

Safeguarding Children Policy

Link Up & Live CIC

This policy protects everyone under 18 attending or affected by our workshops, youth showcases, festivals, outreach and online activity. It applies to directors, employees, volunteers, session leaders, contractors and visitors acting on our behalf. It includes child protection procedures and supporting safeguarding rules.

Document control	Details
Policy reference	LUL SC 01
Version and document review	1.2 16 October 2026
Territorial scope	England Thamesmead, Bexley and Greenwich
Designated lead and deputy	Child lead: Kabichi Kabala (Ella) Deputy: Marcia Marshall
Agreement	Approved effective 13 October 2026 on Marcia Marshall's instruction. Authorised typed signatures entered 16 October 2026.
Effective date	13 October 2026
Review	At least annually and after serious incidents or relevant changes. Last document review: 16 October 2026. Next review: 13 October 2027

Our commitment

We will put this policy into practice through clear responsibilities, suitable resources, staff and volunteer induction, documented decisions and regular review. The instructions addressed to staff, volunteers and contractors are organisational requirements. Legal duties depend on the activity and the role held; this document does not certify a venue, individual or service as compliant.

How to use this policy

This policy must be read with the Link Up & Live CIC Supporting safeguarding policies and procedures pack, version 1.1, approved with effect from 13 October 2026. Its sections 1 to 13 form part of our safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment, training, EDI, records and retention, health and safety, whistleblowing, complaints, anti-bullying, online safety, photography, behaviour, supervision ratios and accessible information. Section 12 requires at least two suitable adults, with minimum ratios of 1:6 for ages 4 to 8, 1:8 for ages 9 to 12 and 1:10 for ages 13 to 17; risk assessments may require more. Immediate protection and external referral take priority.

Read this policy and its supporting procedures before working on our behalf. Keep a current copy available and provide an accessible public copy. Do not publish incident records or confidential participant information. Approval and effective date: 13 October 2026, as instructed by Marcia Marshall. Last document review and entry of authorised typed signatures: 16 October 2026. Next scheduled review: 13 October 2027, or sooner after a serious incident or relevant change. Record reference: LUL SG 2026 10 13, retained as an addendum to meeting minutes 01 of 15 October 2026.

Safeguarding leads and immediate access

Kabichi Kabala (Ella) leads child safeguarding, with Marcia Marshall as deputy. Marcia Marshall leads adult safeguarding, with Kabichi Kabala (Ella) as deputy. These are the only designated leads and deputies. Each lead coordinates referrals, restricted records and follow-up in their area. Confirm trained cover and direct telephone access at every activity. Anyone may refer directly to statutory services without waiting for a director decision.

Conflicts of interest and allegations

Report a concern about one director to an uninvolved lead and the appropriate external safeguarding service. The person implicated must not manage the case, access its restricted file or decide its outcome. Where all leads are implicated or independent handling is impossible, refer directly to statutory services and obtain independent management advice. Do not wait for an internal meeting. Staff and volunteers may raise concerns externally without retaliation.

Recognising harm

- Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, including harm by family members, workers, strangers or other children.
- Child sexual and criminal exploitation, grooming, trafficking, county lines, online abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and coerced image sharing.
- Domestic abuse, including harm to a child who sees, hears or experiences its effects; discriminatory abuse, bullying, forced marriage, so-called honour-based abuse and female genital mutilation.
- Behaviour changes, unexplained injuries, fear, withdrawal, coercive relationships, unexplained gifts or money, missed sessions or concerning content can prompt action. Absence of visible signs is not proof of safety.

Inclusion and participation

Listen to people in their preferred way, provide reasonable adjustments and accessible information, and take account of disability, race, religion, sex, language, sexuality and other protected characteristics. Do not dismiss harm as culture, banter or a feature of disability. Use an appropriate interpreter rather than an alleged perpetrator. Explain how to report concerns and offer an independent route to help.

Child centred practice

The child's welfare takes priority over reputation, funding, convenience and personal relationships. Explain concerns and next steps in age-appropriate language, seek their views and avoid blaming them for exploitation or abuse. Children aged 16 or 17 remain children for safeguarding even where mental capacity law also applies.

