KYRIA SAFEGUARDING POLICY (2026)

1. PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

Kyria Network is committed to creating an environment in which women in leadership can flourish safely, confidently, and without fear of harm. We recognise that women may face particular risks related to power dynamics, discrimination, harassment, coercion, and abuse; including emotional/psychological, physical/ sexual and spiritual harm and exploitation. We also recognise that there are other opportunities for other people with whom we have contact to be at particular risk of harm; including our own staff, volunteers and beneficiaries of the charity. While Kyria Network does not work directly with children or young people, we are committed to ensuring their safety on all occasions where they may come into contact with those we work with/for and serve.

We therefore commit to:

- promoting the wellbeing, dignity, and empowerment of all participants, staff, volunteers, and partners
- preventing harm through proactive culture building, clear expectations, and robust safeguarding practice
- responding to concerns promptly, proportionately, and in line with legal and regulatory requirements
- fostering a culture where speaking up is welcomed, respected, and protected

In pursuit of these commitments, we undertake to:

- endorse and follow all applicable legislation (including the Children Acts, 1989 and 2004, Care Act 2014, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and equivalent legislations across the four nations of the United Kingdom), national and local safeguarding procedures, in addition to the relevant

international conventions (e.g. the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

- provide on-going safeguarding training for all our trustees, staff and volunteers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that any premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that they are welcoming, accessible and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

2. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to:

- all staff, trustees, volunteers (including council or reference, mentors, coaches, facilitators, and contractors)
- all programme participants, alumni, and individuals engaging with our activities
- all organisational environments, including in person events, online spaces, mentoring relationships, and external partnerships

3. UNDERSTANDING SAFEGUARDING DEFINITIONS

3.1 SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding refers to the actions, systems, and culture that promote wellbeing and protect individuals from harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or misconduct. It encompasses both preventative and responsive dimensions of organisational practice.

3.1.1 Preventative Safeguarding

Preventative safeguarding is proactive. It focuses on creating safe environments, healthy cultures, and clear boundaries that reduce the likelihood of harm occurring. This includes:

- Embedding values of respect, dignity, and accountability in leadership and practice.
- Ensuring robust recruitment, induction, and supervision processes.
- Providing training and awareness to all staff, volunteers, and participants.

- Establishing transparent policies, codes of conduct, and reporting mechanisms.
- Promoting psychological safety and open dialogue about wellbeing and risk.

Preventative safeguarding is about building resilience and trust before harm occurs. It is a cultural commitment, not merely a procedural one.

3.1.2 Responsive Safeguarding

Responsive safeguarding ensures that when harm, abuse, or misconduct is suspected or disclosed, the organisation acts swiftly, proportionately, and compassionately. This includes:

- Listening to and supporting those affected.
- Reporting and recording concerns appropriately.
- Taking protective action where necessary.
- Cooperating with statutory agencies and following legal obligations.
- Learning from incidents to strengthen future practice.

Responsive safeguarding is about acting decisively and ethically when risk or harm emerges, ensuring accountability and care for all involved.

Together, these dimensions form a continuous safeguarding cycle; preventing harm, responding to concerns, and learning to improve.

3.2 Abuse (and Harm)

The terms ‘abuse’ and ‘harm’ are often used inter-changeably. The various forms of abuse that all Kyria Network personnel should be aware of include (but is not limited to):

- Emotional or Psychological Abuse: Persistent behaviour that undermines a person’s confidence, dignity, or sense of self-worth through manipulation, humiliation, or intimidation.
- Sexual Abuse (or Harassment): Any unwanted sexual activity, contact, or behaviour; whether verbal, physical, or online that violates consent or dignity.
- Physical Abuse: The deliberate use of force or physical actions that cause pain, injury, or fear.
- Neglect: The failure to meet a person’s basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs, resulting in harm or risk of harm.
- Spiritual Abuse: The misuse of faith, belief, or spiritual authority to control, coerce, or exploit others, often under the guise of religious justification.

