

Collectively Diverse CIC

Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy statement

Collectively Diverse CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and wellbeing of everyone who engages with our work, particularly children, young people and adults at risk.

We believe that everyone has the right to participate in activities and services where they feel safe, respected, heard and able to raise concerns. We recognise our responsibility to promote safe practice and to take appropriate action where there are concerns about harm, abuse, exploitation or neglect.

Our approach to safeguarding is inclusive and person-centred. We recognise that people's communication styles, neurodivergence, disability, mental wellbeing, previous experiences and other circumstances may affect how they communicate concerns or seek help. We will seek to remove unnecessary barriers to being heard and will take concerns seriously regardless of how they are communicated.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all staff, volunteers, freelancers, associates and anyone working on behalf of Collectively Diverse CIC;
- all activities and services delivered by Collectively Diverse CIC, whether in person or online;
- training, workshops, educational activities, tutoring and community programmes;
- children and young people under the age of 18;
- adults at risk;
- activities delivered independently or in partnership with schools, colleges, community organisations, sports organisations, workplaces and other partners.

Where Collectively Diverse CIC works within another organisation or setting, we will also follow the relevant safeguarding procedures of that organisation.

3. Our safeguarding principles

Collectively Diverse CIC is committed to:

- acting in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk;

- creating environments where people feel safe, respected, included and heard;
- taking concerns, disclosures and allegations seriously;
- responding promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- recognising that safeguarding risks can occur both in person and online;
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries;
- recognising and responding to barriers that may make it more difficult for someone to communicate a concern;
- sharing information appropriately where this is necessary to protect someone from harm;
- working with families, partner organisations, safeguarding professionals and statutory services where appropriate;
- promoting inclusive and anti-discriminatory safeguarding practice.

4. Definitions and forms of harm

For the purposes of this policy:

Child or young person: anyone under the age of 18.

Adult at risk: an adult who has care and support needs and who, because of those needs, may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or the risk of harm.

Safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- physical abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- financial or material abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- exploitation;
- discriminatory abuse;
- bullying and harassment;
- online abuse or exploitation;
- other actions or failures to act which cause, or create a risk of, harm.

Safeguarding concerns may arise in families, communities, organisations, relationships or online environments and may involve people known or unknown to the individual.

5. Safeguarding responsibilities

The **Safeguarding Lead for Collectively Diverse CIC is Elizabeth (Liz) Day.**

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- overseeing safeguarding arrangements within Collectively Diverse CIC;
- receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns;
- ensuring appropriate records are maintained;
- seeking advice and making referrals to relevant agencies where required;
- promoting appropriate safeguarding awareness and practice;
- reviewing this policy and related procedures.

Everyone working or volunteering on behalf of Collectively Diverse CIC has a responsibility to:

- understand and follow this policy;
- remain alert to safeguarding concerns;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- report concerns promptly;
- avoid investigating concerns themselves;
- cooperate with safeguarding processes and statutory agencies where required.

6. Working within schools, colleges and partner organisations

Where Collectively Diverse CIC delivers activities within a school, college or another organisation, we will familiarise ourselves with the setting's relevant safeguarding arrangements.

Where a safeguarding concern arises within a school or college, it will normally be reported promptly to the setting's Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriate safeguarding representative, in accordance with the setting's procedures.

Collectively Diverse CIC representatives will also inform the Collectively Diverse CIC Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

We recognise that partner organisations may have their own statutory or organisational safeguarding responsibilities. Working within another organisation does not remove our responsibility to act where we become aware of a safeguarding concern.

7. Safer recruitment, checks and training

Collectively Diverse CIC will take a proportionate and role-appropriate approach to safer recruitment.

Where a role involves regulated activity or other work for which a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is appropriate, the relevant level of check will be obtained in accordance with current eligibility requirements.

Safeguarding expectations will form part of induction where relevant, and anyone working or volunteering with children, young people or adults at risk will receive safeguarding information or training appropriate to their role.

Safeguarding knowledge and arrangements will be reviewed and updated where necessary.

8. Professional boundaries and conduct

Anyone representing Collectively Diverse CIC is expected to:

- treat people with dignity, respect and fairness;
- prioritise the safety and welfare of participants;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- communicate appropriately and respectfully;
- avoid unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact;
- never engage in or tolerate abuse, bullying, harassment, exploitation or discrimination;
- avoid placing themselves or participants in unnecessarily vulnerable situations;
- use photographs, video and recordings only where appropriate permission and safeguards are in place;
- follow appropriate arrangements for communicating with children and young people.

