



## WIN Safeguarding Policy

WIN recognises safeguarding as a key governance priority for the charity and is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its staff, its membership organisations, and those connected to the activities of the charity.

We do not work with children (under 18), but disclosures of information about the possible abuse of children or vulnerable adults may be received via WIN's email address ([info@whistleblowingnetwork.org](mailto:info@whistleblowingnetwork.org)) or directly to a member of WIN staff.

### 1. Protecting our staff

If any member of staff suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse at WIN or as a result of working at WIN, they should immediately report it to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is not available, it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the Executive Director is involved in or connected to the abuse, it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees will first make a note of the concern reported to them, discuss the matter with the Executive Director and/or other members of the Board, if appropriate, and/decide whether the report should be escalated to the police (for serious or possible criminal offences) or to the Social Services. A full record of incidents and allegations will be stored securely in a safe place. The information received will be treated as confidential and shared with others only on a need to know basis.

Protecting our staff also means ensuring that our staff read and understand WIN's policies and procedures and know about their rights and responsibilities as employees of WIN, as per our Constitution. These include WIN's Equality and Diversity Policy.

### 2. Protecting our Members and Associates

If a WIN membership organisation discloses details of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse at WIN or as a result of working with WIN, they should immediately report it to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is not available it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the Executive Director is involved or connected to the abuse, it should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees will first make a note of the concern reported to them, discuss the matter with Executive Director, if appropriate, and decide whether the report should be escalated to the police (for serious or possible criminal offences) or to the Social Services. A full record of incidents and allegations will be stored securely in a safe place. The information received will be treated as confidential and shared with others only on a need to know basis.

WIN's Conflict of Interest Policy for Trustees and its Codes of Conduct for Trustees, Members, and Associates also set the standards of expected conduct and behaviour and are an additional safeguard to the safety and well-being of WIN staff and all those who participate in the WIN network.

### 3. Protecting those who contact WIN

WIN staff are not expected to diagnose health conditions, and are not trained to deal with complex personal issues. However, they will sometimes deal with distressed individuals via email. Those who contact WIN may, occasionally, present or disclose concerns about a range of behaviours that could suggest potential risks. Staff are given guidance as to how to communicate with individuals who contact us. This includes walking through previous emails and discussing the use of template emails. Alongside a key emphasis on looking after oneself, and treating others with respect and sensitivity, staff are encouraged and requested to pass on any communication that they are not comfortable with a senior member of the team or the Executive Director.

WIN does not provide individual legal support services but staff must treat any personal information given to the organisation as confidential. This means it will only be shared outside the organisation with the approval of the Executive Director and the express consent of the individual, by court order, or because of an extreme circumstance relating to:

- a) risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult
- b) intention to commit suicide or seriously self-harm
- c) a future criminal offence.

Being told that such an event has happened in the past does not permit you or us to breach confidentiality, only if there is a future risk. WIN staff will direct any concerns about potential risks to the Executive Director immediately and the Executive Director may consult the Board of Trustees if they consider the situation to be an emergency.

See the [Solicitors Regulatory Authority Code](#) for more information on confidentiality.

The principles of WIN's response to individuals who are distressed and/or disclose any of the above are to:

- recognise unusual behaviours and potential risks
- manage and contain them proportionately to the situation
- provide information about other services if appropriate

As WIN works internationally, the information available on services that can provide direct support is necessarily limited by location. Where possible, WIN will direct individuals to services and resources relevant to their global location and context.

The Executive Director is responsible for this policy and will review it at least once every three years.