



# ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Priority 1 Governance Document

<b>Organisation</b>	FND Connect
<b>Status</b>	Unincorporated Non-Profit Organisation
<b>Address</b>	133 Fable Lane, Kingswood, Hull, HU7 3PT
<b>Document Code</b>	FND-SAFE-001
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Adopted</b>	01/05/2026
<b>Approved By</b>	Matthew Gerdes-Hansen, Chair; Emma Wilder, Secretary
<b>Review Cycle</b>	As stated in this document

Controlled document. This policy should be read together with the FND Connect Constitution v1.0 and any supporting procedures adopted by the Management Committee.

## Document Control

<b>Owner</b>	FND Connect Management Committee
<b>Lead Responsible Person</b>	As specified within this document
<b>Adoption Date</b>	01/05/2026
<b>Review Cycle</b>	Annual - next review 01/05/2027
<b>Linked Constitution</b>	FND Connect Constitution v1.0
<b>Applies To</b>	Committee Members, officers, volunteers, advisers, representatives and anyone acting

This document is drafted for FND Connect's current status as an unincorporated non-profit organisation and should be reviewed when FND Connect incorporates as a Community Interest Company, Charitable Incorporated Organisation or other legal entity.

## 1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This Adult Safeguarding Policy sets out FND Connect's approach to protecting adults who engage with its services, communities, events and digital platforms.

1.2 FND Connect primarily supports adults affected by Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), carers and related support networks.

1.3 The Policy applies to Committee Members, officers, volunteers, moderators, advisers, contractors and anyone acting on behalf of FND Connect.

1.4 It applies to online communities, social media groups, support groups, telephone support when introduced, events, training, mobility aid loan schemes and digital services including SeizeControl where relevant.

## 2. Safeguarding Commitment

2.1 FND Connect recognises that some adults affected by FND may be vulnerable because of disability, seizures, fluctuating health, isolation, distress, dependency, mental health difficulties, communication barriers or previous negative experiences of services.

2.2 FND Connect is committed to creating safe, respectful and well-managed environments.

2.3 Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, but the Management Committee has overall accountability.

2.4 FND Connect will take concerns seriously, respond proportionately and keep records securely.

## 3. Safeguarding Lead

3.1 The initial Safeguarding Lead is Matthew Gerdes-Hansen.

3.2 The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for receiving safeguarding concerns, advising volunteers, maintaining safeguarding records, escalating concerns where necessary and reporting to the Committee.

3.3 The Committee may appoint a Deputy Safeguarding Lead when organisational growth requires it.

3.4 Where the Safeguarding Lead is implicated in a concern, the matter shall be referred to another Committee Member or an independent adviser.

## 4. Boundaries of Support

4.1 FND Connect provides information, peer support, signposting, awareness and community support.

4.2 FND Connect does not provide emergency medical care, diagnosis, therapy, counselling, crisis intervention or regulated clinical services except by signposting to relevant services or at such time as the Committee hires or engages dedicated and appropriately qualified persons to provide such services directly.

4.3 FND Connect representatives must not present peer support as clinical advice.

4.4 Participants should be encouraged to contact appropriate professionals for medical, mental health, safeguarding, social care or emergency needs.

## 5. Adults at Risk

5.1 An adult may be at risk where they have care and support needs, are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and are unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

5.2 Safeguarding concerns may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, neglect, self-neglect, domestic abuse, discriminatory abuse, organisational abuse, exploitation or coercion.

5.3 FND Connect does not need proof before recording and escalating a concern where there is reasonable cause for concern.

## 6. Responding to Concerns

6.1 Any person acting for FND Connect who becomes aware of a safeguarding concern must act promptly.

6.2 Immediate danger should be referred to emergency services by calling 999.

6.3 Non-emergency concerns may be referred to local adult safeguarding services, NHS 111, the person's GP, mental health crisis services or other appropriate services.

6.4 The Safeguarding Lead should be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

6.5 A factual record must be made including date, time, people involved, concern, action taken and any referral made.

6.6 Volunteers should not investigate allegations themselves.

## 7. Crisis, Suicide and Self-Harm Content

7.1 Posts or messages suggesting immediate risk of suicide, self-harm, medical emergency or serious harm must be treated as urgent.

7.2 Moderators should signpost to emergency services, NHS 111, 999 where appropriate, Samaritans or relevant crisis services.

7.3 Moderators and volunteers must not make private rescue attempts or take sole responsibility for crisis management.

7.4 Where platform tools permit, posts may be escalated using platform safety reporting features.

7.5 The Safeguarding Lead should be notified and a record made.

## 8. Online Communities

8.1 Online communities must be moderated in line with FND Connect rules and safeguarding standards.

8.2 Content may be removed where it creates safeguarding risk, promotes harmful advice, harasses others, exploits vulnerability, spreads dangerous medical misinformation, encourages self-harm or breaches confidentiality.

8.3 Members may be warned, restricted, suspended or removed where necessary.

8.4 Volunteers must avoid private one-to-one support relationships unless authorised and risk assessed.

8.5 FND Connect may not be able to monitor all content in real time, but will respond to reports as reasonably practicable.

## 9. Children and Young People

9.1 FND Connect is currently an adults-only support organisation.

9.2 Where a child or young person seeks support, FND Connect shall normally refer them to a parent, guardian or appropriate responsible adult.

9.3 Publicly available information may be accessed by any person, but direct support services for children shall not be provided unless the Committee adopts appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

9.4 Any concern that a child is at risk of harm must be escalated to appropriate safeguarding services.

## 10. Volunteers, Moderators and DBS

- 10.1 Volunteers and moderators must complete basic safeguarding induction before active duties.
- 10.2 Higher-risk roles may require references, safeguarding declarations and DBS checks.
- 10.3 DBS checks shall be required only where the role and level of contact justify them.
- 10.4 The Committee shall decide which roles require DBS checks based on risk.
- 10.5 Failure to cooperate with safeguarding checks may prevent appointment to a role.

## 11. Confidentiality and Records

- 11.1 Safeguarding information shall be handled confidentially and shared only where necessary.
- 11.2 Confidentiality does not prevent disclosure where a person is at risk, a crime may have occurred, a legal obligation applies or safeguarding escalation is required.
- 11.3 Safeguarding records shall be stored securely and retained for at least seven years, or longer where legally or operationally necessary.
- 11.4 Records should be factual, dated and limited to relevant information.

## 12. Whistleblowing and Reporting Culture

- 12.1 FND Connect encourages people to report concerns, mistakes, unsafe practice and safeguarding worries.
- 12.2 No person shall be penalised for raising a genuine concern in good faith.
- 12.3 Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be dealt with under conduct procedures.

## 13. Review

- 13.1 This Policy shall be reviewed annually, or sooner following a serious safeguarding incident, material change in services, new legal guidance or organisational growth.
- 13.2 The next scheduled review date is 01/05/2027.

## Approval and Adoption

This Adult Safeguarding Policy was approved and adopted by the Management Committee of FND Connect on 01/05/2026.

The document shall remain in force until amended, replaced or withdrawn by the Management Committee.

Signed by	Role	Signature	Date
Matthew Gerdes-Hansen	Chair		01/05/2026
Emma Wilder	Secretary		01/05/2026