



The Paddington Partnership (trading as Grand Union Business Improvement District) Safeguarding Policy

This Safeguarding Policy sets out Grand Union Business Improvement District's (BID) commitment to keeping its employees, corporate volunteers and the children and vulnerable adults the organisation works with safe and how it will respond to any safeguarding concerns.

All permanent and temporary employees of Grand Union BID are required to follow the policy. The document is updated on an ongoing basis by the Community Team as new volunteering activities are developed and formally reviewed annually by the Head of Social Value to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Safeguarding measures in place for Grand Union BID employees

The principal way that Grand Union BID employees have contact with vulnerable children and adults is in their work delivering the Community Programme.

- All Grand Union BID employees who are involved in delivering the Community Programme are required to initiate an enhanced DBS check prior to commencing employment with the Grand Union BID. Our probation period allows for termination of employment in the event of a positive DBS result, meaning the check has revealed criminal information or other relevant data. The nature of the information revealed in this instance will be carefully considered to determine whether the applicant is still suitable for the position applied for. External HR advice will be sought as required to inform this decision-making process.
- DBS checks are renewed every three years, in line with best practice.
- All Grand Union BID employees involved in delivering the Community Programme complete Safeguarding Adults Level 1 and Safeguarding Children Level 1 training within six weeks of commencing their employment at Grand Union BID. This training is refreshed every two years to ensure up-to-date knowledge and skills.
- All Grand Union BID employees are required to return to the office or check in via a phone call with their line manager following a volunteering event. This ensures timely supervision and support is offered following the event and specifically to address any safeguarding concerns which may have arisen.
- All Grand Union BID employees have a monthly catch-up with their line manager, where ongoing supervision and support around safeguarding can be provided.

The Community Programme Team facilitate employee volunteering; supporting staff from companies (typically based in the Paddington basin area) to participate in volunteering activities designed to support local charities, schools and community groups. This volunteering includes activities where individuals have direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, including but not limited to:

Activities involving direct contact with children and young people

- Listening to primary school pupils read as a volunteer reading buddy
- Running a maths breakfast club for primary school pupils
- Delivering assemblies, presentations and career carousel workshops to classes
- Mentoring secondary school students
- Reviewing CVs and conducting one-to-one mock interviews with secondary school and college students

Activities including direct contact with vulnerable adults

- IT support with mobile phones, laptops and tablets for the elderly and vulnerable adults

- Hosting tea parties and social lunches for the elderly
- Delivering travel training and hosting educational workshops for adults with learning disabilities

For every volunteering activity facilitated by the Grand Union BID, a separate risk assessment is undertaken. Each of these identifies the specific safeguarding measures required for the activity in a dedicated safeguarding section and talks about appropriate behaviour when working with vulnerable people and how to deal with challenging behaviour of vulnerable persons. There is no instance at any volunteering event organised or attended by Grand Union BID where an employee volunteer or an employee of Grand Union BID would have responsibility for the personal care needs (including toileting, medication management or mobility support) of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

An overview of the steps taken to ensure children and vulnerable adults are kept safe is listed below. These are separated into two sections dependent on if the activity is a one-off volunteering event e.g. volunteers conducting mock interviews with students or an ongoing commitment e.g. mentoring a young person for a school term.

Safeguarding steps taken to keep children and vulnerable adults safe at all volunteering events

1. The Community Team conduct due diligence on all charity partners and schools prior to placing volunteers with them, ensuring they are registered with The Charity Commission where appropriate, have safeguarding leads in place and up to date safeguarding policies. Direct contact details are kept for safeguarding leads at all our partner charities and schools so that if a safeguarding concern arises during or following a volunteering event, it can be dealt with swiftly.
2. Volunteers are always asked not to take their own photographs when participating in volunteering activities where children or vulnerable adults are present. The Community Team only take photographs on their work phones and with the consent of the charity or school partner. All images are shared with the respective organisation after the event and any containing children or vulnerable adults who do not have consent to be photographed are immediately deleted (both from devices and cloud-based storage). Images are not used without written consent. All images taken by the Community Team are stored in a password protected folder.
3. The specific policy regarding mobile phone use within each charity or school partner is followed. As a general rule, volunteers in schools are asked not to have their mobile phones out at all when moving around the school and to only use devices in the designated break-out room they have been allocated for checking emails / taking calls etc.
4. All records about volunteering events are kept in password protected folders on Grand Union BID computers which have two-factor authentication and are fire-wall protected. Where paper records are printed about volunteering activities containing sensitive information (e.g. sheets with pupil names for mock interview events) they are destroyed immediately after the event in confidential waste. Please refer to our privacy policy (a copy of which can be provided on request) for further details about how we keep information safe.