Responding to a disclosure

- If there is immediate danger or an urgent medical need, call 999 and take safe protective action. Do not leave the person with someone suspected of harming them.
- Listen calmly, take the concern seriously and let the person explain in their own words. Reassure them that telling you was right. Do not promise secrecy or a particular outcome.
- Use only minimal, open questions needed for immediate safety. Do not investigate, confront the alleged perpetrator or ask for repeated accounts. Do not examine injuries or take photographs of intimate areas.
- Explain that information will be shared with people who need it to help keep them safe. Record facts, exact words where possible, dates, times, observations and actions; distinguish opinion from fact.
- Tell the duty lead immediately and make a written record as soon as safe, normally before leaving the session. If a lead is unavailable, conflicted or fails to act, contact statutory services yourself.

Referral and follow through

Where a child may be suffering or at risk of significant harm, contact children's social care without delay and the police where necessary. For less urgent worries, obtain timely advice and consider family help in line with local thresholds. Do not wait for proof. Follow local referral procedures, document the recipient and reference, and confirm receipt. A referral about a worker may require both children's social care and LADO involvement.

If the response does not address a continuing risk, the duty lead follows up and uses the local safeguarding escalation or professional disagreement procedure. Any worker who remains worried can escalate directly. Record interim safety measures, responsible people and the next review time. Support the affected person and staff without compromising an investigation.

Information sharing and consent

Involve the child and normally parents or carers where safe and appropriate. Do not notify a parent or seek consent where that could increase risk, compromise an investigation or expose the child to coercion; seek advice from children's social care or police. Consent is not a prerequisite for a necessary, lawful child protection referral.

Share relevant, accurate information securely with people who need it. Record the purpose, recipient, legal basis and decision to share or not share. For special category or criminal offence data, identify the additional legal condition as well as the general lawful basis; document any required appropriate policy document. Data protection law is not a reason to leave a person unsafe.

Reporting changes introduced in 2026

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduces child sexual abuse reporting and regulated activity reforms. Before recruitment and delivery, the leads must confirm which provisions are commenced and apply the current DBS and Home Office guidance; this policy does not assume every provision is already in force. Regardless of commencement, CIC policy requires prompt external referral of suspected child sexual abuse and prohibits obstruction of reporting. Staff must confirm that a required onward referral has actually been made; merely telling a director is not enough if no action follows.

Recruitment and selection

Use written role descriptions, application or structured background information, an interview, identity checks, verified references and a documented suitability decision before appointment. Explore relevant employment gaps and concerns; assess qualifications and eligibility to work where applicable. Include safeguarding expectations in advertisements, volunteer agreements and contracts. All staff, directors and volunteers must follow the same suitability process for the work they actually perform.

DBS and ongoing suitability

Assess the actual duties, frequency and current regulated activity rules with the DBS or an umbrella body before requesting a check. For eligible roles, require an Enhanced child workforce DBS check and the Children's Barred List check where legally eligible as CIC policy. Never request a barred list check for an ineligible role. Do not assume a Basic check or an adult workforce certificate covers a child role. Until required checks and suitability decisions are complete, do not permit independent child-facing delivery; use an authorised, lawful arrangement or postpone.

With the person's consent, use the Update Service only where the original certificate, workforce, level and barred list coverage are suitable for the new role. Check identity and the original certificate and record the outcome. A DBS result does not certify someone as safe and is not a substitute for supervision. Store disclosure information securely; normally do not retain certificate copies longer than necessary, generally no more than six months unless a justified exception applies. Keep a proportionate recruitment decision log.

Induction training and supervision

Before contact with participants, give an induction covering reporting, boundaries, emergency arrangements, equality, online safety and this policy. Leads complete appropriate safeguarding lead training before acting independently. Refresh staff awareness at least annually as CIC policy, with role-specific training and earlier updates after changes. Arrange regular supervision, wellbeing support and a clear route for reporting poor practice. Record induction, training, supervision and actions. Contractors receive relevant site and safeguarding instructions; visiting status is not an exemption.

Conduct and allegations

Maintain professional boundaries. Do not bully, discriminate, exploit, humiliate, exchange sexual material or initiate sexual or romantic relationships with people receiving your support. Do not offer secret gifts, personal loans or private favours. Report conduct that falls below these standards, including low-level concerns; record patterns and escalate when harm may be involved. Provide support and fair procedures for anyone subject to an allegation without putting participants at risk.

Allegations about adults working with children

Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer without delay, normally within one working day, if someone has harmed or may have harmed a child, may have committed a relevant offence, behaved towards children in a way indicating a risk of harm, or behaved in a way suggesting they may be unsuitable to work with children. External conduct can also be relevant. Contact children's social care or police immediately where needed; the LADO route does not replace urgent protection. Agree next steps before internal fact-finding or contacting the subject where this could compromise enquiries.

