

Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults

Last updated: January 2026

Applies to: All directors, staff, volunteers, contractors, associates and anyone acting on behalf of Surviving Universal UK (SUUK)

1. Statement of Commitment

Surviving Universal UK C.I.C. is a Black-led, survivor-led grassroots organisation.

We exist first and foremost to advocate for, protect and uplift Black survivors of spiritual abuse, cultural abuse and coercive control. This focus is foundational to who we are and reflects the reality that Black survivors are consistently under-served, under-protected and rendered invisible within mainstream safeguarding, faith and abuse-response systems.

Our work is shaped by the specific cultural, racial and structural barriers faced by Black communities, including racism, religious harm, stigma, fear of retaliation, mistrust of statutory systems and the misuse of culture or faith to excuse abuse.

Surviving Universal UK does not exclude or turn away any victim or survivor on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, faith or background. We support survivors of all identities affected by cultic, spiritual and cultural abuse, while remaining unapologetically clear that our core purpose, leadership and expertise centre Black survivors.

We are explicitly anti-racist, anti-oppressive and LGBTQ+ inclusive. Our safeguarding practice recognises intersecting harms, including racism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia.

Safeguarding is central to how SUUK operates. It informs our decisions, boundaries and methods of engagement. The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount at all times.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by relevant UK legislation and statutory guidance, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

3. Scope of This Policy

This policy applies to all children under the age of 18 and all adults who may be considered at risk. It applies to anyone engaging with SUUK through direct messages, email, online or in-person support spaces, one-to-one conversations, peer support groups, training, consultations, campaigning activity, social media content or live public sessions.

Safeguarding responsibilities apply regardless of whether engagement is formal or informal, public or private, online or offline.

4. Definitions

A child is any person under the age of 18.

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

Safeguarding refers to protecting a person's health, wellbeing and human rights and enabling them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

5. Safeguarding Approach

SUUK operates a trauma-informed safeguarding approach. We recognise the impact of trauma and seek to minimise the risk of re-harm while prioritising safety, dignity and autonomy.

Safeguarding decisions are made proportionately, recorded appropriately and reviewed where necessary. The safety and wellbeing of individuals will always take precedence over organisational reputation, content creation, visibility or campaigning priorities.

6. Governance, Roles and Accountability

Surviving Universal UK is governed by a board of independent directors who are collectively responsible for safeguarding oversight and accountability. Directors are independent of one another and provide checks and balance within the organisation.

Safeguarding responsibilities are held at board level and operational level. Individuals undertaking frontline or public-facing work on behalf of SUUK are appropriately trained and supported to act in line with this policy.

Where a safeguarding concern involves a director, or where it would be inappropriate for an internal lead to manage the concern, SUUK will seek advice from, or make a referral to, the relevant statutory authority or an appropriate external safeguarding professional.

Anyone acting on behalf of SUUK is expected to adhere to this policy, maintain appropriate boundaries and raise safeguarding concerns without delay.

7. Initial Contact, Direct Messages and Informal Disclosures

SUUK recognises that safeguarding disclosures frequently occur through informal contact, particularly via social media direct messages or email.

Safeguarding responsibilities apply at all points of contact, including direct messages. Informal communications, however, cannot function as full assessment, therapeutic or crisis-intervention spaces.

Through direct messages and informal contact, SUUK may provide trauma-informed responses, initial safeguarding guidance, reassurance, encouragement of safety, and signposting to emergency, statutory or specialist services where appropriate.

Direct messages are not used for ongoing risk assessment, crisis management or intensive support. Where further engagement is appropriate, individuals are guided towards SUUK's structured support pathways so that safeguarding, boundaries and accountability can be properly maintained.

8. Support Provided and Safeguarding Boundaries

Surviving Universal UK is not a mental health service, crisis service or emergency response organisation. We do not provide clinical treatment, emergency intervention or statutory crisis care.

SUUK does, however, provide specialist safeguarding-informed advocacy and peer support for survivors of cultic, spiritual and cultural abuse. This includes trauma-aware listening, survivor advocacy, peer support spaces, and support navigating safeguarding, legal and statutory pathways.

Where appropriate, SUUK may support survivors to understand reporting options, including police reports or safeguarding referrals, and may retain records or evidence generated through our support processes. Survivors may request access to their own information in line with data protection law.

SUUK's role is to reduce harm, strengthen safety and support informed decision-making, while working alongside — not replacing — statutory and specialist services.

9. Safeguarding and Social Media Live Sessions

SUUK recognises that social media activity and public storytelling carry inherent safeguarding risks.

Planned SUUK live sessions, recorded interviews or public storytelling activities where an individual is intentionally platformed are subject to safeguarding due diligence. This includes a private conversation with an appropriate SUUK representative prior to participation to consider wellbeing, capacity, boundaries and potential risks associated with public disclosure.

This process considers emotional readiness, ongoing risk, possible retaliation or harassment, and the realities of public exposure. Informed consent is required.

Where an individual is assessed as appropriate to participate in a planned live session, they do so in good faith. SUUK will take reasonable and proportionate steps to promote safety and will offer appropriate aftercare support following the session. However, SUUK cannot control or be held responsible for decisions, events or emotional responses that occur after the live session has taken place.

Unplanned live participation, such as spontaneous join requests during open community live sessions, cannot be subject to the same level of prior safeguarding assessment or privacy accord. In these circumstances, SUUK will take reasonable steps to mitigate risk, moderate participation or end involvement where safeguarding concerns arise, but cannot guarantee outcomes or assume responsibility for unplanned participation.

Safeguarding decisions always prioritise safety over content. Participation may be declined, postponed or ended where risk is assessed as too high.

10. Consent and Capacity

SUUK seeks informed consent wherever possible. Where there are concerns about capacity, decisions are made in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, using the least restrictive option.

Safeguarding action may proceed without consent where there is a serious risk of harm to the individual or others.

11. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

When a safeguarding concern is identified, SUUK will listen without judgment, avoid making promises of confidentiality, record relevant factual information, and escalate the concern in line with this policy.

SUUK does not investigate safeguarding concerns independently. Where appropriate, concerns are referred to children's services, adult safeguarding teams, the police or relevant health services.

Where there is immediate danger, emergency services will be contacted.

12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information is shared on a need-to-know basis and stored securely. Information may be shared without consent where there is a risk of serious harm or a legal duty to do so.

SUUK complies with data protection legislation while recognising that safeguarding considerations may override data protection where necessary.

13. Safer Recruitment and Suitability

Where SUUK engages staff, volunteers or associates, roles are risk-assessed and appropriate safeguarding checks, including DBS checks where required, are undertaken.

Safeguarding expectations are made clear prior to engagement.

14. Recording, Review and Sustainability

Safeguarding concerns, decisions and actions are recorded accurately and securely. This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if there are material changes to legislation, organisational structure or operating model.

This policy reflects Surviving Universal UK's operating model as of January 2026.

15. Contact Details

Safeguarding concerns can be raised by contacting our Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Rachael Reign

Email: info@survivinguniversaluk.org

If someone is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted.

16. Statement of Accountability

Surviving Universal UK is committed to transparency and accountability in safeguarding practice. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and scrutiny that strengthens safety, trust and ethical practice is welcomed.