- Financial Abuse or Exploitation: The improper or unauthorised use of a person's money, property, or resources for personal gain.
- Discriminatory Abuse (including Misogyny, Racism, or Other Forms of Prejudice): Harassment, exclusion, or mistreatment based on identity, belief, or characteristic, denying equality and respect.
- Organisational/Institutional Abuse: Harm arising from systemic failings, poor culture, or unsafe practices within an organisation that compromise wellbeing or rights.
- Online Abuse: Harmful behaviour conducted through digital platforms, including bullying, exploitation, coercion, sexual abuse or exposure to inappropriate content.

3.3 Vulnerability

In line with Charity Commission guidance, Care Act 2014, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), vulnerability is understood as any condition, circumstance, or context that increases a person's exposure to harm, exploitation, or diminished capacity to protect themselves or others.

Vulnerability is not fixed or inherent. It may arise from situational, relational, or systemic factors, including but not limited to:

- Personal circumstances such as trauma, mental health challenges, bereavement, or social isolation.
- Power imbalances within ministry, mentoring, leadership, or organisational relationships.
- Discrimination or inequality, including gender-based, racial, or faith related marginalisation.
- Economic or social pressures, including dependency on employment, housing, or immigration status.
- Organisational culture, where expectations, authority, or spiritual influence may inhibit autonomy or disclosure.
- Digital or online exposure, where boundaries and privacy may be compromised.

A person may therefore be considered vulnerable when their ability to make informed choices, express concerns, or access support is reduced by context, environment, or relationship dynamics; even if they do not meet statutory definitions under safeguarding law.

Recognising vulnerability in this broader sense enables the organisation to apply a dutyofcare lens that is preventive, proportionate, and empowering, ensuring that

all those engaged in our leadership development activities are supported with dignity, respect, and psychological safety.

3.4 Risk

In safeguarding, risk refers to the possibility that harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or misconduct may occur - whether to individuals, groups, or the organisation itself as a result of inconsistent or unsafe practice, inadequate systems, or contextual vulnerabilities.

Risk is not limited to immediate physical danger; it encompasses psychological, emotional, reputational, relational, and organisational dimensions. It may arise from:

- Individual factors, such as personal circumstances, trauma history, or power imbalance.
- Environmental factors, including culture, leadership dynamics, or online exposure.
- Systemic factors, such as unclear boundaries, insufficient supervision, or gaps in policy and procedure.

Effective safeguarding requires recognising that risk is dynamic and contextual and it changes with time, setting, and relationship. Kyria therefore commits to:

- Identifying potential risks through proactive assessment and open dialogue.
- Evaluating their likelihood and potential impact.
- Mitigating them through proportionate controls, training, and culture building.
- Reviewing risks regularly to ensure continued relevance and responsiveness.

This definition aligns with Charity Commission guidance (CC30: Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees) and sector good practice, emphasising that safeguarding risk management is integral to governance, leadership, and organisational integrity.

4. Principles of Safer Practice

Our safeguarding approach is grounded in the following principles:

- Dignity and Respect: Every person is valued, heard, and treated with fairness.
- Empowerment: We support autonomy, agency, and informed decision making.
- Accountability: Leaders and staff model integrity and responsible use of power.

- Proportionality: Responses are appropriate to the nature and seriousness of concerns and compliant with all relevant legislative and best practice expectations.
- Transparency: Processes are clear, accessible, and consistently applied.
- Trauma aware: We recognise the impact of trauma and secondary trauma, and respond with sensitivity.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees

- Hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding governance.
- Ensure policies, training, and reporting mechanisms are in place and effective.

Senior Leadership (including CEO)

- Promote a safe culture and model appropriate behaviour.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand and follow safeguarding procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Acts as the primary point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Oversees reporting, record keeping, and liaison with external agencies.
- Ensures regular review of safeguarding practice and learning.

Staff, Volunteers, Mentors, Coaches, Council of Reference

- Maintain appropriate and professional boundaries.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Participate in required safeguarding training and development activities.

Participants

- Treat others with respect.
- Report concerns or inappropriate behaviour.

