



## **Policy on Safeguarding our Members**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Society is open to all, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, sex or sexual inclination and will not ask questions about these factors of any new or existing Member.
- 1.2 Members must feel safe when participating in any activity organised by the Society and know to whom they should report any concerns and for those concerns to be fairly investigated for all parties by the Trustees.
- 1.3 There are certain circumstances when the Society may have a legitimate interest in the individual's past and retains the right to ask whether, for certain categories of position in the Society an individual has anything to declare that might affect his/her ability to undertake the role or might adversely affect the image or standing of the Society. This would include previous criminal convictions as well as serious issues which have not resulted in a criminal conviction (eg being dismissed from employment for an offence.)

### **2. Safeguarding Procedure**

- 2.1 Any Member of the Society may report any concerns to an Officer of the Society (Chairman, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary) or to a Trustee who will follow the Procedure as described below, whether the person under scrutiny is an official position within the Society or not.

### **3. Roles which require a Declaration**

- 3.1 For anyone applying to become a Walk Leader, Trustee, on any formally recognised committee of the Society or co-opted to a committee for an extended period, the Society will ask them to confirm there is no impediment that might adversely affect their suitability to undertake the role envisaged or might be seen as a conflict of interest or be seen as making them unfit to fulfil the role.

### **4. Process for dealing with a Declaration of Interest**

- 4.1 If an individual makes a declaration that there is a factor in the past which should be considered then the matter shall be referred to the Trustees, who will appoint a Sub-Committee of three, which will not include the Chairman of the Society, to consider the facts in relation to the role and reach a conclusion as to the suitability of the candidate.

4.2 In reaching their decision the Sub-Committee will take into account the following:-

- The role of the person in question and the bearing the factor has on the role.
- The effect on those in the Society working closely with the person.
- The severity of the factor.
- In the case of a criminal conviction for a serious offence whether that offence is spent or unspent.
- Any mitigating circumstances from the individual or other character references.
- His/her past behaviour, if they have been in the role for some time.

4.3 The Sub-committee may seek expert advice, if appropriate.

4.4 The Sub-Committee will document their findings and clearly state their decision and reasons as to the suitability or otherwise of the person in the role. They will notify the Trustees of their decision.

4.5 This record will be made available to the person and he/she will be allowed to appeal and they must be allowed 21 days to make such an appeal.

4.6 Any appeal must be heard by the full Trustees, who must allow the individual or their representative to make a statement, if they wish, but not to be present in the ensuing discussion and decision. The Sub-Committee may not vote at an appeal hearing.

4.7 The Trustees will document their findings and then clearly state their decision and reasons as to the suitability or otherwise of the person in the role. The record will be made available to the person, but at this stage the Trustees decision will be final.

4.8 Any proceedings should be conducted on a “need to know” basis. The Trustees will go into Confidential session and minutes will not be published, but a record kept in the BBPS Archive for no more than 5 years.

## **5. Process for dealing with a factor which arises after an appointment**

5.1 This applies to a situation whereby an individual is appointed to one of the roles described in Paragraph 2 and it subsequently comes to the attention of the Society that there may be a factor in their past which may affect their ability to perform the role or may bring the Society into disrepute.

5.2 One of the Trustees will be appointed by the Trustees to establish the facts with the individual and to report to the Executive as soon as practical.

5.3 If the Trustees consider the facts presented worthy of further investigation then the procedure described in Paragraph 4 will be followed.

**6. If any other Members of the Society or a Member of the Public are aware of the report to the Society, then the Executive will issue the following statement:-**

“ The Society is aware of a potential issue that has been raised as to the suitability of a Member of the Society to perform the designated role within the Society. The Society has a Safeguarding Policy and the Trustees will be following this Policy. The Trustees’ decision will be final and they will not enter into any correspondence.”