

JOIN the DOTS

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Date for review: February 2026

CONTENTS

Section 1: Details of the Organisation

Section 2: Introduction to Policy

Positions of Trust

Our Commitment

Section 3: Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

Safer recruitment

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Management

Safeguarding Training

Practice Guidelines

Management of workers - Code of conduct

Section 4: Partnership Working

Section 5: Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

- Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

- Allegations of sexual abuse

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

Section 6: Pastoral Care

Section 7: Adoption of the Policy

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Safeguarding Statement

Appendix 2 Terms and Definitions of Abuse

Appendix 3 Code of Conduct

Appendix 4 Incident Report Form

Appendix 5 Reporting Flow Chart

Appendix 6 Whistleblowing Policy (draft done)

Appendix 7 GDPR/Privacy Policy

Appendix 8 Health & Safety Policy

Appendix 9 Volunteer Policy

Appendix 10 Grievance/disciplinary policy (to come/edit)

- Equal opportunities policy – ensuring safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory.

Join the Dots. Safeguarding policy

Join the Dots is a working name of registered charity number 1202665, operating as a CIO

Date of Issue: February 2025 Date of next review: February 2026. Page.2

- Confidentiality (or limited confidentiality policy) – ensuring that clients are aware of the organisation’s duty to disclose.

Section 1: Details of the organisation

Name of Organisation:	Join the Dots
Email address:	admin@jointhedots.solutions
CEO & Safeguarding Lead:	Ruth Stephens
Email:	ruth@jointhedots.solutions
Telephone:	07801599523
Trustee Safeguarding Officer / Deputy Safeguarding Lead:	Laura Ryder
Email:	safeguarding@jointhedots.solutions
Membership of Organisations:	
Thirtyone:eight	https://thirtyoneeight.org/
Tel:	03030031111
	Our membership number 17365
Mid Sussex Voluntary Action	
	www.msva.org.uk / 01444 258102
Charity Number:	1202665
Insurance Company:	Hiscox Insurance

Join the Dots exists to equip and support churches, charities and youth organisations who work with individuals or families who have experienced trauma or disadvantage. It aims to make a positive contribution to the wellbeing and strength of a community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. We do this by providing a range of training and consultancy services.

Section 2: Introduction

Good governance helps an organisation prevent abuse and means it can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Central to this, is the Governance Board or Board of Trustees.

The trustee board is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for an organisation or charity and have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organisation or “the way we do things around here”. Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

“The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object” (ICSA The Governance Institute, 2017)

Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022 it is illegal for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims, to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but to also build an open culture where:

- Those who lead do so by example
- We are committed to the safeguarding of all those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles
- There are accountability structures
- There are codes of conduct
- The values of the organisation are embedded in its day to day actions and behaviours of its people
- There is open communication

Our commitment

As a Leadership (the Board of Trustees and CEO) we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We

also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

Our safeguarding statement can be found in Appendix 1.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight (thirtyoneeight.org/ten-standards)

Appendices are available to view at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J28W--SdUzn_1eW6txNJWyPPccGT80sm?usp=share_link

Section 3 - Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those organisations whom we consult with, or encounter during the course of our work, we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

- 1. State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy and in Appendix 2 ('Terms and Definitions of Abuse'), and Appendix 6 ('Reporting Flow Chart').

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Job descriptions for all roles involving contact with children and / or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities
- Those applying have completed an application form or provided a CV if it is a freelance role
- Those shortlisted have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification
- A self-declaration form and disclosure and barring check (DBS) are completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- A DBS check is carried out for roles which are in direct contact with children/vulnerable adults. Otherwise a copy of a portable DBS or previous DBS which has been carried out by another organisation will be deemed sufficient.
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and references)
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant is required to complete a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and if they work directly with vulnerable persons, will undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis. This will include training at least every three years for all staff who work with vulnerable persons, and every two years for the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers/volunteers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

We have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached or in the appendices.

Join The Dots may come into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the following activities:

- Vulnerable adults with a background of trauma may attend our training.
- Vulnerable adults or children may visit our stand at exhibitions.
- During all of our work, including trainings, consultations, we will be working alongside others who support children and vulnerable adults.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers (including volunteers) have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their job role and out, according to the volunteer policy. They will also receive further training as necessary. This is included in Appendix 3 Code of Conduct, and Appendix 10 Volunteer Policy.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Management

The organisation commits resources to providing DBS checks on staff (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and / or vulnerable adults. This is recorded in a log by the Safeguarding Lead.

In order to avoid DBS gaps, the organisation will maintain and review a list of roles within the organisation which involve contact with children / vulnerable adults by the Safeguarding Lead/DSL annually.

In addition to checks on recruitment for roles involving contact with children / vulnerable adults, for established staff, the following processes are in place: established staff and roles are regularly reviewed through a 3 year rolling programme of re-checking DBS's in place for holders of all identified posts; existing staff (paid or unpaid) who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with children / vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.

Section 4:

Partnership working

We work with a diversity of organisations and settings. This means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not.

We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding when family hubs are established.

It is also our expectation that any partner organisation will have their own policy that meets sufficient safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 5

Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

Documenting a concern

- The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern as soon as possible in the following way:
- Complete the safeguarding reporting form [here](#)
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

- Send it to safeguarding@jointhedots.solutions
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Name: (hereafter the "Safeguarding Lead") Ruth Stephens

Tel: 07801 599 523

Email: ruth@jointhedots.solutions

Reporting a concern

- If the suspicions implicate both the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Trustee: Laura Ryder

Email: safeguarding@jointhedots.solutions

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy should contact the appropriate agency local to the charity, and to where the incident was reported, or they may first ring the Thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives. The incident may need to be reported in both the area where the incident took place.
- If you are unsure what course of action to take you can call Thirtyone:eight, the advisory organisation with whom we hold membership.

Tel: 03030031111

Join the Dots' membership number is 17365

Alternatively you could contact the local authority in which the person at risk resides or local authority of the person about whom the allegations are against..

Please follow local guidelines to access the correct contact details.

Or contact the local police Protection Team

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
- The trustee responsible for safeguarding may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
- Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services and/or the Police.

- The Leadership will support the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, although the Leadership hope that members of the organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct (such as the NSPCC or Thirtyone:eight). We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (as above, this may need reporting in both the area where the incident took place *and* in the area of the child's residence: see above) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e., counseling or other pastoral support.
- Contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers, or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide, not Join the Dots.

Section 6

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the organisation.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending an event run by the organisation (whether through Join the Dots, or a partnering organisation) is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually on:

Signed by:



Position: CEO and founder

Signed by: *Laura Ryder*

Position: Trustee

Date: 26.03.25

Version	Date	Responsible	Reasons for changes
1.0	2024.10	Ruth Stephens	New document
2:0	2025.03	Ruth Stephens	Updating