

Ark-T Safeguarding, Child Protection and Adults at Risk Policy

Reviewed and Updated: September 2025

Document Control and Review

- **Approval Status:** Approved
- **Approved by:** Ivan Wise
- **Date Approved:** September 2025
- **Next Review Date:** September 2026

Amendment Log:

Version	Date	Section Amended	Description
January 2022	Various	Staffing structure	Updates to reporting and procedures
January 2023	Various	Legal framework	Updates to legislation references
March 2024	Whole Doc	Full Review	Annual review, added second DSL, review cycle
April 2024	Whole Doc	Full Revision	Legal updates, Adults at Risk, Digital Safety, Low-Level Concerns
August 2025	Whole Doc	Full Revision	A Full revision of the entire policy.

1. Introduction and Statement

Ark-T is firmly committed to the belief that **all children, young people, and adults at risk** have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. We fully recognise our responsibility to

safeguard and promote their welfare across all areas of our work, including creative programmes, community spaces, online platforms, and outreach activities.

We encourage a culture of openness and listening, where disclosures are believed, respected, and acted upon swiftly. The views of children, young people, and adults at risk are sought in ways appropriate to their age, understanding, and circumstances.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure maximum protection from harm for all individuals engaging with Ark-T, whether in person or online.

For the purposes of this policy, harm includes but is not limited to:

- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect
- Exploitation (including grooming, modern slavery, county lines)
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Exposure to domestic abuse, substance misuse, radicalisation
- Discriminatory abuse (including racial, gender-based, disability-related abuse)

All staff, volunteers, trustees, and contractors will receive this policy and must sign a declaration confirming they have read, understood, and will adhere to it.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Care Act 2014 (*for safeguarding adults at risk*)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (updated 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 (*where applicable*)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board \(OSCP\) Guidelines](#)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

This policy applies to:

- All Ark-T staff, trustees, volunteers, contractors, sessional workers, freelancers, and anyone acting on behalf of Ark-T.

- All children (under 18), young people (up to 25 where applicable), and adults at risk.

3. Organisational Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside Ark-T's wider governance framework, including:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers
- Social Media and Digital Communications Policy
- Data Protection & GDPR Policy
- Photography & Media Consent Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Note: All policies are available on Ark-T's shared drive and upon request for partners, parents/carers, and participants.

4. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Safeguard **children, young people, and adults at risk** who engage with Ark-T's services, including participants, visitors, and the children of adults using our services.
- Provide clear guidance to all staff, volunteers, trustees, partners, and (to the extent that they interact with Ark-T participants) hirers and freelancers, on Ark-T's approach to safeguarding and protection from harm.

To keep people safe, Ark-T will:

- Create environments—physical and digital—where individuals feel **listened to, respected, and safe**.
- Appoint trained **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)** and ensure clear lines of accountability.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers, and trustees receive **appropriate safeguarding training**, refreshed in line with best practice.
- Implement clear, accessible procedures for identifying, reporting, and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Promote effective communication and foster strong partnerships with external safeguarding agencies.

- Embed a culture of vigilance, openness, and proactive safeguarding across all Ark-T activities.
- Take allegations against staff seriously and follow the relevant procedure
- Ensure effective and appropriate communication between all individuals in a position of trust
- Build strong partnerships with other agencies to promote effective and appropriate multi-agency working, information sharing and good practice.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility** at Ark-T.

All Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, and Trustees must:

- Understand the types and indicators of abuse for both children and adults at risk.
- Report **any concern**, suspicion, or disclosure immediately, following Ark-T's reporting procedures.
- Be familiar with and know how to contact Ark-T's **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**.
- Record concerns factually, securely, and in line with GDPR.
- Complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role:
 - **Generalist Safeguarding:** every 3 years
 - **Designated Lead Training:** every 2 years
- Never assume someone else is acting—if in doubt, report.
- Follow Ark-T's **Code of Conduct** and maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Be aware of how safeguarding applies in **creative settings, community spaces, and digital environments**.
 - ◆ **Reminder:** All concerns, including those about colleagues' behaviour (e.g. breaches of professional boundaries), must be reported.

For reporting contact details, refer to **Appendix C: Reporting Contact Sheet**.

6. Safer Recruitment

Ark-T is committed to safeguarding through robust **safer recruitment** practices. We aim to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people, or adults at risk.

