



Safeguarding policy

Commitment to Safety

1. Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs works actively to prevent harm and promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk that we interact with (i.e. as Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs service users). This Safeguarding Policy applies to individuals referred to as 'Beneficiaries'.
2. Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all the Beneficiaries, free from discrimination based on age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic.
3. This Safeguarding Policy adheres to the latest safeguarding laws of England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, including relevant government guidance. If there is any conflict between this Policy and these laws, Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs will always prioritise upholding the legal requirements.
4. Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs has implemented this Safeguarding Policy in fulfilment of its obligations (as a charity regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.)
5. For questions about this policy, please contact our safeguarding trustee, Wendy Withington in the first instance, via e-mail admin@jackandpals.org or via phone 07795 578284.

Safeguarding Policy Scope

6. This Policy applies to everyone volunteering for or representing Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs in the UK, regardless of position, or affiliation (trustee, volunteer,).
7. This Policy is separate from employment contracts. To ensure its effectiveness, Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs may revise the policy at any time. We will communicate any changes transparently.
8. This Policy outlines Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs' approach to harm prevention for its Beneficiaries through member's conduct and practices.
9. This Safeguarding Policy applies to the organisation and operation of all Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs activities that involve children and adults at risk (i.e. Relevant Activities). These primarily include:
 - a. visiting with registered therapy dogs

Safeguarding Definition

10. The term 'Safeguarding' refers to practices and procedures designed to protect vulnerable individuals from harm or potential harm. It also promotes their overall wellbeing. Safeguarding is particularly crucial for children and adults at risk, with most legal obligations related to their care. This Policy specifically addresses:

- Children, who are individuals under 18 years old (in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) or under 16 years old (in Scotland).
- Adults at risk, who are individuals 18 years old or over (in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) or 16 years old or over (in Scotland) who require care and support, and due to this, are unable to protect themselves from harm (e.g. illness, disability). This can be temporary or permanent.

11. This Safeguarding Policy outlines Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs' commitment to protecting its beneficiaries from harm caused by:

- Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs activities, practices, and the potential for harm arising from the conduct of its members, or
- People and situations beyond (Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs) and its members' control. This includes instances where members are aware of, ought to be aware of, or reasonably suspect a situation that poses a safeguarding risk.

12. This policy defines a 'Safeguarding Concern' as any conduct or situation that a member or someone else suspects might violate the safeguarding commitments above.

Forms of Abuse

- Neglect – ignoring mental or physical needs, care, education, or basic life necessities or rights
- Bullying – family, carers, friends
- Financial – theft or use of money or possessions
- Sexual – assault, rape, non-consensual acts (including acts where people are unable to give consent), touching, indecent exposure
- Physical – hitting, assault, man-handling, restraint, pain or forcing medication
- Psychological – threats, fear, being controlled, taunts, isolation
- Discrimination – abuse based on perceived differences and vulnerabilities
- Institutional abuse – in hospitals, care homes, support services or individuals within them, including inappropriate behaviours, discrimination, prejudice, and lack of essential safeguards

Abuse may be deliberate or as a result of lack of attention or thought, and may involve combinations of all or any of the above forms. It may be regular or on an occasional or single event basis, however it will result in some degree of suffering to the individual concerned. Abuse may also take place between one vulnerable adult and another, for example between residents of care homes or other institutions.

Indications

- Bruising
- Burns
- Falls
- Apparent lack of personal care
- Nervousness or withdrawn
- Avoidance of topics of discussion
- Inadequate living conditions or confinement to one room in their own home
- Inappropriate controlling by carers or family members
- Obstacles preventing personal visitors or one-to-one personal discussion
- Sudden changes in personality
- Lack of freedom to move outside the home, or to be on their own
- Refusal by carers to allow the patient into further care or to change environs
- Lack of access to own money
- Lack of mobility aids when needed

How Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs Protects Its Beneficiaries: Key Safeguarding Measures

13. Prioritising child safety by following local safeguarding arrangements. These comprehensive plans, developed by local authorities, police, and healthcare providers, offer valuable leadership and guidance to ensure children's well-being.

14. Prioritising safeguarding adults by applying leadership and guidance provided by local Safeguarding Adults Boards.

15. All members will receive training on identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns. Also, Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs encourage them to report any Safeguarding Concerns they identify (set out below under the heading 'Procedures: Reporting').

16. We create a safe, accessible, fair, and efficient space for all members to raise safeguarding concerns (colleagues, beneficiaries, or anyone else involved). We expect all to listen attentively and professionally. Training will equip members to support those raising concerns and guide them through Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs' established reporting procedures. All reported concerns will be handled by designated individuals and teams following Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs' relevant procedures (detailed below under 'Procedures: Investigation and Response').

- Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs have fair and objective procedures to address all safeguarding concerns, even when they involve members. Allegations are taken seriously, with the severity of the claims considered throughout the process. We are committed to protecting all parties involved. This means we will only presume guilt or publicly criticise people once a thorough investigation is completed.
- Reports that qualify as protected disclosures under whistleblowing law will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and following all relevant whistleblowing policies law.

