



Quality Assurance Policy for The Rivertime Boat Trust

Initial document produced	1 st August 2025
Document owner	Board of Trustees
Reviewed on	6 th February 2026
Reviewed by	Lucy Herbert / Tom Sowerby
Review due	6 th February 2026 or before if required

Contents

Content	Page
Policy statement	1-2
Scope	2
Key quality principles	2
Policy areas	2-4
Governance and Accountability	5
Monitoring and review	5

1. Policy Statement

The Rivertime Boat Trust is committed to providing safe, supportive, and inspirational boat trips for disabled and disadvantaged children, young people and adults. Our commitment to quality assurance is central to our mission, ensuring that every aspect of our operations meets the highest standards of safety, welfare, and governance. This policy outlines our framework for maintaining and continuously improving the quality of our services to ensure we deliver memorable and impactful experiences for all our beneficiaries.



2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities of the Rivertime Boat Trust, including Trustees, employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, and any third-party partners. It governs all aspects of our boat trips, from initial booking and preparation to the trip conclusion and follow-up.

3. Key Quality Principles

Our Quality Assurance framework is built on the following principles, which reflect the values of the Rivertime Boat Trust:

Beneficiary-Centric Approach: We place the needs, dignity, and wellbeing of our beneficiaries at the heart of everything we do.

Safeguarding and Welfare: We are uncompromising in our duty to protect all children and adults at risk from harm, abuse, and neglect.

Health and Safety: We maintain a rigorous approach to health and safety, ensuring our vessel, equipment, and procedures meet or exceed all statutory requirements.

Highly Skilled People: We ensure our skippers, crew, and all volunteers are professionally trained, competent, and fully supported in their roles.

Continuous Improvement: We are committed to a culture of reflection and learning, regularly reviewing our policies and practices to identify areas for development.

Responsible Governance: We operate with transparency, integrity, and accountability in all our governance, financial management, and reporting.

4. Policy Areas

4.1. Beneficiary Welfare and Safeguarding

Rivertime Boat Trust embraces its legal and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. We operate in line with all relevant UK legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the Children Act 1989 & 2004, the Care Act 2014, and guidance from the Charity Commission.

Procedures:

- All Trustees, employees, and volunteers undergo a robust recruitment process, including an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.



- Mandatory safeguarding training is provided for all personnel, and regular refresher training is conducted.
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is appointed to manage and oversee all safeguarding concerns.
- A clear and accessible procedure for reporting concerns is in place, and all reports are taken seriously and handled in line with our separate Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- As is the legal requirement, all skippers must hold a current RYA First Aid certificate. In addition to this legal requirement we also train all crew in first aid.

4.2. Health and Safety

The safety of our beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff is our highest priority. We adhere to all relevant maritime and health and safety regulations as set by the Maritime Coastguard Agency, Royal Yachting Association and the Environment Agency.

Procedures:

- **Risk Assessments:** Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for all trips and activities. These are reviewed and updated regularly.
- **The Skipper's Authority:** The qualified skipper has ultimate authority and responsibility for the safety of the vessel, passengers, and crew at all times. Their decisions on safety matters are final.
- **Boat and Equipment Maintenance:** The vessel and all safety equipment (e.g., life jackets/buoyancy aids, fire extinguishers, first aid kits) are maintained to the highest standard and checked before every trip.
- **Safety Briefings:** All passengers and carers receive a mandatory safety briefing before the boat departs, which includes clear instructions on how to wear buoyancy aids, emergency procedures, and rules for moving around the vessel.
- **Incident and Accident Reporting:** All accidents, incidents, and 'near misses' must be reported to the skipper and logged using our digital reporting system which immediately notifies the Managing Skipper, Charity Manager and selected Trustees.

4.3. Operations and Service Delivery

We aim to provide a consistently high-quality experience from the moment a trip is booked.

Procedures:

- There is a comprehensive set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which cover all routine activities and trips. There is also a set of SOPs covering emergency situations (e.g.

fire, medical emergency, sinking, loss of power etc) which are regularly drilled and ensure continuity of practice amongst all staff and volunteers.

- **Booking and Information:** The booking process is clear and accessible, providing all necessary information regarding the trip, including access, facilities, and what to expect.
- **Staffing:** Every trip is staffed by a fully qualified skipper and at least one experienced crew member, this exceeds the legal requirements but meets our own safety standards.
- **Personalised Trips:** We work with group leaders and carers to understand the specific needs of our beneficiaries and tailor the trip to their requirements.
- **Feedback:** We actively seek feedback from beneficiaries, carers, and group leaders to evaluate our service quality and identify areas for improvement. Every group is encouraged to complete an online feedback questionnaire, the results of which are sent to the Managing Skipper, Charity Manager and selected Trustees. Any score below 5 out of 5 will result in internal investigations and any score below 4 out of 5 will result in contacting the customer to understand the reasons and learn from their experiences.

4.4. Volunteer and Staff Management

Our volunteers are the heart of our charity. We are committed to their professional development, wellbeing, and effective management.

Procedures:

- **Recruitment and Induction:** A clear recruitment process is in place, including interviews and enhanced DBS checks. All new volunteers and staff receive a comprehensive induction covering their role, the charity's policies, and safety procedures as well as shadowing our Managing Skipper for numerous trips.
- **Training and Development:** We provide ongoing training for all volunteers and staff, covering areas such as safeguarding, first aid, and specific boat operation skills. This far exceeds the required minimum standards and includes first aid and safeguarding training for all crew as well as annual refresher training and emergency procedures practice with an independent qualified RYA Instructor.
- **Support and Supervision:** Volunteers are provided with regular support and supervision to ensure they feel valued and are confident in their roles.

5. Governance and Accountability

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for ensuring the charity adheres to this policy and all legal obligations.



Procedures:

- **Policy Review:** This Quality Assurance Policy, along with all other key policies (e.g., Safeguarding, Health & Safety), is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and/or an individual nominated to do so on their behalf.
- **Financial Management:** Robust financial controls and procedures are in place to ensure the responsible use of funds. This includes proactively seeking third party advice and opinion where necessary.
- **Legal Compliance:** The Board ensures the charity complies with all requirements of the Charity Commission, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), and other relevant regulatory bodies.

6. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through regular reporting to the Board of Trustees. The policy is formally reviewed on an annual basis or in response to any significant changes in legislation, our operations, or feedback received.