



# Sense Adventures

## Safeguarding & Risk Assessment Policy

This document is the Safeguarding Policy for SENSE ADVENTURES where sighted volunteers act as guides for Blind and Visually Impaired Adults (e.g. 18 years and over). SENSE ADVENTURES activities are focused on walking days out and long weekends in the Malvern area but can extend to walking holidays in other parts of the country.

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, particularly blind and visually impaired individuals, during SENSE ADVENTURES activities that involve the provision of sighted guides. It ensures that all trustees, staff, and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and act in a way that promotes safety, dignity, and respect. This policy outlines guidelines and procedures to prevent and respond to any potential safeguarding concerns.

Note: Public Liability Insurance MUST be in place for all activities.

### 2. Sense Adventures Commitment

SENSE ADVENTURES is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all participants, regardless of their abilities. We recognise the unique needs and vulnerabilities of blind and visually impaired individuals and strive to ensure their safety and enjoyment during our activities. To this end we will:

- Promote the safety, dignity, and rights of blind and visually impaired individuals at all times.
- Create an environment where individuals feel safe, respected, and listened to.
- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously, acting promptly and appropriately.
- Provide appropriate safeguarding training, guidance, and supervision to all relevant personnel.
- Ensure safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of our work, from planning to delivery.

### 3. Safeguarding Responsibilities

- Trustees: Ensure policy compliance, allocate resources, and oversee safeguarding governance.
- Volunteers: Remain vigilant, follow safeguarding procedures, and report concerns immediately.
- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):
- Name: Stephen Hayward
- Contact:

tel 07891334290; email steve-h@hotmail.co.uk

- Role: Receive and act on safeguarding concerns, liaise with statutory agencies, maintain safeguarding records, and ensure training is up to date.

#### 4. Potential Risks and Harms

It is important for all trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries to be aware of the wide range of risks and harms that exist, such as the following:

- sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
- a charity's culture, which may allow poor behaviour and poor accountability
- people abusing a position of trust they hold within a charity
- bullying or harassment
- health and safety
- discrimination on any of the grounds in the Equality Act 2010
- data breaches, including those under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- domestic abuse
- physical or emotional abuse

#### 5. Reporting Concerns

When it comes to recognising potential risks and harms volunteers should trust their instincts and report any concerns, even if they are unsure.

If you suspect abuse or a safeguarding risk:

1. **Ensure immediate safety** – if urgent, call emergency services (999).
2. **Report to the designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** as soon as possible. At the start of each walk all participants will be made aware of how to contact the DSO if there is a safeguarding concern.
3. **Record details** factually, including dates, times, observations, and exact words used by the individual (if disclosed).
4. Do not investigate yourself.
5. The DSO will decide on the next steps, which may include contacting the local authority safeguarding team or the police.

#### 6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis, in line with UK GDPR and safeguarding requirements.
- Safeguarding concerns override confidentiality where necessary to protect an individual from harm.

## 7. Recruitment and Training

All sighted guides undergo thorough recruitment procedures, to ensure their suitability for the role. They receive training in guiding techniques, communication, and understanding the needs of blind and visually impaired individuals. Guides are also educated on identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns and report immediately to a trustee or other dedicated person. Sense Adventures has a clear code of conduct, which outlines the standards of behaviour expected of both volunteers and our visually impaired guests to help ensure that Sense Adventures is effective, open and accountable. One or more of the trustees is always present at each event or activity and is made known to all volunteers.

All Guides receive a "Vision Guide and training video " to reinforce and remind them of the knowledge gained (see <https://www.senseadventures.co.uk/be-a-guide>).

## 8. Participant Consent and Assessment

Before participating in SENSE ADVENTURES activities, blind and visually impaired individuals, along with their guides, will be required to provide evidenced consent for their involvement. Additionally, an assessment of the individual's physical capabilities and needs will be conducted to ensure their safety and to tailor the experience accordingly.