17. Mrs Wendy Withington is the lead for safeguarding policies and procedures within Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs. She holds a level 2 certificate.

18. Following appropriate recruitment processes for all new members, including volunteers. These processes include:

- Conducting pre-admissions checks following relevant regulations. Volunteers become members after we have received two written references from someone who is not related to the potential volunteer stating their suitability to work with our group with their dog. We encourage references from individuals who have known the volunteer for more than two years.
- All new members must take part in, and understand the content of, all necessary safeguarding training before having any contact with Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs Beneficiaries. This training equips them with the knowledge and skills to keep everyone safe.
- Following Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs' recruitment and selection procedures.

19. Every member should be provided with, and required to undertake, training that is appropriate to their role, responsibilities, and degree and type of contact with Beneficiaries. This should, if appropriate, include training on:

- Identify and respond to abuse by recognising signs of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Learn active listening skills and how to navigate disclosure of safeguarding concerns, including confidentiality.
- Follow reporting procedures by understanding when and how to report concerns using Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs established procedures.
- Stay informed by discovering additional resources like policies, documents, and external training to stay up-to-date on safeguarding best practices.
- Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs will work with the Disclosure and Barring Service and a placement visit where a volunteer member causes concern.
- All volunteer members will ensure that Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs are aware of the places they visit and how frequently they visit.
- Volunteer members will show their ID badge on entering the premises and have it available to show when requested whilst visiting. The badge should also show the dog who is working with them on that occasion.

20. Treating all safeguarding information with the utmost confidentiality and security. This involves:

- Complying with UK data protection legislation, including The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Following Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs data protection policies and procedures.
- Providing members with training on data protection and privacy, if appropriate.
- Making easy to access Mr Mike Withington, who can be contacted by emailing mike@jackandpals.org or at 07795578284 for members as an identifiable point of contact for questions or concerns about data protection and privacy.
- Sharing safeguarding information internally ONLY on a strict need-to-know basis to ensure the best possible care for the beneficiary involved.

21. Building a safe environment by creating a culture of transparency and awareness to prevent harm. For example:

- Encourage open communication by informing beneficiaries about Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs safeguarding procedures and how to report any concerns.
- Acknowledge by the members of safeguarding laws, Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs safeguarding commitments and procedures, and members' responsibilities concerning these.

22. Regularly reviewing all safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they are up-to-date with safeguarding law and that they remain suitable for Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs Relevant Activities and workforce, and meeting any review and evaluation requirements specific to Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs industry and organisation type.

Members' Responsibilities

23. All members are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of all of Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs Beneficiaries by following all of Jack and Pals Therapy

Dog's policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding and all UK laws relevant to safeguarding.

Specifically:

- All members at Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs play a role in keeping Beneficiaries safe and every role will be covered in detail during training. In case of doubt, it is important to contact Mrs Wendy Withington to clarify any aspect of roles and responsibilities.
- Encourage all members to actively participate and ask questions if anything is unclear to Mrs Wendy Withington.
- Do not risk the safety or well-being of any of Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs Beneficiaries by avoiding any of the next situations:
 - i. Subjecting them to or facilitating abuse of any sort.
 - ii. Engaging in any sexual activity with children (i.e. anybody under the age of 18).
 - iii. Participating in or facilitating any activities that may commercially exploit Beneficiaries. For example, failing to report suspected child labour or trafficking.
- Members must report all Safeguarding Concerns that they have regarding Beneficiaries' safety, regardless of whether the concerns relate to potential wrong doing of other members, other Beneficiaries, or external parties (e.g. parents, teachers, other organisations, or members of the public).

Procedures: Reporting

24. To ensure the safety of Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs beneficiaries, members will be trained to recognise potential safeguarding concerns like abuse, neglect, and threats to well-being.

25. Members who identify a safeguarding concern should report it following the next steps:

- Contact one of the safeguarding trustees

26. Members unable to follow the standard reporting steps should still report the concern in another alternative way. This may be the case if, for example:

- Contacting someone potentially involved in the concern, or someone the Member feels uncomfortable approaching, or
- In emergencies involving a risk of serious harm, contact emergency services (e.g. police, ambulance, mental health crisis line) directly, or, if appropriate, report the concern to any Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs trustees.

Procedures: Investigation and Response

27. All Reported Safeguarding Concerns at Jack and Pals Therapy Dogs are treated seriously and addressed promptly by trained personnel following the established procedures and relevant laws. For more details about these procedures, please contact Mrs Wendy Withington.

28. We aim to keep Members who report a Safeguarding Concern informed about its progress as much as possible, depending on the nature of the concern and the confidentiality of the investigations.

29. In case of breach of this Safeguarding Policy or safeguarding law in general by a member, they will be treated fairly and will only be dismissed if appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with employment law.

30. External referrals or notifications (e.g. to police services, local authorities, or regulatory bodies) will only be made when deemed necessary and strictly following applicable laws, including data protection regulations, to ensure the safety and well-being of Beneficiaries.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following a serious incident, whichever comes first.

Adopted 1st June 2025

Review Date: 1st June 2026

Signed: Wendy Withington wendy@jackandpals.org