Specific steps taken to keep children and vulnerable adults safe for **one-off** volunteering events

5. Grand Union BID works with over 35 charities, schools and community groups to deliver volunteering activities. The safeguarding policy of each organisation is obtained in advance of a volunteer event and the contents are shared as part of a written risk assessment sent to all volunteers taking part in the activity. On the day of the volunteering event the safeguarding information is repeated as part of the health and safety briefing and key staff with responsibility for safeguarding at the respective charity or school are identified to the volunteers.
6. For all one-off team events a member of the Grand Union BID Community Programme Team or an employee of the beneficiary organisation is present on site with the volunteers for the duration, to oversee the smooth running of the event and ensure safeguarding policies are followed. All members of the Grand Union BID Community Programme Team have an up-to-date enhanced DBS check. All Grand Union employees have had references taken prior to employment, original ID documents have been checked, copied and held both electronically and in hard copy in their personnel file and their right to work in the UK has been verified.
7. When volunteers are participating in a one-off activity in a school whilst children are on site or at charity partners where vulnerable adults are present, they are not able to move around the school on their own.

The specific safeguarding policy of the school or charity partner will be followed in all instances, but as a general rule volunteers must be escorted to the toilet, breakout room, on and off the premises, or to any other part of the site by a member Grand Union BID Community Programme staff or school / charity staff.

8. When conducting virtual activities involving children and young people, Grand Union BID requires schools to set up the Teams link (or equivalent meeting) so that we do not have access to students' email addresses. We follow individual schools' safeguarding policies regarding whether students have their cameras on, whether meetings are recorded and whether students can ask questions / write directly into the chat box.
9. When conducting virtual activities involving vulnerable adults (namely Zoom quizzes or talks), the Grand Union BID Community Team set up these activities and remain on Microsoft Teams / Zoom throughout for safeguarding. Links to Zoom / Teams meetings are shared separately with volunteers and participants so that they do not have each other's email addresses. The private messaging function in Zoom / Teams is disabled by the Community Team so that volunteers and participants cannot message one another privately or vice versa. Volunteers are encouraged to message the Community Team privately via email / text if they have any concerns during the event.
10. When conducting virtual events, the Community Managers will act as the 'host', taking responsibility to remove any participants from the event if they display any offensive or abusive behavior.
11. Where volunteers are supporting vulnerable adults with IT, the sessions are always supervised by a member of the Grand Union BID Community Programme Team or charity partner staff member being in the room. Volunteers are reminded not to share their own details such as email addresses, phone numbers or personal social media accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Any requests for follow-up support must be organised via the charity partner. Volunteers are asked not to look at or input passwords or sensitive personal information (e.g. date of birth, national insurance number etc.) on behalf of people.
12. When reviewing student CVs, all CVs are anonymised prior to being shared with volunteers. Students' full names are either just given as initials or first names and all addresses and contact details are removed. If CVs are shared electronically with volunteers, Grand Union BID deletes them immediately from our system following the project (both from the hard drive and cloud storage) and requests that volunteers do the same. Any printed paper copies are destroyed in confidential waste.
13. When volunteers are conducting careers carousels / mock interviews, we are aware that a student may disclose sensitive information which may raise a safeguarding concern. As part of the briefing at the start of any activity like this, where volunteers will be speaking to students one-to-one about their experiences, all volunteers will be briefed on how to handle a disclosure. This includes not asking leading questions, not promising to keep any information shared a secret and reporting it to the safeguarding lead at the host school at the earliest convenience. Time is always scheduled between each mock interview or at the end of a workshop so that volunteers have an opportunity to raise any concerns with school staff in a timely manner.
14. All volunteers supporting activities through Grand Union BID are discouraged from connecting/ or adding the beneficiaries (older people, school students etc.), on their personal social media accounts. If a volunteer receives an invite from a student or vulnerable adult post-event, we ask that the volunteer inform the Community Team and delete the request. We recognise that students want to add senior people to their networks to help with job search or work experience. If volunteers would like to stay in touch, we will support this through longer-term volunteering opportunities.