Key Safer Recruitment Steps:

- All staff and volunteers must:

- Complete a detailed **application form**, including self-disclosure of any convictions.
- Provide **two references**, one of which must comment on suitability to work with children/vulnerable adults. References are verified by telephone.
- Undergo an enhanced **DBS check** before starting any unsupervised work.
- Provide evidence of identity (photo ID required).

Note:

In exceptional circumstances, where a DBS check is pending, supervised work may be permitted **only if constant supervision by a DBS-checked staff member is ensured**. No unsupervised access is allowed prior to DBS clearance.

Interview and Induction:

- All candidates will:
 - Be introduced to Ark-T's **Code of Conduct** and safeguarding expectations.
 - Have qualifications and identity verified.
 - Undergo induction, including safeguarding procedures.

Ongoing Training:

- All staff and volunteers:
 - Must complete safeguarding training relevant to their role.
 - Receive guidance on recognising concerns, good practice, and how to respond to disclosures.
 - Are issued clear advice on maintaining professional boundaries.

7. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is **reviewed annually** by the CEO, DSLs, and Trustees, or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.
- All staff, volunteers, and trustees must **sign to confirm** they have read and understood the policy.
- Ark-T completes an annual **safeguarding self-assessment** against OSCP standards.
- Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at all **Board meetings**.
- Visitors, parents/carers, and partners will have access to this policy upon request or during registration processes.
- Ark-T follows all procedures set by the [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(OSCP\)](#) and [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board \(OSAB\)](#).
- The **Trustee Safeguarding Lead (currently Ivan Wise)** provides a direct link between DSLs and the Board, ensuring accountability.
- Digital safeguarding practices are reviewed regularly in light of Ark-T's growing online engagement.

8. Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Ark-T recognises its duty to safeguard not only children and young people but also **adults at risk**, in line with the **Care Act 2014** and national best practice.

An **Adult at Risk** is defined as someone aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not these are being met),
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect,
- And, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Types of Abuse for Adults at Risk include:

- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse
- Financial abuse or material exploitation
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Modern slavery
- Organisational abuse
- Self-neglect

Ark-T's Commitment:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand how safeguarding applies to adults, particularly within creative programmes, wellbeing workshops, and community spaces.
- Promote autonomy and empowerment, respecting adults' rights to make choices while acting when necessary to prevent harm.
- Follow the **six principles of adult safeguarding**:
 1. **Empowerment**
 2. **Prevention**
 3. **Proportionality**
 4. **Protection**
 5. **Partnership**
 6. **Accountability**
- Report concerns using the same internal procedures outlined in this policy, contacting the [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board \(OSAB\)](#) where appropriate.
- Recognise that issues such as **mental health, isolation, or learning disabilities** may increase vulnerability in Ark-T's adult participants.

If in doubt, staff must seek guidance from a DSL or escalate directly to safeguarding services.

9. Digital and Online Safety

Ark-T recognises that safeguarding extends to the **digital environment**, including online programmes, social media, email communication, and digital content sharing.

While digital platforms offer opportunities for creativity and connection, they also present risks such as:

- Online grooming and exploitation
- Cyberbullying and harassment
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Privacy breaches and data misuse
- Radicalisation and extremist content

Ark-T's Digital Safeguarding Commitments:

- Apply the same safeguarding principles **online** as in physical settings.
- Ensure staff and volunteers engaging in digital delivery (e.g. **MySpace Online**, virtual workshops) are trained in **online safety**.
- Use Ark-T-approved platforms with appropriate privacy settings for communication and digital sessions.
- Never engage in **one-to-one private messaging** with children, young people, or adults at risk via personal accounts or devices.
- Gain **parental/carer consent** for participation in online activities involving minors.
- Monitor and moderate interactive platforms where possible to prevent harmful interactions.
- Follow the UKCIS Guidance: Safeguarding and Remote Education and relevant OSCP digital safeguarding advice.
- Ensure data protection standards (GDPR) are upheld in all digital communications.
- Report any online safeguarding concerns immediately, following the procedures set out in this policy.

Remember: Screenshots, messages, or digital evidence should be preserved when reporting online concerns.

10. Reporting Low-Level Concerns

Ark-T is committed to creating a culture where all concerns—no matter how minor they may seem—are recognised, reported/recorded, and addressed.

A **low-level concern** is:

"Any behaviour by a staff member, volunteer, trustee, or contractor that does not meet the threshold for serious safeguarding action but may be inconsistent with Ark-T's Code of Conduct or professional expectations."

