



A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND

Bertie Bus uses a 16 seat minibus to take elderly and socially isolated adults out for trips to shops, cafés, libraries, cinemas and other leisure and entertainment venues. For these trips, Bertie Bus provides the drivers and normally the passenger assistants, all of whom are volunteers. Sometimes Bertie Bus provides the bus and driver for external organisations who supply their own helpers.

Bertie Bus acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all adults and is committed to ensuring that safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and requirements.

Bertie Bus is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

AIM OF POLICY

The Policy recognises that the welfare and interests of all adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of their age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all adults:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of the services offered by Bertie Bus
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in the activities offered by Bertie Bus.

Bertie Bus acknowledges that some adults, including those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and it accepts the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

POLICY

Bertie Bus Trustees are responsible for:

- promoting and prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all adults;

- ensuring that all drivers and passenger assistants obtain a full Protecting Vulnerable Groups disclosure prior to taking part in any activity of behalf of Bertie Bus;
- ensuring everyone who volunteers with Bertie Bus understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults;
- ensuring immediate and appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse and support is provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern;
- ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- ensuring all potential volunteers understand and accept Bertie Bus's safeguarding policy before joining the charity;
- ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation;
- ensuring that the Policy and Procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone volunteering with Bertie Bus. Failure to comply with the Policy and Procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.
- ensuring that all volunteers with Bertie Bus are given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy upon joining and that all Bertie Bus volunteers are reminded annually of the Policy and its importance to the wellbeing of all passengers carried by Bertie Bus;
- ensuring that for all trips there will be a Bertie Bus volunteer driver plus at least one other responsible person;
- ensuring that any complaints are made to the Chair of Bertie Bus, or to the Vice Chair in the event of the Chair being conflicted or unavailable.

PROCEDURE

The Procedure for ensuring that Bertie Bus's Safeguarding Policy is implemented is:

- all volunteers will obtain a Protecting Vulnerable Groups certificate issued by Disclosure Scotland before joining Bertie Bus;
- training will be provided for all volunteers appropriate to their role (Driver and/or Passenger Assistant) which will include safeguarding. Training will take place when volunteers join Bertie Bus, and will be reviewed regularly as necessary;
- there will be enough volunteers on each run so that no volunteer has to be alone with a passenger, particularly in a passenger's house;
- Trustees will maintain a sufficient number of volunteers to cover all runs.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

In the event of any complaints made by or about a volunteer, concerns should be raised with the Chair of Bertie Bus, or the Vice Chair, if the Chair is conflicted or unavailable.

A full investigation will be carried out by the Chair (Vice Chair) to establish all the facts.

Where necessary, and where the issue cannot be resolved, advice may be sought from appropriate external agencies, eg family members/carers, social work, police, etc.

At all stages, a written report will be made and maintained by Bertie Bus.

If after appropriate investigation, the volunteer either leaves or is asked to leave Bertie Bus *and* is found to have committed at least one of the following actions:

- causing harm to a child or protected adult
- placing someone at risk of harm
- engaging in inappropriate conduct involving pornography
- engaging in inappropriate sexual conduct
- giving inappropriate medical treatment

then it is a legal requirement for Bertie Bus to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland within three months of the person leaving the organisation. See Bertie Bus Referrals Policy.

See Bertie Bus Complaints Policy.

ADMINISTRATION

The Chair of Bertie Bus is responsible for the administration, revision, interpretation, and application of this Policy. The Policy will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.

APPROVED BY TRUSTEES NOVEMBER 2024