Reviewed: January 2025

Next Revision Due: January 2026