## 9. Communication and Support

Clear communication is essential. Guides are instructed to maintain open lines of communication with blind and visually impaired participants, ensuring they feel comfortable expressing any needs and concerns. Guides will be trained to offer appropriate support, assistance, and guidance throughout the activity.

## 10. Activity Planning and Risk Assessment

SENSE ADVENTURES activities will be planned and assessed with safety in mind. Consideration will be given to factors such as terrain, weather conditions, and the physical demands of the activity. Activities will be Graded (e.g. easy, moderate, difficult). This information will be shared with participants prior to attending and ALL participants need to confirm that they are able to meet the minimum requirements of each activity. During an activity, flexibility will be applied to accommodate the abilities of blind and visually impaired participants as well as guides.

All walks and activities are assessed with each individual participant's fitness and suitability taken into account. Transport is made available where an individual wishes to have the option of leaving a walk early.

### Covid 19

While there is no longer a legal requirement to have a separate and specific COVID-19 risk assessment it is important to be aware that the virus is still circulating and take appropriate action if guides or visually impaired persons become unwell and exhibit Covid symptoms. This can include isolating sick people from the main group, requesting people to wear face masks and ensuring that activities take place in well-ventilated areas. Where our activities are out of doors the risk of transmission is minimal.

## 11. Emergency Policy

SENSE ADVENTURES will minimise the risk of emergency with appropriate policies [this document]. SENSE ADVENTURES will strive to have a qualified first aider for ALL Grades of walks. An appropriately stocked first aid kit will be taken on each activity.

In the event of an emergency, guides are responsible for the immediate safety and well-being of blind and visually impaired participants. Clear procedures will be in place for handling emergencies, including medical incidents, adverse weather conditions, and unexpected incidents.

## 12. Reporting and Response

Any safeguarding concerns, whether related to blind and visually impaired participants or other members, will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. Guides should report any concerns to the designated safeguarding officer.

## 13. Confidentiality

All personal information and safeguarding matters will be handled confidentially and only shared with relevant parties on a need-to-know basis.

## 14. Review and Improvement

This safeguarding policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with best practices. This will happen every TWO years or in advance of any major changes in Sense Adventures activities.

By adhering to this safeguarding policy, SENSE ADVENTURES aims to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants, especially blind and visually impaired individuals, who trust us to guide them through our shared outdoor activities.

## 15. Guiding Requirements

Every blind and visually impaired individual MUST have a sighted guide.

Ideally, every walk will have an additional sighted “tail-end” who will be located at the back of the group. They would NOT be guiding, but will be vigilant to any matters and concerns that might arise, and take appropriate action.

Every walk will have a designated “route leader”. They will ensure that the route has been appropriately graded and that a Risk Assessment of the walk has been made BEFORE starting, and make any Risk Assessment decisions during the walk.

First aiders: Any walk Graded Medium or Hard MUST have a qualified first aider.

## 16. Safeguarding Risk Register

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Mitigations</b>
Health and safety	Risks associated with walking outdoors in hilly terrain are well understood	See sections on Activity Planning and Emergency Policy
Bullying or harassment	The potential risks of working with small groups is recognised	A strong code of conduct and policy on recruitment and training help to mitigate this

		risk.
Data breaches	Risks associated with protecting clients and volunteers personal data are well understood	Attention is paid to Purpose limitation, Data minimization: Accuracy, Storage limitation, and Data Integrity and confidentiality as per GPDR
Not all volunteers have a current DBS check	It is considered sufficient for the trustees to have up-to-date DBS checks.	One-on-one situations between volunteers and clients are avoided through planning. Volunteers are encouraged to get DBS checks.

## 17. Date of Policy Approval:

Version	Approved by	Approved On	Date of Next Review
0.1 Initial Draft	Luke & Dee	Aug-2023	26 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2023
1.0 Issue	Luke and Dee	April-2025	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2027
2.0	Luke and Dee	March 2026	March 2028