No representative of Collectively Diverse CIC should use their position to establish inappropriate personal, financial, sexual or other exploitative relationships with participants.

9. Online and digital safeguarding

Safeguarding responsibilities apply to online and digital activities as well as activities delivered in person.

Where Collectively Diverse CIC delivers activities online, reasonable steps will be taken to:

- use appropriate platforms and privacy settings;
- establish suitable expectations for participation and communication;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- consider how children or adults at risk access online activities;

- avoid unnecessary collection or sharing of personal information;
- obtain appropriate permission before recording sessions or using identifiable images or video;
- respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns arising during online activity.

Personal contact details and private communication channels should not be used to communicate with children or young people unless this is necessary, appropriate and subject to suitable safeguards.

10. Responding to a disclosure or concern

If someone discloses abuse, harm or a safeguarding concern, the person receiving the disclosure should:

- listen carefully and remain calm;
- take the person seriously;
- avoid expressing disbelief or judgement;
- avoid asking unnecessary or leading questions;
- not promise complete confidentiality;
- explain, where appropriate, that information may need to be shared to help keep someone safe;
- record relevant information accurately as soon as possible;
- report the concern promptly through the appropriate safeguarding route.

The person receiving the concern should not attempt to investigate the matter themselves.

Where someone appears to be in immediate danger or there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services should be contacted on **999**.

Where appropriate, advice or referrals may also be sought from local authority children's or adult safeguarding services, the police or other relevant statutory agencies.

11. Recording safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns and disclosures will be recorded accurately and as soon as reasonably possible.

Records should include relevant factual information, actions taken, decisions made and any referrals or advice received.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely, with access limited to those who need the information for legitimate safeguarding purposes.

Records relating to safeguarding will be managed in accordance with relevant data protection requirements and appropriate retention arrangements.

12. Confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and shared only with people who need the information for legitimate safeguarding purposes.

Information may be shared without consent where this is necessary and proportionate to protect a child, young person or adult at risk, comply with a legal obligation or support an appropriate safeguarding response.

Data protection legislation does not prevent appropriate information sharing for safeguarding purposes.

Where reasonably possible and safe to do so, individuals will be informed about how their information is being used and shared.

13. Concerns about someone representing Collectively Diverse CIC

Any safeguarding concern or allegation involving a member of staff, volunteer, freelancer, associate or other person representing Collectively Diverse CIC must be taken seriously and reported promptly to the Safeguarding Lead.

Where a safeguarding concern or allegation relates directly to the Safeguarding Lead, Elizabeth (Liz) Day, it should be raised with another Director of Collectively Diverse CIC.

Where appropriate, concerns or allegations will be referred to the relevant statutory safeguarding service, police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other appropriate agency.

No internal process should delay a referral to statutory services where someone may be at immediate risk or where an external referral is otherwise required.

14. Accessibility and raising concerns

We recognise that people may find it difficult to disclose abuse or raise safeguarding concerns for many reasons.

Neurodivergence, disability, communication differences, literacy, language, anxiety, trauma, previous experiences of services or fear of not being believed may affect how someone communicates.

We will seek to:

- listen without making assumptions;
- provide accessible ways of communicating wherever reasonably possible;
- allow additional processing or communication time where appropriate;
- take account of communication and support needs;
- avoid requiring unnecessary disclosure or explanation;
- ensure that differences in communication are not mistaken for a lack of credibility or concern.

A person does not need to use safeguarding terminology or make a formal allegation for a concern to be taken seriously.

15. Relationship with other policies

This policy should be read alongside relevant Collectively Diverse CIC policies and procedures, including:

- Data Protection and GDPR Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Volunteer Policy.

16. Relevant legislation and guidance

Collectively Diverse CIC will have regard, where relevant to its activities, to current safeguarding legislation and guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Care Act 2014;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, when working within or alongside schools and colleges;
- current Department for Education safeguarding guidance for out-of-school settings;
- relevant UK data protection legislation and statutory information-sharing guidance.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, current requirements will take precedence over references contained within this policy.

17. Monitoring and review

Safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed following significant incidents or concerns and where there are material changes to Collectively Diverse CIC's activities.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, organisational practice or the nature of our work.

Date adopted: 1 September 2026

Next review due: 1 September 2027

Approved by: Elizabeth Day, Founder, Collectively Diverse CIC