An uninvolved lead arranges proportionate protective measures, which may include removing participant contact, adjusting duties or suspension following advice. Do not treat suspension as proof of guilt. Consider the statutory DBS referral duty where a regulated activity provider removes someone, or would have removed them had they not left, and relevant harm or risk conditions are met. A police or LADO referral does not replace a required DBS referral.

Staffing and safe supervision

Our organisational minimum is two suitably recruited adults present for group activities involving children. A single workshop leader may teach, but must not be the only adult responsible for the group. Set and record staffing ratios through an assessment of age, numbers, disability, needs, venue, activity and emergency cover; there is no single universal statutory youth club ratio. Under-18 helpers do not count as adults. Do not open or continue if safe cover is lost. Any activity requiring registered childcare or other regulated provision needs a separate check of its legal requirements.

- Use attendance registers and agreed sign-in and sign-out arrangements. Record authorised collectors and any agreed independent travel, taking age and risk into account. Never release a child to an unsafe or unauthorised person.
- For missing children, alert the session lead immediately, check safe areas without abandoning supervision, secure relevant exits where lawful and appropriate, and contact police urgently if there is risk or the child cannot promptly be located. Notify carers where safe and follow police advice; there is no mandatory waiting period.
- For late collection, two staff remain with the child, contact carers and emergency contacts, and seek children's social care advice if safe collection cannot be arranged. Staff must not take a child home privately.
- Keep one-to-one conversations observable and appropriately private, with another adult aware. No closed-door isolated meetings, personal overnight accommodation or unauthorised private transport.
- Explain and obtain agreement for necessary teaching contact, such as dance positioning; use verbal demonstration first. No corporal punishment or humiliating sanctions. Physical intervention is only a proportionate last resort to prevent immediate harm under lawful, trained arrangements; record and review it.

Online safety and photography

Use approved organisational accounts and moderated platforms. No private social media contact, disappearing messages or personal direct messaging with children. Include a carer or another authorised worker in necessary communications, according to the child's circumstances. Use age-appropriate content, privacy settings and access controls; explain reporting tools. Obtain the required permission and the child's agreement before planned photography, audio recording or publication. Participation must remain available if recording is declined. Avoid full names, live location and identifying details that create risk. Do not store material on personal devices without a specific approved secure arrangement.

For sexual images of children, do not ask someone to forward an image, copy it, print it or circulate it. Record the concern without reproducing the image, secure access to the device where safe and seek police or safeguarding advice. Remove harmful public content through the platform without destroying evidence needed by authorities.

Bullying peer harm and behaviour

Give children a clear, accessible behaviour code: respect others, no threats, discriminatory language, unwanted sexual behaviour or unsafe use of equipment. Respond immediately to bullying, harassment and peer harm. Support the child harmed and assess the needs and risks of the child alleged to have caused harm. Do not minimise sexual harassment as normal growing up or force mediation where abuse is suspected. Record, consult safeguarding services where needed and use proportionate restrictions and support plans. Explain decisions and provide a fair review route; exclusion does not end safeguarding responsibilities.

Complaints and whistleblowing

Children and carers can speak to any worker or an uninvolved director. Explain this route at registration and provide accessible alternatives. A safeguarding complaint follows this policy immediately, regardless of the ordinary complaints timetable. Record non-urgent complaints, acknowledge them within five working days as CIC policy and explain the response plan. Anyone can contact external services directly. Protect people raising good-faith concerns from victimisation and handle malicious conduct separately without discouraging reporting.

Secure records and retention

Keep safeguarding case files separately from ordinary attendance and marketing records. Limit access to the people managing the case, with conflicted individuals excluded. Use protected organisational storage, access controls, backups and secure transfer. Do not keep case files in personal messaging accounts. Log access and corrections; retain the original record rather than overwriting it.

The retention schedule in section 6 of the Supporting safeguarding policies and procedures pack, version 1.1, is approved with effect from 13 October 2026 and forms part of this policy. Apply the category-specific review points and documented preservation holds. There is no universal statutory retention period for all safeguarding files. Record lawful reasons for extensions, consider specialist and insurer advice, and securely delete or anonymise only when the documented need ends.

Concern recording form

Complete promptly and pass securely to the duty lead. Do not place completed forms on the website.