Examples include:

- Overly familiar language or behaviour
- Breaching professional boundaries (e.g. unnecessary physical contact)
- Inappropriate comments, jokes, or social media interactions
- Favouritism towards a particular participant
- Being alone with a child or adult at risk without proper justification

Why Reporting Low-Level Concerns Matters:

- Helps identify patterns of behaviour early.
- Protects both participants and staff by reinforcing clear boundaries.
- Demonstrates Ark-T's commitment to safeguarding best practice.

Process:

- All low-level concerns should be reported to a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- Concerns will be logged confidentially and addressed proportionately.
- Repeated low-level concerns may trigger formal action.

Note: Reporting a low-level concern is not punitive—it's part of maintaining a safe, transparent environment.

Staff are encouraged to speak up without fear, knowing that Ark-T values vigilance and proactive safeguarding.

Appendix A

Child and Adult Protection & Safeguarding Procedures

1. Introduction

All Ark-T staff, volunteers, and trustees have a legal and moral duty to act if they believe:

- A **child, young person, or adult at risk** has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- A person's wellbeing or development is impaired due to abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other safeguarding concerns.

This applies regardless of whether the concern arises during Ark-T activities, online interactions, or externally.

Remember: You are not responsible for investigating—only for reporting.

2. What To Do If You Are Concerned

If you witness, suspect, or receive a disclosure of abuse:

1. Report Immediately

Contact a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** without delay, following Ark-T's escalation procedure (see Appendix C).

2. Record

- Log the concern using **MyConcern** safeguarding software.
- Record facts only—avoid opinions or assumptions.
- Include date, time, names, and exact words used where possible.

3. Do Not:

- Promise confidentiality—explain that you must share concerns to keep people safe.
- Ask leading questions.
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than a DSL or appropriate authority.

If no DSL is available, escalate directly to:

- [MASH \(Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub\)](#) – for immediate risk
- [LCSS \(Locality and Community Support Service\)](#) – for early help concerns
- Or dial **999** if someone is in immediate danger.

3. Dealing with Disclosures — The 5 Rs

- **Receive** — Listen calmly and attentively.
- **Reassure** — Acknowledge they've done the right thing.
- **React** — Clarify if needed, but don't probe.
- **Record** — Write down exactly what was said.
- **Report** — Pass it on to a DSL immediately.

4. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

If the concern involves Ark-T personnel:

- Report to a DSL, who will contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within 24 hours.
- If the allegation involves a DSL, report directly to the **Chair of Trustees or Board Safeguarding Lead**.

5. Confidentiality

- Information is shared strictly on a **need-to-know basis**.
- All records are stored securely in compliance with GDPR.

Appendix B

Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

Ark-T recognises that abuse can affect **anyone**, regardless of age, gender, background, or setting. The following definitions apply to both **children** and **adults at risk**, where relevant.

1. Categories of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Deliberate physical harm such as hitting, shaking, burning, or misuse of medication.

Indicators:

- Unexplained injuries, bruises, burns
- Frequent "accidents"
- Fearfulness around certain individuals

Emotional (or Psychological) Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe impact on emotional wellbeing.

Indicators:

- Low self-esteem, withdrawal
- Excessive fear of making mistakes
- Sudden behavioural changes

Sexual Abuse

Involvement in sexual activity without consent, including non-contact abuse (e.g. online exploitation).

Indicators:

- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge
- Physical discomfort or injuries
- Fear of specific people or places

Neglect

Failure to meet basic needs, including food, shelter, medical care, or emotional support.

Indicators:

- Poor hygiene, malnutrition
- Consistently inappropriate clothing
- Untreated medical issues

2. Additional Forms of Abuse

Financial or Material Abuse (*Adults at Risk*)

The misuse, theft, or exploitation of a person's money, property, or assets. This can include fraud, coercion to sign financial documents, or denying access to funds.

Indicators:

- Unexplained loss of money or possessions
- Sudden changes in financial circumstances
- Unpaid bills despite adequate income
- Anxiety around discussing finances

Domestic Abuse

A pattern of abusive behaviour within intimate or family relationships, including physical, emotional, sexual, financial abuse, and **coercive control** (isolating, intimidating, or restricting freedom).

Indicators:

- Withdrawal, anxiety, or fearfulness
- Unexplained injuries
- Partner or family member speaking on behalf of the individual or controlling their movements
- Low self-esteem or signs of isolation

Note: Children witnessing domestic abuse are also considered victims in their own right.

Modern Slavery

Encompasses human trafficking, forced labour, servitude, and exploitation. Victims may be controlled through threats, violence, or debt.