6. Safe Practice Expectations

All staff, volunteers, and others must:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- avoid relationships or behaviour that could be perceived as exploitative or a misuse of power and/or authority
- communicate respectfully and appropriately in all settings

- avoid one to one situations that could create risk without transparency
- ensure online interactions follow the same standards as in person conduct
- disclose conflicts of interest/loyalty
- be alert to any risk that may compromise safe working practices
- adhere to codes of conduct that apply to their role/involvement in Kyria activities

7. Dealing with Safeguarding Concerns

A safeguarding concern is any information, observation, or disclosure that suggests a person is or may be at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or inappropriate conduct; whether the risk is current or non-recent/historic.

Concerns may arise from something seen, heard, or disclosed directly, or from patterns of behaviour or environmental factors that indicate possible harm. A safeguarding concern does not require proof or investigation by the individual raising it; it simply requires reporting and appropriate followup in line with organisational procedures. Concerns may relate to:

- current participants/beneficiaries
- alumni returning with historic disclosures
- staff, volunteers, mentors, or external partners
- behaviour occurring within or outside organisational activities

Kyria supports a simple process for dealing with safeguarding concerns to ensure clarity and consistency of responsibilities. These are known as the '6 Rs of Safeguarding' as follows:

1. Recognise – Identify signs, indicators, or disclosures of harm, abuse, or neglect.
2. Respond – Take immediate, proportionate action to ensure safety and wellbeing.
3. Record – Document what was seen, heard, or disclosed accurately, factually, and securely.
4. Report – Share the concern promptly with the designated safeguarding lead and/or relevant authority.
5. Refer – Escalate the concern to statutory agencies or external professionals when required.
6. Review/Reflect – Active engagement in reflective learning and continuous improvement after incidents or disclosures.

Together, these R's form a cycle of safeguarding accountability; ensuring that concerns are recognised early, handled appropriately, and used to strengthen organisational culture and practice.

8. Responding to Concerns

8.1 Responding Well

A person's first experience of disclosing abuse is significant, and the way we respond can shape their wellbeing long after the conversation has ended. When someone finds the courage to speak about what has happened to them, or circumstances lead them to share their experience, they should be met with reassurance and taken seriously. Often, the person they choose to tell is the only individual they feel safe approaching, and it may be the only time they ever disclose what has happened.

Disclosures may unfold gradually rather than all at once. If further information is shared later, the same careful and supportive approach should be followed each time. Responding well requires skill, and one of the most important is active listening. This means being fully present, attentive, and free from distraction; using body language and eye contact to convey safety; and reflecting back what has been said so the person knows they have been heard and can confirm your understanding. When someone discloses harm, we will attempt to respond well by:

- listening without judgement
- avoiding probing questions and NOT investigating
- reassuring them they have done the right thing
- asking what they would like and explaining what will happen next
- reporting the disclosure to the DSL immediately

We will not promise confidentiality where safety is at risk.

8.2 Historic or Non-Recent Disclosures

We recognise that people may disclose harm long after an incident occurred. All historic disclosures will be:

- taken seriously
- recorded accurately
- assessed for ongoing risk
- handled with sensitivity and respect
- referred to statutory agencies where appropriate

Where disclosures involve individuals connected to the organisation (past or present), the DSL will ensure appropriate safeguarding and reputational risk management.

8.3 Responding to Allegations of Abuse

An allegation is a statement or concern that someone may have caused harm, abuse, or misconduct. Unlike a firsthand disclosure where an individual speaks about their own experience, an allegation often involves a third party and may come from observation, suspicion, or information shared by someone other than the person affected.

When responding to an allegation, we will act with objectivity, neutrality, and procedural clarity. The focus is on ensuring safety, preserving evidence, and enabling appropriate investigation, rather than providing immediate emotional support to a victim (as is required in a disclosure).

8.4 Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an allegation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) concerning a child or young person, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with section 10 below and local safeguarding procedures will:

- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other children's services officer whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity).
- Liaise with Children's Services in regard to the suspension/withdrawal of the worker.
- In liaisons with the local authority consider making a referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or AccessNI for potential inclusion on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs.

