LINCOLNSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Safeguarding Policy (Adults)

Background

The Charity Commission explicitly mandates that safeguarding applies to all charities that interact with people - not just those working exclusively with children. For the Lincolnshire Family History Society (LFHS), the safeguarding focus shifts primarily towards creating a safe environment during public meetings, preventing the bullying or harassment of volunteers, and protecting any vulnerable adults or younger students who may use the Resource Centre.

1. Policy Purpose and Commitment

LFHS is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment. No person who interacts with our Society - whether a member, trustee, visitor, or volunteer - should experience harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. While our core focus is family research, we recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

For the purpose of this policy, a vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or abuse.

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail;
- Has a mental illness or memory impairment, including dementia;
- Has a physical or sensory disability;
- Has a learning disability;
- Has a severe physical illness;
- Misuses substances or alcohol;
- Is homeless.

2. Scope of Application

This policy applies to all activities organised or sanctioned by LFHS, including:

- Physical research and drop-in assistance at the Lincoln Resource Centre;
- Monthly local branch lectures and events (Lincoln, Bourne, Great Grimsby);
- Digital spaces (TEAMS), online forums and virtual help desks;
- Family History Fairs

3. Key Principles and Codes of Conduct

To minimise risk and ensure best practices, all LFHS volunteers and trustees must adhere to the following rules:

- A Culture of Openness: Encourage a respectful, friendly environment where everyone feels comfortable asking for help or reporting issues.

- The “Two-Adult” Guideline: Volunteers must avoid being left entirely alone (1-to-1) behind closed doors with a child, teenager, or vulnerable adult at our Resource Centre or branch venues. Always keep doors open or ensure a third person is within sight.
- Appropriate Behaviour: Refrain from using discriminatory, suggestive, or inappropriate language during research sessions or branch meetings.

4. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Safeguarding concerns may arise if a volunteer spots signs of physical or emotional distress, or if a member discloses personal safety issues at home. If a concern is raised or an incident occurs:

i. Do Not Investigate: If someone shares a concern, listen calmly. Do not interrogate them or try to investigate the matter yourself.

ii. Record Content: Write down exactly what was said or observed as soon as possible (not at the time), sticking purely to the facts without adding personal opinion.

iii. Report Immediately: Pass the written record straight to the designated LFHS Safeguarding Lead (nominated from within the Executive Committee).

Note: If an individual is in immediate physical danger, contact the police directly at 999 before alerting the Society’s committee.

5. Managing Records and Serious Incidents

- Confidentiality: All safeguarding reports must be kept strictly confidential, held in a secure directory separate from standard meeting minutes, and managed in compliance with data laws.
- External Reporting: If a serious safeguarding breach occurs, the Executive Committee is legally responsible for submitting a “Serious Incident Report” to the Charity Commission.

6. Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee at its first meeting following the Annual General Meeting. The Committee may review and amend this policy at any time if changes in legislation, Charity Commission guidance, best practice, or the Society's circumstances make this necessary. The date of the most recent review will be recorded in the Committee minutes.

Approved by the Executive Committee: 24 September 2026
Last reviewed: No reviews to date
Chairman: Colin Ashworth
Next review: First Committee meeting following the 2027 AGM

APPENDIX (Further information)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-protecting-people-for-charities-and-trustees