Indicators:

- Lack of personal identification or control over finances
- Appearing malnourished, withdrawn, or fearful
- Being accompanied by someone who speaks for them
- Long working hours in poor conditions

Discriminatory Abuse

Harassment, slurs, or unequal treatment based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, or belief.

Indicators:

- Exclusion from services or activities
- Derogatory language or attitudes
- Failure to respect cultural or personal values
- Signs of depression or withdrawal linked to marginalisation

Organisational (or Institutional) Abuse

Poor or neglectful care practices within settings like care homes, community services, or group environments. This can be due to policies, culture, or individual actions.

Indicators:

- Lack of dignity or privacy
- Unsafe or unhygienic environments
- Inflexible routines prioritising staff over individuals' needs
- Misuse of medication or restraint

Self-Neglect

When a person fails to care for their personal health, hygiene, or living conditions, placing themselves at risk.

Indicators:

- Poor personal hygiene
- Hoarding or unsafe living environments
- Malnutrition or dehydration
- Refusal of necessary care or support services

Note: Self-neglect is a safeguarding concern when it leads to significant harm or risk, but responses must balance protection with respect for personal choice.

County Lines Exploitation

Criminal gangs exploit children, young people, and vulnerable adults to transport drugs, money, or weapons across regions ("county lines"). Victims may be coerced through violence, debt, or grooming.

Indicators:

- Frequent missing episodes
- Unexplained money, gifts, or phones
- Sudden changes in behaviour or friendships
- Travelling alone to distant areas

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and considered a serious safeguarding issue.

Indicators:

- Talking about a "special ceremony" or trip abroad
- Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing after a trip
- Reluctance to undergo medical examinations
- Fear, anxiety, or withdrawal, particularly after school holidays

Mandatory Reporting Duty:

Teachers and regulated professionals must report known cases of FGM in under-18s directly to the police.

Radicalisation & Extremism (Prevent Duty)

Radicalisation refers to the process where individuals are drawn into extremist ideologies or terrorism. Under the **Prevent Duty**, Ark-T must act to safeguard individuals at risk.

Indicators:

- Expressing extremist views or "us vs them" thinking
- Accessing extremist material online
- Isolation from peers or family
- Sudden changes in behaviour or appearance

Concerns should be reported as safeguarding issues. MASH or Prevent leads may escalate to **Channel**, a voluntary support programme for individuals at risk of radicalisation.

-
- **County Lines Exploitation**
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
- **Radicalisation & Extremism (Prevent Duty)**

3. Bullying & Cyberbullying

Persistent intimidating or harmful behaviour, including via digital platforms.

Indicators:

- Anxiety, reluctance to attend sessions
- Unexplained injuries or damaged belongings
- Withdrawal or sudden mood changes

4. Self-Harm

Deliberate injury to oneself, often as a coping mechanism.

Indicators:

- Unexplained cuts, burns
- Wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Signs of depression or isolation

Important:

These signs **do not confirm** abuse but should prompt concern and reporting if observed.

Appendix C

Reporting Contact Sheet

All safeguarding concerns—whether relating to a **child, young person, or adult at risk**—must follow Ark-T's structured reporting process.

Order of Escalation

1. Log the concern immediately using:
MyConcern Safeguarding Software
2. Notify a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
 - **Clare Keep** – Art Nest Manager & DSL
📞 07388 541017
 - **Vanessa Lamb** - Programmes Manager
📞 07388 092590
 - **Jo Race** – DSL
📞 07825039125 or 07849773965

3. If DSLs are unavailable, escalate to:

Trustee Board Safeguarding Lead

 - **Ivan Wise** – Chair of Trustees
📞 [07824 644108] [*Ivan to confirm that this is the number he wants to be contacted on.*]

4. If no internal contacts are reachable, or if immediate external intervention is needed:
 - **MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub):**
📞 0345 050 7666
 - **Emergency Duty Team (out of hours):**
📞 0800 833 408
 - **LCSS (Early Help):**
 - **0345 2412705**
 - **Police (immediate danger):**
📞 999

- **Police (non-emergency):**
 101

Key Reminders:

- All concerns must be logged, no matter how minor they seem.
- Use MyConcern for secure documentation.
- In cases involving Ark-T staff or volunteers, contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** at  01865 810603 within 24 hours.

Policy Oversight

This Safeguarding Policy is adopted on behalf of Ark-T's Trustees by:

Name: Ivan Wise

Position: Chair of Trustees

Signature: *Approved electronically*

Date: August 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026