8.5 Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

If an allegation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) concerning an adult with care and support needs, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with section 10 below and local safeguarding procedures will:

- Make a referral to the Adult Services Safeguarding Officer whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with adults with care and support needs (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity).
- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regard the suspension/withdrawal of the worker.

- In liaisons with the local authority consider making a referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or AccessNI for potential inclusion on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs.

8.6 Supporting Staff and Teams (including Secondary Trauma)

Teams working with sensitive or distressing issues may experience secondary trauma. In such circumstances, Kyria will seek to:

- provide access to wellbeing support
- offer reflective practice or supervision where appropriate
- encourage healthy boundaries and workload management
- create psychologically safe spaces for staff to share questions and concerns

9. Recording Concerns

It is the responsibility of the person receiving an allegation or disclosure to make an accurate and timely record of the information shared.

The person who receives the information should not try to decide if it is true or try to investigate it, but SHOULD accurately record what has been seen, heard or experienced so that this can be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to take further action. In most circumstances, the person receiving the concern should:

- Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within one hour).
- Record the date, time and place that the concern was identified and when the record was made.
- Record what has been said or shared and by whom and the circumstances (e.g. where you were or the activity that was happening when the concern was identified).
- Include as much detail as possible about the abuse or behaviour that has been described.
- Make a record of any physical signs of abuse such as any injuries (note their size, shape, and location).
- Record what was said in response and any action taken.

If the concern needs urgent action - such as immediate medical treatment - this should take priority, with records being written up as soon as possible after the situation has been dealt with.

10. Reporting and Referring Concerns

Concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as practically possible. Reports may be made verbally, but will usually need to be supported without delay in writing. Once the DSL has received the report, they will:

1. record the concern accurately and sensitively
2. assess immediate risk and take protective action if required
3. determine whether external agencies should be involved and make any necessary referrals
4. ensure the individual making the disclosure and recipient of the concern are supported appropriately
5. maintain secure, confidential records for future reference

In the absence of the DSL, the Deputy DSL should be contacted. If both the DSL and the Deputy DSL are absent or unavailable, a report should be made to Thirtyone:eight (0303 003 1111) for further advice or directly to the relevant statutory agency (i.e. Children's or Adult's Services or Police).

11. Reviewing/Reflecting on Concerns

Reflection means taking time to consider what went well, what could have been handled better, and what lessons can be learned to improve future responses. It is not just a best practice. It is essential for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures remain fit for purpose.

After an incident, we will:

- Review the response: Was the situation handled as well as possible?
- Check compliance: Were safeguarding policies and procedures followed correctly?
- Evaluate effectiveness: Do any policies or processes need to be amended?
- Centre the victim-survivor: Were they kept at the heart of the response throughout?
- Identify support needs: Have all those affected been properly supported in processing and, where needed, recovering from the incident?
- Capture learning: What other lessons can be drawn for the organisation?

This reflection should be documented, even briefly, to show that we have acted in compliance with this policy and engaged with the learning process for continuous improvement.

12. Safer Workforce Management

12.1 Safer Recruitment

Kyria Network will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written role description/person specification for all roles (paid and voluntary).
- Those applying for roles have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
- Those shortlisted have been interviewed and safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed-up where appropriate.
- A criminal records check (DBS, PVG or AccessNI) at the appropriate level and for the appropriate workforce has been completed where assessed as necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to respond to and report concerns.

12.2 Training and Culture Development

Kyria Network is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

We will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

12.3 RecordKeeping and Confidentiality

Kyria Network is committed to best practice and will comply with all expectations regarding data protection, data security and data retention (particularly the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2008). We will therefore ensure that safeguarding records will be:

- accurate, factual, and timely
- stored securely
- accessible only to authorised personnel
- retained in line with legal requirements

12.4 Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

Kyria Network is committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision and are familiar with the expectations upon them regarding their conduct. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

13. Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or elsewhere. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- legislation changes
- organisational activities evolve
- a safeguarding incident indicates the need for revision