Date and time of concern and record: _____

Person concerned and safe contact details: _____

Reporter and role: _____

Location and people present: _____

Exact words and factual observations: _____

Immediate danger and protective action: _____

Person's wishes and consent or reason for sharing without it: _____

Lead and external service notified with date time and reference: _____

Decision reasons and next action owner and deadline: _____

Follow-up outcome and review date: _____

Reporting contacts

Use the service for the relevant area and follow its cross-boundary procedures. Where location or responsibility is uncertain, contact a safeguarding service for advice immediately rather than delaying. Check these details each term and before events. Display the lead and deputy contacts before delivery.

Designated lead or deputy	Telephone and initial contact email
Kabichi Kabala (Ella)	Child lead; adult deputy 07597 136755 info@linkupandlive.org
Marcia Marshall	Adult lead; child deputy 07902 950884 info@linkupandlive.org

Duty lead for this activity: _____ Deputy cover: _____

Use direct telephone contact for urgent concerns and call 999 for immediate danger. The shared info@linkupandlive.org mailbox is for initial contact and is not an emergency or confidential case-record channel. Do not send detailed allegations, sensitive records or concerns about a mailbox user to that shared address. Contact an uninvolved lead or statutory services directly; keep case records in restricted storage accessible only to authorised, unconflicted people.

External route	Contact checked on 14 October 2026
Immediate danger or urgent medical help	999
Police non-emergency	101
Bexley children's MASH	020 3045 5440 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
Bexley children's out of hours	020 8303 7777 or 020 8303 7171
Bexley LADO for allegations about workers	LADO@bexley.gov.uk
Greenwich children's services	020 8921 3172 mash-referrals@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
Greenwich emergency duty service	020 8854 8888
Greenwich LADO	020 8921 3930 childrens-LADO@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

For a new borough or venue outside these areas, record the local referral and out-of-hours contacts before delivery. Use official council referral forms where required and confirm receipt; do not rely on an unattended email for urgent action.

Local reporting sources: Bexley Council worried about a child; Bexley Safeguarding Partnership LADO; Royal Greenwich report concerns about a child; Greenwich Safeguarding Children Partnership LADO. Verify contact routes on their official websites each term.

Monitoring and learning

An uninvolved lead reviews open concerns regularly and confirms referral outcomes and safety plans. Directors review anonymised patterns, complaints, staffing, training and actions at least quarterly. Share learning with staff while protecting identity, and cooperate with statutory reviews and investigations. Make safeguarding a standing board item.

Implementation before delivery

- Display and test the direct lead and deputy contacts, restricted record storage and safe reporting routes before opening.
- Complete role-specific suitability checks, lead training, session ratios and the two-adult staffing plan.
- Implement the approved retention schedule and codes of conduct, obtain recording permissions and confirm current reporting and DBS requirements.
- Give every worker a policy briefing; record their acknowledgement and relevant training. Identify who can stop unsafe activity and who covers absences.
- Retain approval record LUL SG 2026 10 13 with minutes 01. Review at least annually, next due 13 October 2027, and sooner after a serious incident or relevant change. Maintain a version history.

Director agreement and adoption

Approval and effective date: 13 October 2026, as instructed by Marcia Marshall. Last document review and entry of authorised typed signatures: 16 October 2026. Next scheduled review: 13 October 2027, or sooner after a serious incident or relevant change. Record reference: LUL SG 2026 10 13, retained as an addendum to meeting minutes 01 of 15 October 2026. The signatures below are entered with authority recorded on 16 October 2026.

Approver and safeguarding role	Signature	Date
Marcia Marshall Adult lead and child deputy	Marcia Marshall Authorised typed signature entered 16 October 2026	Effective approval 13 October 2026
Kabichi Kabala (Ella) Child lead and adult deputy	Kabichi Kabala (Ella) Authorised typed signature entered 16 October 2026	Effective approval 13 October 2026

Approval record: LUL SG 2026 10 13 | Minutes 01 addendum | Effective date: 13 October 2026

Next review due: 13 October 2027 | Version control: Marcia Marshall and Kabichi Kabala (Ella)

Legal framework and guidance

Prepared for activities in England using the sources below, checked on 14 October 2026. Apply legislation as amended and in force. Guidance explains practice; it is not interchangeable with a statutory duty. Recheck commencement dates and local procedures before delivery.

Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

DfE safeguarding guidance for out of school settings updated February 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice>

DBS regulated activity guidance and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-guidance-leaflets/regulated-activity-with-children>

Home Office Crime and Policing Act 2026 factsheet updated September 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crime-and-policing-act-2026-factsheets/crime-and-policing-act-2026-independent-inquiry-into-child-sexual-abuse-recommendations-factsheet>

Information sharing advice and ICO guidance under UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 as amended

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-to-safeguard-children-and-young-people>