Specific steps taken to keep children and vulnerable adults safe during **ongoing** volunteering projects

15. All ongoing volunteering projects are risk-assessed in advance by the Community Team and a copy of this document is shared with any participating volunteer, which includes a dedicated section covering safeguarding. Grand Union BID will also organise an introductory meeting where safeguarding policies are explained to the volunteers by the school or charity partner's designated safeguarding lead in advance of any volunteering commencing.
16. Where individuals are volunteering on an ongoing basis working directly with children or vulnerable adults, Grand Union BID work with the respective charity or school partner to support the volunteer to complete a DBS check. The DBS check and associated verification of a volunteers' identity is undertaken by the specific school or charity partner and not by Grand Union BID. The volunteer is also required to undertake

safeguarding training with the respective safeguarding lead for that charity or school and to refresh this in line with their safeguarding policy.

17. Where individuals are going into a school or charity partner on an ongoing basis and working with vulnerable children, young people or vulnerable adults, they will always be provided with the direct contact for the safeguarding lead and a written summary of what to do if they have a safeguarding concern, so that the information can get directly to the person that needs it the most. The nature of the Community Programme means that the team are out of the office a lot and not always available at our desks to respond immediately to emails or take calls. The Community Team would ask to be made aware of the concern in the first instance so that they can support the volunteer and ensure it is swiftly followed up by the school or charity partner.

Action taken when a safeguarding concern is raised

The Community Team will work with the respective charity or school partner and the individual(s) concerned to respond to the safeguarding concern in a timely manner.

When volunteers have a safeguarding concern about a child, young person or vulnerable adult:

- The volunteer will be encouraged to write down everything they remember at the earliest possible opportunity including exactly what a child or vulnerable adult may have said, any observed behaviours or visible indicators that have flagged a safeguarding concern.
- The Community Team will support the volunteer to raise that concern at the earliest possible opportunity with the respective safeguarding lead for the organisation.
- The Community Team will work with the volunteer and where appropriate / necessary the charity / school partner to provide the volunteer with any follow-up support they may require after raising a safeguarding concern.
- The Community Team will work with and ultimately support the school in deciding whether the volunteer should continue working directly with that particular child or vulnerable adult following a safeguarding concern being raised.
- In the case of challenging behaviour from vulnerable people being experienced by volunteers at a one-off event, the Community Team will work with the charity / school partner to review procedures in place for future events, to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants. This may include restricting volunteer numbers or times of day when events take place to minimize contact with vulnerable people. The Community Team will follow up with the individual volunteer(s) involved in the incident afterwards and ensure the company ESG Lead is notified, so that all parties are aware of what has taken place and the steps the Community Programme are taking to ensure an incident does not occur in the future.

When a safeguarding concern is raised about a volunteer:

- If a safeguarding concern is flagged at a one-off volunteering event, the Community Team colleague leading the event will ask the volunteer to leave the site and if necessary end the volunteering event early.
- If a safeguarding concern is flagged about an ongoing volunteer e.g. a reading volunteer, the Community Programme Manager may request that their volunteering is paused whilst the concern is investigated.
- The Community Team will arrange a meeting, in person wherever possible, with the respective charity or school at the earliest convenience to discuss the concern.
- Following a discussion with the school or charity partner, a meeting will be arranged with the volunteer concerned (and involving the charity or school partner where it is appropriate). This meeting will be conducted by the Community Team member who has met with the school or charity partner. Wherever possible a colleague should attend – to corroborate details and provide a more reliable record if anything discussed is disputed.
- A written log of all safeguarding concerns about volunteers is kept by Grand Union BID and a record made of the steps taken. This record is kept in a password protected file. As documented in our privacy policy, all Grand Union BID computers and mobile devices have 2-factor authentication and fire walls to protect data stored on them and are kept in a secure environment.

- The Community Team will notify the relevant ESG lead contact at the employer where a safeguarding concern is raised, as colleagues are participating in employee volunteering. This activity is covered under their employer's liability insurance and therefore counts as work. The Community Programme Managers will cooperate with any requirements of the employer and, where appropriate, the police, with regard to responding to the safeguarding concern.

This safeguarding policy and the steps undertaken to keep people involved in all of our projects safe is under constant review as new volunteering projects are implemented.

The Head of Social Value is responsible for formally reviewing its contents on an annual basis.

If you have any questions about the contents of this policy, please contact the Community Team on volunteer@thisispaddington.com.

Last updated June 2025
